

## Model ship storage

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### Also in this issue

An interview with Helen Shenton

Blue coat figures reanimated

Starting an internship





Conservation by Design Limited are no stranger to the readers of the ICON magazine, providing a comprehensive range of high quality conservation products to museums, galleries, libraries and archives worldwide.

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*The magnificent medieval castle of Mont Orgueil, in Jersey, was restored and reinterpreted so that the visitor can gain an insight into the medieval mindset and understand how the castle was developed*

*The innovative design approach to the interpretative element, blended the use of artist inspired exhibits with the more traditional techniques of display and presentation.*



NOVEMBER 2016 Issue 67



## From the Editor

In this issue we have the first of our interviews with former conservators whose careers have taken them beyond the bounds of conservation. When you read the impressive list of qualities – skills and knowledge – which Alison Richmond enumerates in her CEO column as being required (and developed) by the practice of conservation, it is rather surprising that we are not running every institution going. One attribute she omitted was modesty, but for which we would certainly be running the country itself.

Well, don't hide your light under a bushel but get involved with Icon, either by joining in with Group activities, coming to the AGM to discuss the Institute's future direction or, best of all from my point of view, writing for Icon News. You are bound to interest, inform or inspire others, be they Icon's members or friends. This time around we cover stone figures, scrapbooks, model ship transport and the aspirations of a new intern. Next time, who knows? Perhaps someone has conserved a bushel. Do tell us about it!

**Lynette Gill**



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ISSN 1749-8988

### Icon News

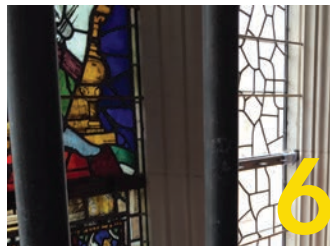
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Cover photo:  
Model of the 'Santa Maria', Christopher Columbus's flagship in 1492. In the Science Museum: 1923-0026. Image © Science Museum Group. Article on page 32

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### Deadlines:

For the January 2017 issue

Editorial: 30 November

Adverts: 16 December

Icon is registered as a Charity in England and Wales (Number 1108380) and in Scotland (Number SC039336) and is a Company Limited by Guarantee, (Number 5201058)

# professional update

## From the Chief Executive



Photo: Matt Wreford

### NARROW-MINDED EDUCATION

**Alison Richmond ACR FIIC deplores the current view of arts and crafts in education**

Last month, the AQA, the qualifications agency that manages A- and AS-level examinations, announced plans to withdraw three subjects from their suite: history of art, archaeology and classical civilisation. This has prompted an outcry from

many quarters.<sup>1</sup> AQA stated that a combination of low numbers of students put quality assurance at risk, noting the difficulty of finding examiners among other factors, and made the subjects commercially unviable.<sup>2</sup>

This news may not come as a surprise in the current environment given the trends established by Michael Gove when he was Secretary of State for Education. In England at least, with the introduction of the new national curriculum over the past two years, the status of art and craft subjects has been downgraded in the national curriculum and the e-baccalaureate. These developments reflect a reductionist definition of education, the purpose of which is to provide a 'critical path' to a career in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) and if there is no direct, visible link from, say, art history or archaeology or art to a career in STEM, these subjects can and should be dispensed with.

This is a narrow-minded and mistaken view of education that poses a direct threat not only to the creative and cultural industries but also to the development of sympathetic audiences and clients, funders and supporters of the arts and heritage. Many people get interested in the arts at school. If these subjects are no longer on the curriculum or offered at A-level, kids will not have the opportunities to find out if the arts are for them.

Many have argued the critical role that art and crafts – not to mention music and performing arts – play in developing all kinds of cognitive and motor skills, as well as creativity. Far from a reductionist point of view, on the contrary, advocates argue that developing these skills and attributes at an early age makes better scientists, computer programmers and engineers. They are campaigning, so far unsuccessfully, to put the arts back into the curriculum with the wonderfully dynamic acronym STEAM.

We know that the practice of conservation requires a rich palette of cross-disciplinary skills, knowledge and attributes: along with manual craft skills, knowledge and understanding

of materials science, technology and manufacturing, history, art history, aesthetic appreciation, judgement and ethics, and problem solving, to name a few. Developing an interest in these subjects at school, learning to make things, learning to understand and appreciate the past, plant seeds for what might ultimately grow into a career in conservation.

Even for graduates, there are many different routes into our profession. Take, for instance, the studio where I worked as a youngish conservator: each of us came from a different educational background, with first degrees in practical art, physics and art history. But that is not the whole story. Experiences along the way inspired each of us to become interested in the physicality of art, in the 'doing' as well as in the theory of conservation. I went to schools where I was very fortunate to have studied practical art and art history. Those experiences planted the seeds of my life-long interest in cultural heritage at a young age and ultimately led me to the field of conservation where all of these interests happily converged.

While art history or archaeology or art will no longer be available in public education, private schools will continue to offer them. Icon is committed to strengthening non-graduate routes into our profession, working with others in our sector to provide new-starter internships, Trailblazer apprenticeships and traineeships. Removing the possibility of studying these subjects at school, reduces opportunities for those who do not go on to university. To support non-graduate access to our profession, these A and AS levels should be available to all students whether in fee-paying or state-funded schools.

Jonathan Ashley-Smith has recently published a paper in our Journal about the loss of craft skills in our profession. In it he notes that the education system is stacked against kids learning to use their hands and that with information technology the classroom is fast becoming a 2-D world.<sup>3</sup> What can be done? Icon Trustee Penny Bendall has taken up this challenge and has started a charity called The Creative Dimension.<sup>4</sup> It gives young people a chance to learn craft skills from a master craftsman. This is a small beginning but its success indicates that it is meeting a real need.

There is no critical path to a career in conservation. We need to act to preserve the many areas of study that nurture interest and ability in conservation of cultural heritage. The changes to the curriculum may not in and of themselves appear to be very significant, but, like any eco-system, if you remove or change one too many components, the whole system can be irrecoverably damaged.

- <sup>1</sup> 'Decision to scrap A-level art history labelled a 'disgrace' by critics' The Daily Telegraph 14 October 2016
- <sup>2</sup> In 2016 around 700 students sat art history at AS level and 800 at A level. The figures for archaeology were 600 and 369 respectively and for classical civilisation 3000 and 2500.
- <sup>3</sup> Jonathan Ashley-Smith, 'Losing the edge: the risk of a decline in practical conservation skills' in *Journal of the Institute of Conservation*, 39, no.2 (2016), pp.119–132
- <sup>4</sup> The Creative Dimension: [www.thecreativedimension.org](http://www.thecreativedimension.org)

## LOOKING FORWARD TO THE AGM

### An invitation from the Icon Chair to be involved in Icon's future direction



At the time of taking up the Chair of Icon, at the last Annual General Meeting, I was very conscious of the opportunities that exist for Icon to take a more outward-facing role within the heritage sector and beyond. Across the year we have continued to develop Icon's professional and public role and to respond to issues arising from the Membership Survey.

As Icon's Strategic Plan 2012–2016 comes to an end,

we are now poised to formulate a new strategy and to reinvigorate the organisation's vision and purpose. It is a key moment in Icon's development; an opportunity to reflect on the organisation's achievements and fitness for the future, and to set out an agenda that will guide our activities through the next few years.

To inform the process we have had reports back from three Task and Finish Groups. These groups were drawn both from Board members and the wider membership. They arose out of discussions held by the Board to inform areas for change and examine future areas for strategic development. The three areas were defined as:

Group 1: Strengthening the support that Icon gives to professional conservators

Group 2: Raising the public and policy profile of Icon

Group 3: Increasing a wider membership and supporter base for Icon

The Task and Finish groups have highlighted practical ways in which Icon can provide focus and attention on managing the changes we wish to make for strengthening the profession and building support for conservation.

The AGM will be an opportunity to share these recommendations and I would very much like to harness the enthusiasm of the membership to provide feedback and input into the ongoing process of strategy development.

We would like your views on the recommendations of the Task and Finish Groups, the development of a new Vision and Mission for Icon, and the key aims and objectives on which we should build our strategy. We are also looking at new ways of improving the effectiveness of Icon as a membership organisation.

Icon can be so much more than the home for all those involved in conservation. We have the potential to be a movement for championing standards, advocating for

conservation, and engaging everyone with a greater appreciation of our cultural heritage. I hope that you will be able to join us to make your contribution in building a strategy that we can all be proud of.

*Siobhan Stevenson*

## VOTE FOR NEW TRUSTEES – EASILY

As we approach the end of 2016, the time for trustee elections has arrived and this year promises to be an exciting one. Not only do we have two candidates for the seat reserved for Scotland but we also have no less than ten candidates for the four unreserved seats. This includes nine new candidates and one who is standing for re-election. This may well be a record and possibly reflects a great deal of interest in helping Icon when we are finalising our new Strategic Plan for 2017–2021. Times are certainly changing and we need an active Board to lead the organisation forward.

You should by now have received an email inviting you to vote on line. Our new system, run by Mi-Voice, makes voting easy and we hope this will encourage many more members to do so. Being internet based, you can vote at home, at work, on the train or on the beach anywhere in the world that has a connection. No need for a stamp and to go to a letterbox. To ensure that you receive the Mi-Voice email, please add their name to your approved email address list on your system.

With so many good candidates standing, it is particularly important that every eligible member casts their vote. This is the first time we have used our new on-line voting portal and we are hoping for a record turnout. The new system is very easy to use so **please cast your vote no later than 5.00 pm on Monday 5 December 2016.**

All you need to do is go to our election portal when you get the invitation email. Please note that you can only enter the portal by this means and it ensures that members will only be able to vote once.

Whilst we were always very careful about the integrity of our elections, you can now have confidence in a respected independent organisation organising and counting your votes. The new system will also save in the costs of our printing and postage as well a large amount of staff time, which we will put to other uses.

If you do not have an email address and would like to vote for trustee candidates in the election, please phone Mi-Voice at 02380 763 987 immediately, asking them to register you as an Icon member who has no email address and they will send you voting papers by post.

If you are unable to attend the AGM and would like to vote through a proxy, please see details in the AGM notice on page 11.

*Simon Barcham Green*  
Icon Business Manager

## A NEW COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Icon launched its new Complaints Procedure on 28 September. The procedure is intended for the resolution of any complaint about a member of the Institute and supersedes Icon's Disciplinary Code. This brings to completion the suite of standards documents including the Institute's Code of Conduct and the Professional Standards.

Volunteers, staff and a legal team all worked hard to develop a transparent and fair process that meets the standards of best practice for professional bodies. The first draft was drawn up by Clare Meredith ACR based on previous work by Icon Trustee David Leigh ACR. Trustees refined the procedure further. Siobhan Stevenson wrote the final draft which was sent to a legal firm for review. This was undertaken by a team of specialist lawyers at Withers LLP. The feedback from the legal team was taken on board and incorporated in a new draft which was approved by the Icon Board of Trustees on 22 June 2016.

Key features of the new Complaints Procedure are:

- Intended for the resolution of any complaint about a member of the Institute.
- An emphasis on alternative dispute resolution and remedial rather than punitive measures
- Clear separation of powers of an Investigation Committee, a Conduct Committee and an Appeal Committee, with each committee chaired by a different lay person
- A Conduct Register of at least ten ACRs that will serve as a pool from which members of the committees can be drawn. The composition of the Register is published on the Icon website
- A legal advisor to support the work of the committees and to advise on conflicts of interest
- A clear time frame for the process
- Specific restrictive measures (sanctions)

The Board of Trustees has approved the appointment of twenty Accredited Members to the Conduct Register and, in accordance with the procedure, their names are published on Icon's website.

The Board of Trustees would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those Icon members who have contributed to the development of the new Procedure, with particular thanks to David Leigh for his review and Clare Meredith for her first draft. The Trustees also wish to thank those members and non-members who have taken part in previous panels. All of these contributions have been invaluable in helping to ensure that the new procedure is fit for purpose.

For more information about Icon's Complaints Procedure, Icon's Code of Conduct and Professional Standards, please visit the Icon website at [icon.org.uk/about-us/about-members/icon-complaints-procedure](http://icon.org.uk/about-us/about-members/icon-complaints-procedure).

## HERITAGE SCIENCE NEWS

The National Heritage Science Forum's new grant to open up access to heritage science research opened to applications on 10 November.

The NHSF grant will support the full cost of Gold Open Access publication of heritage science research by successful applicants. This means that the research will be accessible online, to everyone, immediately on publication.

Eligible papers will be assessed against the impact that they will have on the field of heritage science and their alignment with the National Heritage Science Strategy ([www.heritagescienceforum.org.uk/strategy.php](http://www.heritagescienceforum.org.uk/strategy.php)).

The grant is one element of a programme of NHSF activities. These are designed to:

- maximise the impact and public benefit of heritage science by building a diverse interdisciplinary community that works together to share knowledge, ideas, innovation and resources and;
- network with other digital platforms to make heritage science research publicly accessible, promoting knowledge exchange and encouraging collaboration.

Open Access to heritage science research will:

- Increase the visibility of heritage science research
- Help bring together researchers and the users of research
- Build networks between scientists from different disciplines
- Maximise the impact of investment in heritage science research
- Enable fuller use of the results of heritage science research for the benefit of society and the economy
- Build a richer research culture for heritage science

Employees and individual members of organisations that are a member of NHSF are encouraged to apply: the application process and form is available at: [www.heritagescienceforum.org.uk/publications.php](http://www.heritagescienceforum.org.uk/publications.php)

Further information can be obtained from Caroline Peach [administrator@heritagescienceforum.org.uk](mailto:administrator@heritagescienceforum.org.uk)

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ROUND UP 2016

2016 has been a busy year for the Professional Development team at Icon (and our two hundred and twenty one volunteers), we've been travelling the country promoting accreditation, running training sessions and developing new qualifications. At risk of this looking like the first part of our own Continuing Professional Development (CPD) review, take a look to see just some of what we have been up to this year!

### Professional Accreditation

This year we have been delighted to have been able to accredit twenty six more members to join the 824-strong current list of ACRs. Congratulations to those individuals for their hard work and determination in achieving accredited membership: it shows that they have earned the esteem of



Susan Bradshaw



Patrick White

their professional peers and is a powerful symbol of belonging to a wider professional community.

The start of the year also saw us train eight new PACR Assessors, who travel the country to assess candidates as part of the accreditation process. In the same vein, we are also delighted to announce that the Accreditation Committee has been bolstered by four new members joining its ranks. Ensuring that there is a regular turnover of committee members brought into the assessment process is essential in order to maintain a robust system.

Looking at the numbers coming through for accreditation, the PACR Pathway continues to grow, with 467 people currently registered. Our 2016 PACR Clinics have taken us to Edinburgh, Birmingham, County Durham, Oxford, York and London and have proved to be extremely popular. Although attending a clinic in person is recommended, because demand was so high we put on a webinar clinic for those who could not get a place at the clinic of their choice.

In the spring of 2017 we are planning on running clinics in Glasgow, Exeter and London. We are always looking for new places to go to, to ensure that we can help as many members as possible on their path towards accreditation right across the UK. If you are able to host us, please get in touch with our Training & Development Manager to see if we can come to your town!

### **Mentoring**

Icon Mentors provide invaluable support for those members who are on their way towards accreditation. We are incredibly grateful for the hard work and time they commit to supporting people with their PACR Applications as well as their ongoing professional development. We have run training for new mentors in London and would like to hold one in another city if the demand is there for next year.

With around eighty mentors and so many people on the pathway, there is always a need for more. It can be an incredibly rewarding process for both the mentors as well as the mentees. If you are an ACR who is interested in becoming a mentor, please do get in touch to find out details of the next training sessions.

### **CPD**

This year's CPD recall ran smoothly. Over the summer our CPD Readers have been busy reading the reviews submitted for the 2016 recall. We are pleased to announce that this has now been completed and that feedback has been sent back to all of those recalled.

Last but certainly not least, 2016 also saw the end of the PACR licensing agreements with ARA and BHI, and with that we have taken the opportunity to revise the paperwork and application guidance to ensure that the application process is as clear and straightforward as possible.

### **Training & Qualifications**

We have continued to work on supporting the development of new qualifications for people entering the profession. We are pleased to confirm that following its launch earlier in the year, the first group have started on the V&A Icon Conservation & Collections Care Technicians Diploma. Along with strong interest from the candidates themselves, we have also had strong interest from ACRs who are working to become qualified NVQ Assessors to take candidates through the programme.

In related news, we are also taking part in the Heritage Environment Practitioner Apprenticeship Trailblazer working group, to continue our development of a clear vocational entry route into the sector. Led by Historic England, the group includes representatives from across the heritage sector in the UK. Significant work has already been done in setting the overarching standards which have been out for consultation. In 2017 our big task will be developing the framework further and developing a clear route for conservation.

### **A fundraising initiative**

Over September and October, we have been working hard, preparing a new application to the Heritage Lottery Fund's Skills for the Future Programme. With a project called Search Out Heritage Conservation (SOHC). This programme is to be quite different from our last HLF Funded Internship Programme. If successful, SOHC will enable candidates to undertake a period of structured training and work experience within the conservation sector, alongside the development of generic work related skills. This programme will lead to the successful candidates being taken on as Conservation Apprentices in Greater Manchester and London.

The programme will target young people (aged 18–24) from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds who we recognise as being underrepresented in the workforce of the heritage sector. This is only the first round application, but we remain hopeful that we will be able to update you further with good news in early 2017!

### **Icon Internships Programme**

Our internship programme has continued to move from strength to strength, providing structured support for emerging conservators, enabling them to kick start their careers in conservation.

Over the course of the year we have had placements at the Bowes Museum, British Museum, Leather Conservation Centre, National Library of Scotland, National Museum Wales, National Museums Scotland, National Trust and National Trust for Scotland.

### **Continuing Professional Development**

This year, we were delighted to have been able to help twenty-two people through the Icon Tru Vue CPD Grants



Centre for Textile Conservation, University of Glasgow

Anna Plowden Trust beneficiary 2016 Keira Miller training in textile conservation

Programme, which supports mid-career conservators with grants of between £300 and £1,000 to undertake CPD activities.

The previous rounds of applications have been extremely popular and have seen candidates undertake a huge range of activities from attending conferences, such as the recent IIC Congress *Saving the Now* in Los Angeles, through to taking part in a three-day emergency salvage course. As we approach the end of the year, we are very happy to announce the launch of the next round of funding. Further information can be found on the Icon website: [www.icon.org.uk/what-is-conservation/careers-training/career-grants](http://www.icon.org.uk/what-is-conservation/careers-training/career-grants).

### Promoting accreditation

A PACR consultation exercise is being carried out by Alison Richmond and Susan Bradshaw to find out from key stakeholders what they know about PACR and how Icon can enable them to better identify and appoint accredited conservators. A report will be made to the Icon Board in March 2017.

Recently Icon was invited to deliver the keynote address at the annual conference for Architects Accredited in Building Conservation (AABC). It was an opportunity to illustrate how, when and why accredited conservators can work with architects.

We continue to present sessions to students at Lincoln, City & Guilds and West Dean about professional standards, accreditation and Icon.

### And finally...

Professional Development along with all areas of Icon are heavily indebted to the generous time of the volunteers who support all areas of our work. Whilst 2016 has seen many people join the ranks, it has seen the departure of a number of PACR volunteers, whose hard work and commitment has helped to make accreditation what it is today. A big thank you to all our volunteers.

We look forward to working with you all in 2017!

#### Icon Professional Development Team

Susan Bradshaw, Head of Professional Development  
Patrick Whife, Training & Development Manager  
Shulla Jaques ACR, Accreditation Officer

## ANNA PLOWDEN TRUST NEWS

Recently the Anna Plowden Trust was delighted to receive a major grant – of £90,000 over three years – from the Dulverton Trust, which will enable it to help more students than ever with their conservation training.

As the only charity dedicated to supporting conservation training, the Anna Plowden Trust has awarded nearly two hundred bursaries since it was founded in 1998. However, training to be a professional conservator is costly and, with student debt rising, the Trust's funds are heavily oversubscribed each year. This year however, thanks to this new grant, they have been able to help a record number of thirty two conservation students on fourteen different courses across the range of conservation disciplines.

Among the students being supported in 2016/17, is Keira Miller in her final year on the MPhil Textile Conservation programme at Glasgow University. Keira said 'I am passionate about becoming a trained conservator and it is the Anna Plowden Trust's support that is helping me to achieve this. It is fantastic to know that even more students will be supported thanks to the Dulverton Trust.'

### 2017 deadlines announced

The Trustees have announced next year's deadlines for applications from students for Conservation Training Bursaries and from conservation professionals for CPD Grants.

They are as follows:

Conservation Training Bursaries

One deadline only: June 5 (for bursaries for the 2017/18 academic year)

CPD Grants

Four deadlines: January 12, March 22, June 5 and September 14

## TRAVELS WITH THE MEMBERSHIP MANAGER: Autumn 2016

With sixteen specialist groups, and networks covering the full spectrum of conservation disciplines, it is no surprise that as a whole, our organisation covers a lot of ground. A prevailing focus of recent Group meetings and AGMs has been the development of outreach efforts, and calibration of strategies to pursue this most effectively. Whether it's inviting related bodies to get involved, soliciting key sector partners to participate, or cooking up new angles of promotion and marketing, the energy, enthusiasm and creative thinking of members has led to some exciting projects in development. When the full range of potential new audiences is added into the mix, the sum total is a vivid landscape of opportunity.

### At the Heritage Science Group AGM

In early July, I popped over to Bloomsbury for the Heritage Science Group AGM. Speaking was Professor Carl Heron, Director of Scientific Research at the British Museum, who discussed current research underway at the Museum. Before this, the Heritage Science Group met to review the previous year and discuss upcoming plans. Like most Groups, heritage science is interconnected with a variety of closely related fields; from chemistry, to physics, to broader realms of materials research. With Royal Societies and Institutions



The new Heritage Science Group committee elected at the AGM

leading the way in these related fields, strong potential for partnership working and shared approaches exists, with the possibility of diversifying the discussion and raising the profile of conservation among our partners. But how can we best engage with our colleagues and friends in these fields? How can we obtain their willing participation in our programmes and activities in a way that serves both their objectives and ours?

### With the Stained Glass Group in Canterbury

This was also a prominent theme in the discussion at the Stained Glass Group conference in Canterbury in early September. Conference delegates explored the Cathedral, toured the Cathedral's conservation studios and ascended the scaffolding to view progress on the reinstallation of the Great South Window, a project led by Icon member Leonie Seliger ACR. The project has involved close collaboration between stained glass conservators, contractors and stone masons – a perfect example of the strong connections that exist between conservators and other professions. Naturally, there is a desire to advance our perspectives on conservation more broadly among our colleagues elsewhere. What tactics can help to ensure that our conferences and events don't simply preach to the choir?

Among the tried-and-tested methods, signed and posted

Stained Glass Group members view the reinstallation of the Great South Window at Canterbury Cathedral



letters inviting key figures as a 'special guest' has met with success in the past, particularly when offered in combination with bursaries and/or a complimentary place at an event. However, we live in an interconnected world and there are far more options at our disposal – starting with the Icon website.

### Group pages on the website

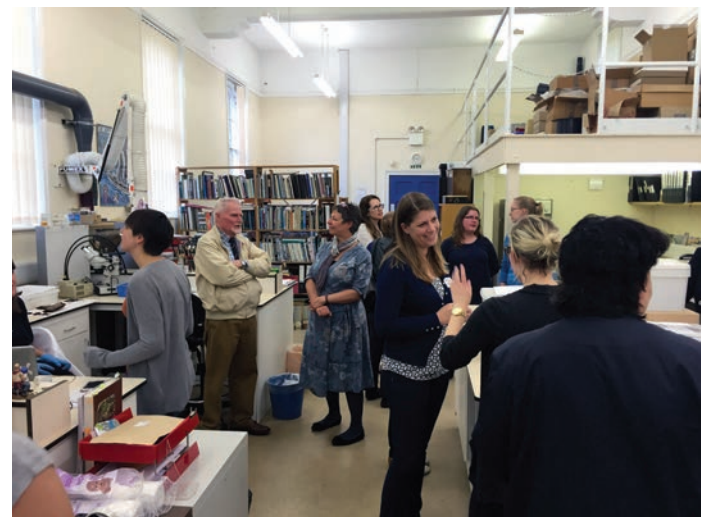
Going around this season's Group events, I learned that virtually every Group saw disadvantages with the way Groups' pages had been set up in the new website. In the initial redevelopment phase, these pages had been identified as a membership benefit and thus placed behind the membership paywall. However, this entailed unintended consequences for Group outreach. Most prominently, it meant that the diversity of our activity across the specialisms was obscured, and this potentially hindered our outreach efforts. It meant that Group material did not appear in Google searches for the specialisms, where it might have lured people to our website who hadn't previously heard of us, and thus we missed opportunities to expose interested people to our brand, our networks and our overtures to join us. As I made the rounds at Group events, the message was a very consistent one.

Accordingly, based on this feedback I liaised with our web development team and as of 30 August the Group's pages were moved to the public side of the website, where the website's built-in search engine optimisation will give the specialisms a new foothold in Google search results.

### The Archaeology Group in York

Alongside this, the political climate continues to intrigue, and specified political outreach to advocate the perspectives of our specialist members frequently brings a different branch of outreach to the forefront. The Archaeology Group convened in York this past July to stage their AGM and conference. Ian Panter, Head of Conservation at the York Archaeological Trust, gave a presentation describing his experience coping with the severe floods that hit the Jorvik Viking Centre last Christmas.

Archaeology Group members tour the YAT conservation labs after the AGM



Before this, the Group AGM considered a variety of pressing issues facing the sector. In particular, the fallout from Brexit jeopardises European funding streams that have long sustained a fair degree of conservation activity in the regions. How can Icon lend support to members keen to influence the political system within the specialisms? To support this activity, Icon is now developing guidelines for advocacy that will provide a good starting point for those looking to get involved.

### **Disaster planning with Care of Collections Group**

Of course, outreach works both ways – and there are always ways to improve connections within our organisation itself. This past month, the Care of Collections Group AGM and Conference in London explored approaches to disaster planning, and it attracted a glittering constellation of members and non-members alike – from the public sector, private organisations and the freelance world. Group Chair Jane Thompson-Webb ACR was unable to attend, so she sent a video message filmed in the Collections Store at Birmingham Museums Trust. This innovative development may well hold the key to increased participation among our internal networks.

### **Improving accessibility to events**

By their very nature Group events are localised in one part of the country or another, and not all members who might like to attend are able to do so for whatever reason. Last year's Membership Survey revealed that some members faced barriers when they looked to participate in Group events. The Survey indicated that, among those reporting events as inaccessible, 41.61% cited geography as a primary barrier. In contrast, less than half as many reported funding as the main barrier (18.6%). Mitigating this would improve the viability of events, which might reach break-even point more briskly. It would also improve our internal democratic channels, if more Icon members were able to participate in AGMs and elections across the organisation.

The potential to invest more broadly in podcasting and video conferencing equipment to facilitate the involvement of members across the organisation is a pressing avenue of development. Alongside this, there is also new potential to expand the use of our online voting software – presently limited to Icon Board Elections. Watch this space!

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts and our organisation is no exception. Consolidating our shared clout and expanding our outreach to boost the profile of conservation and our specialist practices was a core motivating force leading to Icon's inception. In the coming months, we can look forward to new developments in this area.

I'll next be heading to Freemasons Hall in London for the Paintings Group AGM, and then I'm off for a brief spin around Scotland for the annual Plenderleith Lecture. Of course, if I can be of help to anyone in the meantime you know where to reach me!

**Michael Nelles**

[mnelles@icon.org.uk](mailto:mnelles@icon.org.uk)

## **NEWS FROM THE GROUPS**

### **Archaeology Group**

Icon-AG held their AGM and summer outing in York in July. The meeting was attended by about twenty members who enjoyed the atmospheric surroundings of the Gunpowder Plot Conspirator's Planning room in the Black Swan Pub for the meeting. The Group was treated to a talk by Ian Panter of the York Archaeological Trust (YAT) on the severe flooding that occurred in York on Boxing Day 2015. Ian described the valiant efforts that he and his team made to rescue the objects from Jorvik Viking Centre before the flood water broke through. The take away point from this was that your museum or attraction does not live in isolation and when a wider disaster occurs resources such as pumps and even the fire brigade may not be available to help. Be prepared!

The Group was also brought on a behind-the-scenes tour of YAT's labs. Sonia O'Connor of the University of Bradford and Mags Felter of YAT gave us the chance to get up close to the fascinating medieval writing tablets from Swinegate in York with wax and writing still extant. Wood specialist Steve Allen also provided a detailed description of the processes involved in post-excavation assessment and treatment of wooden artefacts.

The Archaeology Group is planning the programme for 2017 workshops and meetings. Provisionally there may be a session on digital x-radiography in the spring and the summer meeting may focus on conservation work in areas that are under threat particularly in the Middle East. Please look for announcements in Iconnect and in the Archaeology Group pages on the Icon website.

### **Book and Paper Group Chair's Update**

Some news about Committee changes to start off: Francesca Whymark is stepping down as Events & Training Sub-Editor while she is on maternity leave (congrats!). She will continue to act as the Book and Paper Group's liaison with the Documentation Network. A big thank you to Francesca for all

### **Mags Felter leading the visit to the YAT labs**



her help on the Committee over the years. Thanks to Tom Bower who has agreed to take on the extra editing work for us, and to Nikki Tomkins, who has been elected to assist and learn the treasurer role with Abigail Bainbridge, who is expecting twins.

Now to what we're working on. Hopefully everyone has heard through Iconnects and social media about the Book and Paper Group Professional Development Bursaries (mentioned in the last Icon News). If not and you've missed the first round, never fear – there is more to come! To apply for one of our £100 training or research bursaries please have a look at the guidelines and application form, which can be found on the Book and Paper Group pages of the Icon website.

The Group is also looking into using various technologies and social networks to improve and expand our communication with the members. We have recently set up a Twitter account: follow us @ICONBook\_Paper.

**Michelle Stoddart**

Book and Paper Group Chair

### **Events & Training Update**

At the last Book and Paper Group Committee meeting we agreed to rebrand the Co-operative Training Register (CTR) because we found the acronym 'CTR' was not always self-explanatory to our members. So we would like to reintroduce ourselves as the **Events & Training** sub-committee. Our remit remains the same: we will enable book and paper conservators to offer training to one another and to place requests for specialist courses to fill skills gaps. We will continue operating on a co-operative basis, and as always we invite you to submit ideas for workshops, lectures and training through our pages on the Icon website or via [iconbpg@gmail.com](mailto:iconbpg@gmail.com).

Courses proposed for the New Year include using magnets to create bespoke boxes and a re-run of the successful parchment workshop which took place in Cambridge earlier this year, and a number of other ideas which we hope to share with you in due course.

**Fiona McLees**

Events & Training Chair

### **Ceramics and Glass Group**

The Ceramics and Glass Group committee has been busy planning the Group's 2017 Conference and AGM to be held next year in Oxford, and is now opening its call for papers and poster submissions.

The conference will take place on Friday 8 September 2017 and is being hosted by Magdalen College. Visits are currently being arranged to some of the wonderful sites and collections around Oxford. The committee is looking for papers and posters from conservators (and student conservators) on projects that they have been working on over the past couple of years. It doesn't have to be complicated, just something you'd think people would like to hear about! Please visit the Group pages on the Icon website for further information, or do get in touch.

The committee is also looking for new members to help with the planning and delivery of its conferences and workshops. If you'd like to get involved, and would like to know more about the roles on offer, please do contact the chair for a chat.

**Rachel Sharples**

Icon Ceramics and Glass Group Chair

### **Furniture and Wood Group**

Following the great success of our inaugural symposium in May of last year, the Furniture and Wood Group is pleased to announce a call for papers for our 2017 symposium – please see below. The event is still in the planning stages, but a date has been set and we are hoping to emulate the convivial and informative atmosphere that made last year such a wonderful day for all involved

Our day of visits to the conservation studios of the Rijksmuseum and the Amsterdam Historisch Museum's stores on 17 November, scheduled to coincide with the Stichting Ebenist conference, will be happening as this edition of Icon News hits your doorstep. The event was a great success at the previous conference two years ago and promises to be equally interesting this time around. The cost of the trip is £25 payable by cash or cheque on the day – but please do register to avoid disappointment – and places are still available at the time of writing. For further details please email our treasurer Ernest Riall at [riall1@me.com](mailto:riall1@me.com) or see the Furniture and Wood Group events page on the Icon website. We hope to publish a synopsis of the event in a future edition of this publication.

The committee would like to issue a call to action: we recently attempted to put on an event outside London in partnership with our colleagues in the Book and Paper Group – a 'Photoshop for beginners' course in Lincoln. However unfortunately due to a lack of participants the evening had to be cancelled.

The Furniture and Wood Group is aware of the London-centric nature of its committee, and most importantly of its provision of courses and events. This is something we would like to change.

However, as recent events have demonstrated, this is an area where the committee is not in a position to effectively judge the types of events that are needed nor the demand for them. As such you, the members of our Group, can really help to make the difference.

If you live or work outside London and have an idea for a course or event that you feel there is a demand, or more importantly a need for, then please get in touch. The committee is in a position to help with all aspects of organisation and can also offer financial support.

Please email [furniture.events@gmail.com](mailto:furniture.events@gmail.com) with any ideas or questions – or even if you'd simply like to register willing.

We look forward to hearing from you!

### **Call for papers**

Icon Furniture and Wood Group bi-annual symposium

Friday 12 May 2017

Freemasons' Hall, 60 Great Queen Street, London, WC2B 5AZ

The Icon Furniture and Wood Group invites submissions for papers to be presented at our second bi-annual symposium. We invite presentations on all topics relating to the conservation of furniture and wood for a day of talks.

In an attempt to repeat the success of the previous event, no specific theme is given. Previously delivered papers covered topics including novel practical conservation techniques, recent research, and on-going or noteworthy conservation projects. We would also encourage students and recent graduates to submit proposals.

The event will once again be held at the Freemasons' Hall in Holborn, central London. A light buffet-style lunch will be provided.

The deadline for submission of abstracts is 5 February 2017. Abstracts should be 300-500 words long, and should aim to provide a concise and coherent synopsis of the proposed presentation. Talks will be around twenty minutes, with added time for discussion after each talk.

Please send abstracts, or address any related questions, to Alex Owen at [aowen.cons@gmail.com](mailto:aowen.cons@gmail.com)

Tickets will be available after the finalisation of the programme.

**Alex Owen**

Chair, Icon Furniture and Wood Group

### **Gilding & Decorative Surfaces Group**

We have had a number of changes to the committee this year, with our joint chairs, and secretary coming to the end of their terms. We thank Gerry Alabone, Campbell Norman Smith [joint chairs] and Tom Proctor [secretary] for all their time and productive contributions to our group. Most recently we lost Fiona Hay, our events manager, as she moved to Scotland and is now on maternity leave; we wish her all the best for the future.

The new committees members are Suzanne Sacorafou, chair, Claire Irvine, secretary, Lizzie Coleman, treasurer, Jon Slight, web editor, Mark Searle, events manager, and Tom Barrow; please visit our Group pages on the website for more details.

We'll be carrying on in the same vein as before, offering informative events and affordable, high quality training courses to our members. This year we have organised a practical Composition making course, and a beginners' wood carving course. In the autumn we are running a three-day gilding course which sold out in forty eight hours!

Most recently, we were associate organisers of the Auricular Style Conference held at The Wallace Collection in October, each committee member playing valuable behind-the-scenes roles.

The date has now been set for our popular Christmas party and AGM, to be held again at The October Gallery, 15 December 2016. We are very pleased to announce our speaker this year: Helen Hughes is going to present a talk on: *'The Paradise Bed and the Painted Chamber of Westminster'*. Further details to follow via Iconnect soon.



### **SAVE THE DATE**

**8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> June 2017 for BathIRON**

*A unique event not to be missed*

Aimed at heritage professionals and craft practitioners from all over the world, as well as the general public, the National Heritage Ironwork Group's first ever **Historic Ironwork Conference** will be held in the beautiful Grade I listed **Guildhall** at the heart of the World Heritage City of Bath, a stone's throw from historic **Bath Abbey** and the **Roman Baths**. Alongside this, a **Festival of Ironwork** will be staged in the elegant surroundings of **Parade Gardens** bordering the River Avon.

The principal aim of this unique celebration, which is supported by our partners the **British Artist Blacksmiths Association (BABA)** and the **Institute of Conservation (Icon)**, is to raise the profile of one of our neglected national treasures – the country's wealth of Historic Ironwork.

### **Historic Ironwork Conference**

Thursday 8th June and Friday 9th June 2017

**Guildhall, Bath**

**&**

### **Festival of Ironwork**

Thursday 8th June to Sunday 11th June 2017

**Parade Gardens, Bath**

### **Further Details**

...including names of key note speakers, master smiths as well as delegate booking information will be available in November, with the full event timetable released in February 2017.

**To find out more and to stay informed, please go to [www.nhig.org.uk/bathiron](http://www.nhig.org.uk/bathiron)**

Our next committee meeting is to be held on Tuesday 22 November from 6.30-8pm, at The Gallery Pub, 1 Lupus St, Pimlico, London. All are welcome.

**Suzanne Sacorafou**  
GDSG Chair

### **Metals Group**

The Metals Group is pleased to announce our participation in the upcoming BathIRON Historic Ironwork Conference in cooperation with the National Heritage Ironwork Group (NHIG) and the British Artist Blacksmiths Association (BABA). Taking place 8–11 June 2017 in Bath, the event will include a full conference programme alongside ironworking demonstrations and much more. For further information see: [www.nhig.org.uk/bathiron](http://www.nhig.org.uk/bathiron).

In other news, we will be holding our 2016 AGM in London in December. For full details please check the Icon website or follow us on Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn.

### **Paintings Group**

Group members are invited to attend the Paintings Group AGM on Tuesday 22 November at 6:00pm in Freemasons' Hall in London. This will be followed at 6:30pm by a talk from Professor Aviva Burnstock (Head of the Department of Conservation & Technology at the Courtauld Institute of Art) entitled 'New technical imaging of paintings at the Courtauld'. The talk will introduce some of the data from recent studies of paintings at the Courtauld using scanning x-ray fluorescence (MA-XRF) and near infrared (NIR) imaging. The images have provided novel information about the materials and techniques used for some of the Courtauld

Gallery's most important pictures. New insights and issues related to interpretation of the results of these imaging techniques will be discussed.

Those wishing to attend the talk after the AGM should purchase their ticket through the Eventbrite website ([www.eventbrite.co.uk](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk)). The event will be at our usual venue, Freemason's Hall, 60 Great Queen Street, London WC2B 5AZ (close to Covent Garden and Holborn Underground stations). Doors open at 5:30pm. Ticket prices for the talk are as follows: Icon members £10, non-members £15, students £5 (student card required to be shown on the door); wine and cheese will be available. Note that refunds for those unable to attend can only be issued if you notify us at least two days before the event.

### **Textile Group**

The Textile Committee are currently organising several visits and events – look out for details of these as they are confirmed on the Icon Textile Group web page. Further Group news is available on Iconnect and the Facebook page.

The Textile Group has organised a Wet Cleaning Study Day which will be held at St. Fagan's Museum, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff on Saturday 3 December 2016. The day will include presentations and discussions on wet cleaning, a tour of the Studio and stores. It is free to attend, though needs to be booked in advance via Eventbrite.

External textile-related events that may be of interest include the 11th North American Textile Conservation Conference, *Embellished Fabrics: Conserving Surface Manipulation & Decoration*, being held in Mexico City, Mexico, 6–11 November 2017. It will be looking at embellishments found on textiles of many types and considering conservation treatments, technical analyses and other issues relating to the field of conservation. Further details: <http://natccpconference.com/>

*Gels in Conservation* Conference at the Emmanuel Centre, London, 16–18 October 2017 is being organised by International Academic Projects in association with Tate. It will discuss the theory and practical use of gels in various disciplines of conservation. Further details are on the IAP website: (<http://academicprojects.co.uk/gels-conference>)

There is a call for papers for The Pasold Research Fund Conference, *Colour in Cloth*, being held 10–11 April 2017, at the University of Glasgow and the University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh College of Art. The closing date for submissions is 15 January 2017. Further details are on the website: <http://www.pasold.co.uk/conference-2017>.

At the time of writing, we received the sad news that the textile conservator Sally Jubb passed away suddenly in September. Our thoughts are with her family and friends.



THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION

# NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 12th Annual General Meeting of the Institute of Conservation will be held on Wednesday 7 December 2016 at 5.00 p.m. at the St. Bride Foundation, Bride Lane, Fleet Street, London, EC4Y 8EQ, to consider the following business:

**Ordinary Resolution 1:** To receive the Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2016.

**Ordinary Resolution 2:** To authorise the Trustees to appoint the auditors to serve until the end of the next Annual General Meeting and to authorise the Trustees to decide the remuneration to be paid to the auditors.

A member of the Institute of Conservation who is entitled to attend and vote at the meeting (being a paid up Accredited, Associate, Graduate or Student Member) is entitled to appoint a proxy, who need not be a member of the Institute of Conservation, to attend and vote instead of them. Proxies may be appointed via the web portal or to the registered office so long as they are received before 5.00 p.m. on Monday 5 December 2016. Those received later will not be counted.

If you are eligible to vote you should have received an email by our election support provider Mi-Voice inviting you to access the Proxy Notice enabling you to register your instructions on-line. If you do not have an email address, please phone the Mi-Voice office at 0845 241 4148.

We will advise you of any changes or additions to the Agenda as soon as they become available.

Following the close of business, there will be an update presentation about the development of Icon's Strategy 2017-2020 and an opportunity for members to contribute to the discussion on the future direction of Icon.

Members are invited to stay on after closure of business for a glass of wine.

So that we can estimate numbers for catering please let us know if you are planning to attend by sending an email to [membership@icon.org.uk](mailto:membership@icon.org.uk)

**Simon Green, Company Secretary**

## New Icon staff



Welcome to **Fiona Brandt** who joins Icon as our Administration Officer, where her job is to oversee the smooth running of the office and its many administrative processes.

Fiona brings to Icon extensive administrative experience from a variety of sectors and has had ten years' experience as a strategic planner in advertising. But she also brings an interest in conservation: she studied classics at university and discovered conservation whilst studying the art of antiquity. She also has an interest in book and paper conservation and has pursued this through a bookbinding and design course with City and Guilds.

Fiona works Wednesday to Friday and can be contacted on [fbrandt@icon.org.uk](mailto:fbrandt@icon.org.uk).  
Tel: 0203 142 6789

## Welcome to these new members

**We'd like to extend a very warm welcome to all those who joined us in August and September 2016. We hope to see you at an Icon event soon.**

**Centre De Conservation Du Quebec**  
Organisation

**Aimee Crickmore**  
Student

**Rebecca Dabnor**  
Student

**Katarina Kelsey**  
Associate

**Marika Kesler**  
Student

**Adam Lynch**  
Ankh Painter-Stainer Company  
Associate

**Sarah Owens**  
Anchorage Museum  
Associate

**Gary Phipps**  
Danbury Upholsterers  
Associate

**Mathilde Renaud**  
Student

**Helen Rowse**  
The National Trust  
Associate

**Christian Ryan**  
Associate

**Celeste Sturgeon**  
University of Lincoln  
Student

**Veronika Sulcova**  
Associate

**Elena Trimarchi**  
Student

**Natalie Turner**  
Student

**Joan Weir**  
Art Gallery of Ontario  
Associate

**Lucja Zentner**  
Associate

## In memory



We were very sad to learn that Derek Priest, a good friend of paper conservation, died on 9 August after a short illness. Derek was a chemist who made a great contribution to paper conservation at a time when heritage science was not greatly practised and spoken of even less.

Derek was born in North Devon on 6 September 1930 and remained very proud of his Devonshire roots. From Barnstaple Grammar School and National Service he went on to Bristol University finishing with a PhD in physical chemistry. Following jobs with ICI, British Cellophane and a further period at Bristol University, he then went to Reed Paper Group at Aylesford Paper Mill in Kent where he worked for twenty years.

It was during this time that I first met Derek as he carried out a lot of artificial ageing and other testing for me on our hand-made papers. I soon learnt that with Derek you did not just get a dry report with various tables of

data. He would invite me round for tea or visit me and talk through the results, which was extremely helpful. At the time many conservators had views on pH, rosin and alum which did not necessarily coincide with research evidence and Derek's guidance was very helpful both to me and to them. I found, as many others did, that he was an excellent chemist with an inexhaustible fund of patience and kindness.

In 1985 Dr Priest took up a Senior Lecturer post at the Paper Science Department of the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology where he worked until retirement in 1995. He continued undertaking testing for me but he also developed the capabilities of the Department to provide important support to a variety of customers as well as guiding students through the various degrees available. He also got to know the nearby National Paper Museum and became a

Trustee. This led to a wider interest in paper history and membership of the British Association of Paper Historians to whom he gave many interesting talks.

Dr Priest was an occasional lecturer and external examiner for the MA Paper Conservation course at Camberwell. Dr Anthony Smith, who was head of science and then course leader for the MA at Camberwell, wrote 'I'm so very sorry to hear of the death of Derek. He was a lovely man. He was one of the best external examiners we ever had for the MA course and I shall always remember his kindness and supportive attitude. I greatly respected his deep knowledge of paper science and technology and appreciated his generous way of sharing it with us and he made a significant contribution to paper conservation'.

In 1993 Derek accepted an invitation to become

Chairman of the Institute of Paper Conservation and guided IPC through the start of a period of increasing change.


Derek had a passion for steam trains and in retirement he built an N-gauge railway layout including a scale model of the house and attached shop in which he grew up. Amongst many other interests he also enjoyed designing and making paper sculptures and had a fascination for all things related to Alice in Wonderland.

Derek is survived by his wife of sixty years, Mary, and his children Anne and David, to whom we extend our condolences and our appreciation for what he did to help the conservation profession.

**Simon Barcham Green**  
BSc Paper Science

## Conservation Tools & Equipment


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Clifton Conservation Service, Clifton Park Museum, Clifton Lane, Rotherham, S65 2AA




# Conserving a pair of Blue Coat figures

Mayor of the London Borough of Southwark Kath Whittam knew just how to set about a conservation project

## INTRODUCTION

Having left Icon not long ago at the end of the Heritage Lottery Funded internship programme, I had been infected with the conservation bug. Not being a conservator I could not conserve anything myself but I was presented with a project that I was keen to involve the community with.

I became a trustee of a local charity called the Amicable Society. This is an ancient charity set up by some legacies of Sea Captains whose home port was Rotherhithe on the South Bank of the Thames, where the Mayflower sailed from in 1620, before it left from Plymouth.

This charity owns a Grade 2 listed building which was originally a Blue Coat school, first endowed by Peter Hill and Robert Bell in 1613 and this is now the 'new' building which opened as a free school in 1797. Nowadays, the building is let to a design firm and the rent that they pay is dispersed by the charity as grants to help enhance the education of local children.

The building is adorned by figures of two blue-coated children. They have been maintained over the past two hundred years, basically by being repainted every ten to twelve years, so the layers have built up and built up. On analysis it was shown that there have been a great many layers, more of which later.

The Blue Coat figures in situ before conservation work





The figures reinstalled

Heart in mouth time: removing the figures to the laboratory



## GETTING STARTED

As I had been working for Icon, which I had told the Amicable Society trustees when I was invited to join the Board, they were keen to exploit my knowledge and put me in charge of this project which had been on their agenda for a very long time.

I obtained four quotes, three of which were from Conservation Register members and one from a local man who expressed an interest in doing the work. The quotes ranged from £1500 to £20000. Hall Conservation Ltd was chosen to do the work. One of the criteria was that the figures should be taken down to do the work, as this is a very narrow street and there is no room for scaffolding to be erected apart from a temporary tower to facilitate removal.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

I was keen to involve local people in this project as they are well loved figures in the community. Some people were scared of them and swore that they swapped plinths in the middle of the night!

I decided that the most appropriate school to work with was Peter Hills School as their name was on the plaque on the building. The London Bubble Theatre Company were very keen to take on the work of engaging the school and they designed a local history project around the conservation of the figures. The children made models and wrote a story called 'The Curious Tale of Two Statues' which involved the statues travelling through time using a magical tape measure.

The local press were also very excited about the story and published articles when the statues were removed and when



The girl's face showing layers of paint peeling off

they came back. As it happened there was also a local arts festival taking place and it seemed a good opportunity to piggy back onto that to benefit from their publicity.

## STARTING WORK

I had to get listed building consent in order to remove the statues to work on them. This was relatively straight forward with the officers of Southwark Council being very helpful to me as an elected member. As a member I also applied for a

The girl's face after removal of the paint layers



The girl's face after conservation and repainting

grant from the local neighbourhood fund. £2500 was secured for the London Bubble Theatre to work with the children of Peter Hills School over half a term.

The statues were attached only by some lime putty around the base of the statues, cementing them on to the plinths, and a hook holding the figure onto a ring in the wall. The day of removal was heart-in-mouth time. To Hall Conservation it was just another professional job, but they were my babies.

Safely on the ground they were put in the van. It was at this point that we realised that they were not Coade stone as we originally thought but carved limestone. On one hand I was upset that we could not retell the story of Eleanor Coade, but on the other hand they were much more important figures as individually carved pieces.

## DISPLAYING THE STATUES

The following day the statues visited Peter Hills School. The children were very excited to see them 'up close and personal' and to see what a poor state they were in.

The day of the arts festival they were taken to the London Bubble theatre and displayed alongside research carried out by London Bubble, including a photo of Victorian children in front of the building.

Over fifty people attended in the two hours we were there, very keen to know what the plan was and shocked to see what a poor state they were in when seen up close.

## CONDITION ISSUES

Over the next few weeks they were in the Hall Conservation workshop. On examination, the statues were, for their age, found to be in a good, stable condition overall. There were some minor losses in vulnerable areas from weathering, along with a few hairline cracks on the inner parts of the boy's coat, and some areas of the stone surface were powdery and degraded.



The public come to view the statues up close



The London Bubble Theatre Company actors bring the statues to life

The many paint layers were masking details in the carving and modelling of the sculptures. In places the thick paint had lifted from the surfaces creating a loose shell, which had numerous cracks, leaving areas of missing paint which exposed the stone beneath or in some places trapped water between the underside of the paint and the stone surface so that soluble salts crystallised on the surfaces. Beneath these layers of excessive paint there were traces of original paint still firmly adhered to the stone.

## PAINT ANALYSIS

An important feature of the work was the extensive paint analysis. This showed that the sculptures had been painted at least twenty four times and that they were originally finished in a polychrome scheme without varnish.

Samples were taken from fifteen locations, examined under low magnification and then the fragments were mounted as cross-sections in cold-setting polyester resin. The sections were viewed at high magnification and the layers compared. Material from key layers was dispersed on glass slides and the pigments were identified using a polarising light microscope. A chemical test for lead was carried out on each cross-section.

Twelve of the paint schemes were lead-based and therefore applied before the 1930s/40s. With the exception of three occasions in the later 19th century they have always been polychrome.

Originally, the stone was given a white priming based on lead white. When it came to applying the first polychrome scheme, a preliminary white ground layer, based on lead white, was applied, followed by at least nine colours. No varnish was used. In later schemes, the original colours were followed, with or without the application of a fresh white ground.

Then in the second half of the 19th century there was a

change: the figures ceased to be painted in a polychrome fashion, and were now painted a uniform stone colour. Around the turn of the century however, there was a return to polychrome decoration: a brown ground was applied and then the figures were once again painted with blue clothes, pink flesh tones and black shoes.

The first half of the twentieth century saw the last lead-based paint schemes. The colours used were largely the same as the original ones, although certain differences crept in, such as the use of black for the boy's hat (originally a very dark blue) and brown instead of black was used for his shoes. 'Gold' paint was used on a couple of occasions for buttons and buckles.

With the change to zinc-based paints in the mid twentieth century, the figures were varnished for the first time, and this practice continued into the second half of the century. Since the 1950s/60s and the introduction of paints based on titanium white, the figures have been painted five times.

## TREATMENT

On visiting the statues in the workshop I saw the failed paint layers being carefully removed by literally picking them off with a scalpel. This left the earliest polychrome scheme in place where it is still firmly adhered to the stone. It also revealed the fine detail of the carving: fingernails and folds in the clothing exquisitely carved, by an unnamed sculptor, down to the bark on the tree trunk behind the boy.

The fact that the original paint layer was still adhering to the stone threw up some interesting things. The stockings were originally blue, as was the apron. We had been telling the story to the children of the yellow stockings supposedly repelling the rats. It was one of the things we had to tell them that we found out.



The local school children celebrate the return of the statues

The faces were much more expressive than under twenty four layers of paint and the blush on their cheeks could be seen. It was decided to go back to the original paint colours as detailed in the paint analysis. There were small areas of infill where water had undermined the paint layers and eaten into the limestone but on the whole they had been very well protected by the paint.

Once cleaned the powdery surfaces and losses to the stone were consolidated using 20% Primal in deionized water. Up to four coats were applied using a soft brush. Some of the losses to the stone were repaired using a polyester resin, modelled and carved into the correct shape.

Before re-painting, a barrier coat was given to the sculpture to separate the original surviving paint and the new paint system. This layer consisted of two coats of Primal in deionised water. Colour samples were prepared based on a visual comparison with the remaining paint using the pigments identified by the paint analysis. The original paint was a traditional oil based lead paint. However, due to the time constraints of the project it was not possible to use traditional linseed based paints as they would not have cured in time. Instead artists' acrylic paints were used, applied by hand using different sized soft brushes.

## BACK ON DISPLAY

Once fully conserved the statues were taken back to London Bubble Theatre for people to see what had been done. Again, over fifty people came to the 'up close and personal – the return'. They were fascinated by the paint analysis and how the colours had changed over the years, including the psychedelic purple phase in the 70s.

The following week came the time for reinstatement and refurbishment of the plaque and corbels, again taken back to



Local newspaper, the Southwark News, took an interest throughout

the original colour. Once in situ the statues were given a wax coating to prevent any water penetration.

## A GRAND FINALE

The finale was the Grand Parade. The children brought their own papier-mâché statues that they had been making and walked from the new school to the old school house. They were met by actors playing the part of the statues. The actors asked them questions about what they had learned and about the children who had been part of the original school. The local newspaper followed the statues from start to completion of the project.

## Acknowledgements

Kath Whittam is grateful to Brian Hall ACR and Jessica Crow for their help with the technical aspects of this article.

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Mayor Whittam, formerly Icon's Professional Development Support Officer

# Talking to Helen Shenton

In the first of a series of interviews with leaders in the heritage sector who started their careers in conservation and have broken through the 'glass ceiling', Alison Richmond meets Helen Shenton in her office at Trinity College Dublin, where she is the University Librarian and College Archivist

## How did you get into conservation in the first place?

I read English Literature at University College London and as I was coming up to graduate I realised that I had itchy feet and itchy fingers. So for a year I addressed the itchy feet by going to Australia, travelling back overland, but I still had itchy fingers. So I did book binding and what was called book restoration at the then London College of Printing<sup>1</sup>. Towards the end I wanted to do a fine binding in transparent vellum. None of my tutors knew how to do it and they said 'old Roger will know' – by whom they meant Roger Powell<sup>2</sup> who was then about 85. I went to see him at his studio and, to cut a long story short, I ended up going to work for him and on my first day I worked on medieval manuscripts from the Victoria and Albert Museum, London and – the arrogance of youth! – I thought 'I can do this'.

## So what happened next?

Then I moved to the Victoria and Albert Museum and a new position under Jonathan Ashley-Smith<sup>3</sup>. I joined in the mid-1980s and I am very happy to have grown up professionally at the V&A – a generous place in terms of how people shared their inter-disciplinary knowledge. I had the opportunity to work on everything from tortoiseshell to textile bindings.

Two of us looked after two million books in the National Art Library at the V&A and working on a collection of that size you ask 'why am I working on this one item when there are 10,000 in comparable condition?' And with that question you are into preservation, collections' assessment, prioritising – all of which is fascinating. I seemed to be able to get my head around big numbers and big collections, so it was a very rich time.

I also started to get involved professionally with the Institute of Paper Conservation (IPC) at the time. I had never been on a committee before, I didn't know what the chair did and things like that. I eventually became Editor of 'The Paper Conservator'<sup>4</sup>.

At the V&A, I became Conservation Liaison for the large touring exhibitions. That was living Jonathan's leadership in risk mitigation, in which I think he has made such a major contribution. Another major project was developing the Centre for Conservation & Research<sup>5</sup>. The new course with the Royal College of Art also had an influence; I always liked the idea of the South Kensington campus (of the V&A, RCA and Imperial College) and I used to love the students; they were very challenging and that was a very fruitful period.

By this time, I had become Head of Paper and Book Conservation Group, covering everything from portrait miniatures to photographs, to art on paper, mount cutters, book conservation..... then it became Organics, so textiles

and paintings.....and our work on ethics, now that I think about it, was a huge contribution which the V&A made to the field because it distilled down so much into about twenty questions. 'The Ethics Checklist' has had a big impact and, again, it worked, it made you think. It is so easy to make things fiendishly complex and long; it is very difficult to make things elegantly simple.



## You were at the V&A for about fourteen years. What made you leave?

I wasn't looking to leave but then a new position came up in 1998 at the British Library (BL). I realised recently that every position I have ever had until now was a brand-new post and I was also promoted into new posts. I was recruited to the new role of Deputy Director of Collections and Preservation at a very interesting time, just as the BL, previously scattered all over London, was moving into its new flagship headquarters at St Pancras. At the time, it was the biggest move of books in the history of the world and it took two years – paroxysms of change for the organisation!

There again, I was very fortunate, in that soon after I started Lynne Brindley, who was phenomenal, became the Chief Executive<sup>6</sup>. In fact, I have held all my previous posts – at the V&A, the British Library and then Harvard – during the tenure of the first woman at the helm. It's interesting how much you are a person of your time.

Having done the big physical move, Lynne then drove the digital agenda, where the British Library was lagging behind. I had already identified this as absolutely critical in my area and became one of the founders of the Digital Preservation Coalition. Under Lynne, for the first time, the collections came together with collection management. I was Head of Collection Care, covering preservation, conservation, storage, security and the nascent digital preservation. Along with the Head of Cataloguing and Acquisitions, we were the whole of collections management, the whole lifecycle. And I think we brought in some pretty good thinking that still resonates around lifecycle collection management.

Setting up a digital library system was all unknown territory: how do you capture, preserve, make accessible digital collections? And here I am back in a UK copyright library and

we are currently bringing in e-legal deposit. What was happening on the digital side I think perhaps gave me the credibility to champion conservation and the British Library Centre for Conservation.<sup>7</sup> I am very proud of that project. The emphasis was obviously on Conservation but it wasn't just that we needed fit-for-purpose, gorgeous, north-lit studios (but we did and they were beautiful!), it was more that we intertwined it with public access, factoring in, right from the beginning, behind-the-scenes tours, exhibitions, workshops and seminars. We also factored in education right from the beginning, setting up a Foundation course with Camberwell for the practical side.<sup>8</sup> So, I feel we did our bit. Because we started the Centre without all the funding in place it was high risk, but philanthropy was also one of the key factors. It was hugely challenging but a wonderful project.

**You've done this fantastic project at the British Library, seeing it through from beginning to end, so what then?**

I have always been strategic and I thought I would really like to do the Harvard Business School Executive Education Program 'Strategic Perspectives for Non-Profit Organisations' one summer. And eventually I managed to get a place and it was an excellent course. To cut a long story short a couple of weeks after I was back in London, I got an email about a job at Harvard. [After an intensive selection process] I moved there to become Deputy Director of Harvard University Library.

There were seventy-three libraries in the system. What was already on the cards was a Provostial task force on the future of the libraries. You may know that Harvard is probably the most decentralised university in North America and President Drew Faust's thesis was 'One Harvard'. And the prototype was 'One Harvard Library'. And so, I was then appointed the first Executive Director of this new construct called 'The Harvard Library'. On Day 1 there was one of me and then eighteen months later we flipped the switch and over four hundred people moved from various parts of the library system to what was then the consolidated services of Harvard Library. It was a very challenging project.

**So you were busy there for a number of years and then what?**

And then Trinity College Dublin where I have been for just coming up to two years. And this is different again. In some ways I have been blessed in my career of perhaps being the right person in the right place – it's the 'fit'. And you are lucky if it happens to you once or twice.

Really there are three main elements in this particular position. We've got heritage collections; a great collection with medieval manuscripts, early printed books and so on. And we also have the 'most beautiful room in Ireland', which is an historic, protected structure. So, first, there is this sizable stewardship role of collections and buildings, and not just, to my way of thinking, on behalf of Trinity but on behalf of everyone. Therefore, my background in the V&A is very useful.

The second element is that we are the UK legal deposit library for the island of Ireland and so my British Library

experience is very helpful. I am back working with my colleagues, from the BL and elsewhere, as we enact the UK e-legal deposit legislation.

And then the third element is we are obviously a university, and I have worked in a university. Whilst there are differences, there are also lots of similarities. Put those three elements together and that's what I think is needed for the role of Librarian and College Archivist at this point in Trinity College Dublin.

**Only a handful of our conservation colleagues have reached a level within organisations that you have and I wondered whether you had any observations about what enabled you to progress and were there any barriers that you had to push through in your experience?**

Well, first, there aren't that many positions in heritage organisations so [there is an issue of] actual availability given the number of talented people in the system. More generically, I am effectively the Chief Executive or the Director, which is often regarded as, probably, the most difficult step to take, because someone has got to have enough evidence that you can take the reins of the organisation, without your having taken the reins of the organisation. So it's the classic 'how do you get the experience without the experience'? It's the same thing as someone going for their first job.

And so, either stepping out of pure conservation, or going into a different role, that provides the evidence. I've got fewer resources than I had in my last job but I am the person in charge of all the Library. You've proven that you can manage four hundred or so staff and a multi-million dollar budget, but here I've also got responsibility for all the collections and the buildings. But to come back to your exam question, there's something around how to prove yourself and then acquire the evidence that you can do things. So you take on other things. You know, when I was a rookie conservator, like yourself, I went into IPC and we learnt all sorts of other skills.

**What do you think it is about you? It's a huge leap from where you started to the Chief Executive role. I am wondering whether there is anything else for the people reading the article in Icon News saying 'Oh, Helen Shenton, she is nothing like me'.**

You have to think of each step. Each step is always a challenge and you stretch yourself at each one, so you don't go straight from bench conservator to Director. And each step builds on the next and it's what you learn from each one and what's the challenge in each one. I sense I am both a thinker and a doer, and I carried on doing all sorts of different training, at the V&A and at the British Library, where the senior leadership programme was excellent. From the assessment of those of us on that programme, it came out that I had something called 'the golden mean' which meant that I was both the strategic thinker and then the practical doer and implementer. And you need both, I think.

When I left the British Library, I was very moved when Dame Lynne Brindley said 'Helen moved the organisation on'. You



The 'most beautiful room in Ireland': the Long Room in the Old Library of Trinity College Dublin

have to have the strategic thinking and steer your direction, but then you've got to do it! You want to make things better and you want to make the organisation better .... and I don't think it is any coincidence that there is this new strategy for Trinity College Dublin.<sup>9</sup>

It's not a cookie-cutter business school strategy, for example, it's got a manifesto. How that came about was that I was feeding back to colleagues about what I had heard (because we had had an extensive consultation across the organisation when I first arrived), and I was getting exercised, saying: 'we've got a moral responsibility to future generations of Ireland!'. And the feedback was: some staff really liked that. So I thought: what other responsibilities do we have? Well we've got a cultural responsibility to steward these collections, we've got a fiscal responsibility, we've got a social responsibility to have safe and delightful and welcoming places for our students and so on. That became a manifesto and ... it's really around values, and has been picked up by academic colleagues and other institutions. I love ideas. I get a real zing out of ideas. But, I'm also practical. So, how do you bring in, for example, the right to be forgotten as well as the challenges of capturing and preserving the digital memory?

**So, it sounds like you love the challenge that you are within at the moment?**

It's a good time to be here. Ireland has had such a tough time since the financial meltdown. Trinity had a very tough time. Huge, huge challenges. But we have been changing the conversation about the Library. We are just coming to the end of a year of debates and events around the 'Library of the Future, the Future of the Library'.<sup>10</sup> We've had this conversation with anyone, particularly within Trinity, but also

in Dublin and in Ireland, who wants to join in the conversation. And we've had a very rich series of events, because, you know, everyone is addressing the same issues.

**The last question I would like to ask you is what you feel about conservation now, looking at it from where you are in your life.**

Maybe two observations: the first is, if I compare myself to a rookie bench conservator, I've become much more exercised with making material available. Here at Trinity we are doing programmes all around visibility and accessibility. We've got so much material, yet we've digitised less than 1%. You can do so much more when you digitise, then you start to join up with other virtual collections and there becomes this whole, new, digital entity that scholars or school children can access and do different things with the collections.

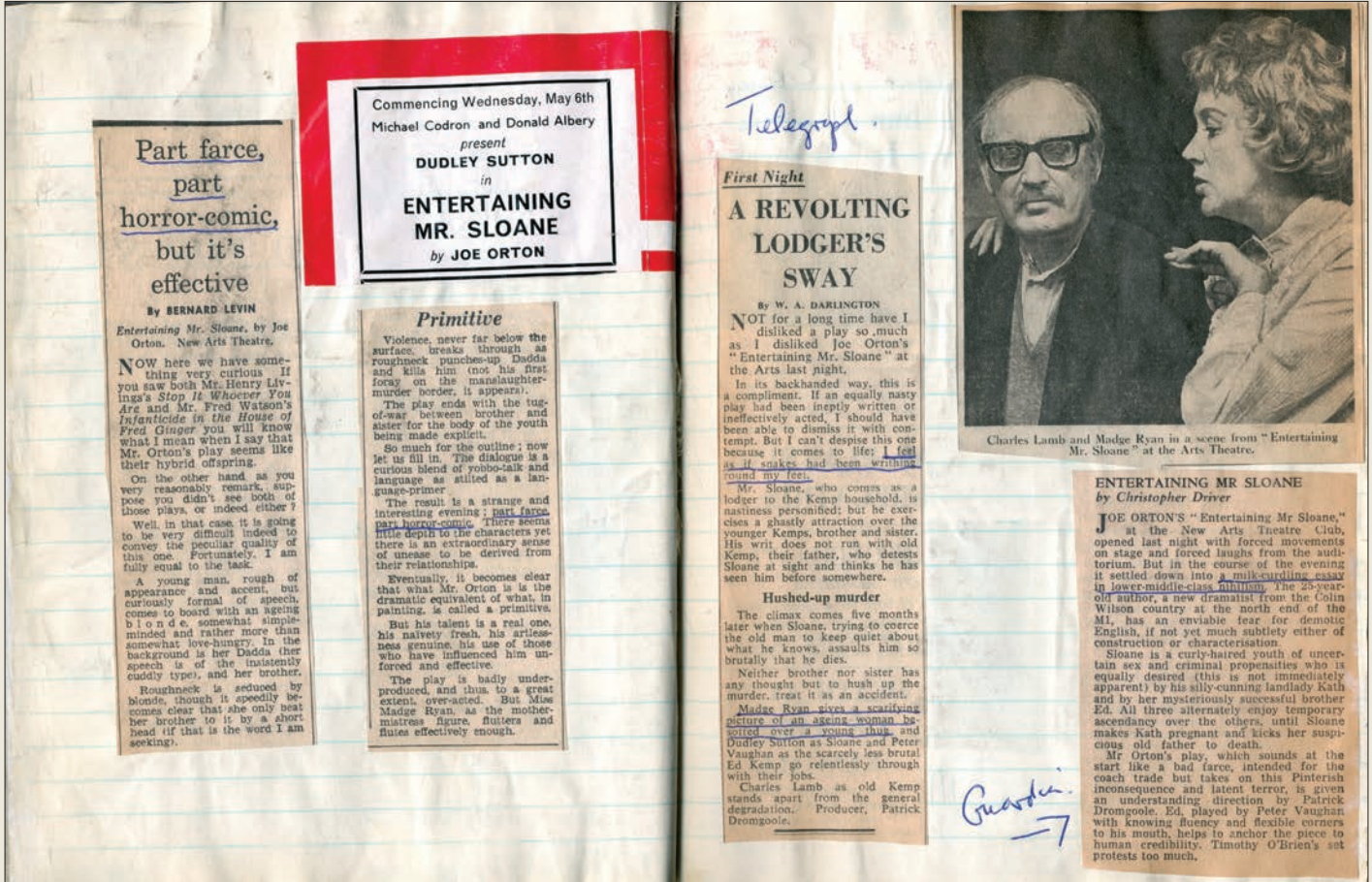
So I think my personal emphasis has become much more on accessibility. It's partly because when you and I started off the world wide web didn't exist, therefore it's partly the times we live in – that's where I have changed. And conservation, as ever, – and I remember having these debates many years ago – has to be careful it isn't always the one that says 'no'. You have to choose your moment when you say 'no'; choose your battles, which is one of my mantras in life generally.

Of course conservators are now all digital natives and embrace the opportunities much more naturally. It's in their DNA whereas we had to acquire it, so the opportunities are huge and my word of advice would be 'go deep but go broad'. Look beyond conservation – and this isn't just about conservation, if you are in any group of one particular profession – rather than navel gazing, look out and put it into the context of whatever's happening in the world. I think that's really important.

*This is an edited version of the interview.*

1. Now the London College of Communication, University of the Arts
2. Roger Powell OBE. English bookbinder who after a long career set up his own bindery in 1947 in Hampshire, where he did some of his most notable work, including the rebinding of the Book of Kells and the Book of Durrow in 1953, and the Lichfield Gospels in 1962.
3. Dr Jonathan Ashley-Smith. Scientist and Head of Conservation at the Victoria and Albert Museum 1977 – 2004
4. The journal of The Institute of Paper Conservation
5. A wing of the V&A developed to house purpose-built conservation studios, a scientific department, a number of collections and the Registrar's department
6. Dame Lynne Brindley DBE served as the first female Chief Executive of the British Library 2000 – 2012
7. Construction of the Centre for Conservation was completed in December 2006 on time and to budget. Following a short period for moving in equipment and staff, the Centre became fully operational in March 2007.
8. The first UK Foundation Degree in Book Conservation. The course was run by Camberwell College of Arts, University of the Arts, in partnership with book conservation departments at the BL and other institutions
9. <http://www.tcd.ie/Library/assets/pdf/strategy/library-strategy-2015-2020.pdf>
10. <http://www.tcd.ie/library/news/future-library/the-library-of-the-future-the-future-of-the-library-calendar-of-events-2015-16/>





©The Orton Estate

The Orton scrapbook, displayed in surrogate form in the exhibition and open on the page shown here. Joe Orton Archive at the University of Leicester, MS237/1/28

An anonymous 19thC scrapbook full of colourful prints and drawings, University of Leicester, SCD 01040



Among the scrapbooks showcased in the exhibition is one created by Ernest Frizelle, author of the *Life and Times of the Leicester Royal Infirmary; the makings of a teaching hospital 1766–1980*. Among the densest scrapbooks in the collection, Frizelle used the scrapbooking technique as a means of capturing and compiling a massive amount of information, linking it to his reference sources and cross-referencing to his draft book – rather like a modern-day database.

In stark contrast, another item from the collection is an enigmatic 19th century scrapbook, SCD 01040. Giving away no personal information and not focusing on any particular theme, the compiler seems to have been indiscriminate, gathering together any form of pictorial printed material, ranging from landscapes both in England and overseas, printed illustrations for popular books such as Little Red Riding Hood and sentimental and lavishly illustrated prints, drawings and watercolours.

The background of the item is unknown; perhaps it was compiled by someone dazzled by the improved availability of colourful printed material as the costs of printing came down, and so proud and excited to be able to arrange the material in their very own book.

Also included in the exhibition is a scrapbook compiled by local boy Joe Orton, the colourful and controversial 1960s' playwright. As Caroline Sampson explained, 'this is an item that colleagues here find very useful to exhibit and use all the time and I have been concerned about its over-exposure to light and also the wear and tear on it. By their very nature, scrapbooks tend not to react too well to overuse because of the strain on spines, glued in enclosures, etc. In this instance, I created a replica so that visitors to the exhibition can get a feel for the content but without us putting the original through the stress of yet another exhibition'.

Based in a library that is in constant use day and night, the exhibition space was not designed solely with exhibitions in mind and its other uses may not necessarily be compatible with good standards of collection care. But even without a professional conservator on the team, steps can be taken to bring collections care concepts into a large organisation which does not have a background in such issues. Concerned about the amount of light to which items are exposed when they are on exhibition for up to four months at a time, Caroline has introduced a new approach for this exhibition in the shape of case covers which are put over the showcases overnight, thereby more than halving the light exposure for these precious survivals from the past.

The exhibition runs daily until 3 February 2017, 9.30am-4.30pm Monday to Saturday and 12.30am to 5.30pm on Sundays, in the basement of the David Wilson Library on the main University of Leicester campus.

## CONSERVATION SHORT COURSES

**Conservation of Transport and Industrial Collections** 10% discount to Icon members  
20-23 February 2017

**Conservation of Plastics** 10% discount to Icon members  
27 February – 2 March 2017

**Filling and Retouching of Three-dimensional Objects**  
10% discount to Icon members  
6-9 March 2017



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## CONFERENCES

### DISASTER!: management, recovery, reconstruction, opportunities

Icon Stained Glass Group  
Canterbury 1–3 September 2016

This year's Stained Glass Group AGM was kindly hosted by the stained glass team at Canterbury Cathedral. With its newly restored south window skilfully reconstructed after reaching a point of imminent disaster, Canterbury Cathedral was the perfect location to focus on this year's topic: 'Disaster! Management, Recovery, Reconstruction, Opportunities'. The venue, Cathedral Lodge, was kindly provided at no extra cost by the Dean and Chapter and was the perfect space for a series of thought-provoking talks and fruitful discussions on the subject, as well as the AGM itself.

The first talk, 'The Great South Window of Canterbury Cathedral: Opportunities for Stone and Glass', was given by **Heather Newton** (Head of Stone Masonry and Conservation at Canterbury) and **Léonie Seliger** (Head of the Stained Glass Studio). They provided a fascinating insight into how disaster was averted after a stone fell from the fifteenth-century window, alerting staff to the worrying instability of the stonework and the resulting risk to both the precious twelfth- and thirteenth-century glass it housed and the people using the busy access point beneath it.

The talk explained in detail the process of managing this potential disaster and how the restoration led instead to a series of positive opportunities. The cathedral now has a secure and beautiful structure to house its precious glass for generations to come and a stronger, more experienced conservation team. The project also raised a huge level of awareness of stained glass and stone conservation through research and various exhibitions; some panels even managed to tour in America during the rebuilding of the stonework!

The topic of opportunity arising from disaster was one that echoed throughout the conference. **Gerard Burger** from Glashütte Lamberts in Germany described the production challenges of creating a new 'disaster glass'; sheets with the texture and appearance of medieval glass, requested for a new project underway at Canterbury. **Merlyn Griffiths** from the York Glaziers' Trust gave a talk on 'Further Research into the Phenomenon Often Referred to as "Crizzling"' (<http://vidimus.org/issues/issue-98/feature/>). This informative account of the disastrous phenomenon left us musing on the opportunities for future research into managing the problem.

On the Friday, talks continued with **Alexandra Jung's** 'Responding to Disastrous Neglect: The Revival of a Church and the



Canterbury Cathedral

Stained Glass Group AGM at Canterbury Cathedral

Impact of Its Stained Glass', the case of an abandoned church in Gutz, Landsberg, and the conservation of its remaining stained glass. Deciding to work with the artist Markus Lupertz raised huge public and media awareness and changed the fate of the building. Unconventionally, a hybrid of the old glass and a new contemporary style was created, a twenty-first-century reflection of the turbulent history of the church.

**Chris Chesney's** amusing yet informative talk 'Define Disaster' was based both on his experiences dealing with the effects of fire damage and how his studio worked to restore the 'original details' which had vanished from some early heraldry panels. With little original paint work and only silver stain remaining, a reversible method was used to recreate detail. This provoked further thought on the ethical concerns of dealing with 'disasters' today, whether they occur suddenly or over a long period of time. Finally, **Léonie Seliger** introduced us to the fire-damaged east window in the shrine of St Jude in Faversham, where a window was restored after the disaster by the cathedral studio. They attempted to recreate it faithfully to the original design despite a lack of good photographic records or original

drawings. Léonie added the image of a phoenix into the work, a reminder that something beautiful can spring from the ashes of a disaster.

The talks were enriched by a programme of site visits that encompassed different aspects of Canterbury's stained glass history, modern to ancient. Split into groups led by members of the studio team, we were given thoughtful insights and information whilst being led around the newly revealed south window (with one panel installed for our pleasure and edification), the stained glass studio and its current projects, old drawings of windows in the archives, and finally a tour around the cathedral glass itself. These short tours were the perfect culmination to two days of talks, the whole experience proving very conducive to further discussions.

The icing on the cake came on Saturday, with a coach trip taking us on a whirlwind tour of some of Kent's hidden treasures: firstly, Aylesford Priory and its iridescent dalle de verre glass; then St Lawrence's Church, Mereworth, with its stunning heraldry panels; All Saints, Tudely, with its beautiful complete Marc Chagall glazing scheme; and finally, and quite aptly, the shrine of St Jude in Faversham. Here we saw

first-hand the beautifully restored fire-damaged east window described by Léonie the day before. The fire had allowed the monks at Faversham to rejuvenate the shrine, turning disaster into something positive. Seeing the phoenix added by Léonie, rising up at the bottom right-hand side of the window, was a perfect way to end the conference. It left us to ponder the thought that from disaster, through careful management in recovery and reconstruction, a range of positive opportunities can arise from the ashes.

A splendid three days, enjoyed by all. A debt of gratitude is owed to Canterbury for such a well-organised event!

**Sarah Mctiernan**, MA student in Stained Glass Conservation and Heritage Management

### FAIL TO PLAN AND PLAN TO FAIL

#### Icon Care of Collections Group London 3 October

This one day conference and AGM was held at the British Library and was sponsored by Harwell Document Restoration Services. Over one hundred people attended and there was a good mix of presentations, tours of the British Library basement, demonstrations of collection emergency equipment and opportunities for professional networking. Six presentations from a range of speakers made for a varied programme. A strong theme running through the day was the benefit of collaborative working for effective emergency planning and disaster recovery.

In the first paper, **Emma Dadson** (Harwell Document Restoration Services) discussed commonly encountered gaps in emergency plans. Emma drew on her own experiences as a project manager for many recovery operations to illustrate how we can improve our emergency plans. She highlighted the importance of internal collaborative working to ensure that our plans are as holistic as possible, remembering building fabric as well as collections and joining up with business continuity planning. Collaborative working with key external organisations such as equipment suppliers was also discussed to make sure that practical requirements in the event of an incident, such as provision of additional space and materials, are met.

**Sarah Hamlyn** (British Library) delivered a presentation entitled 'Smarter disaster preparedness' in which she explained the replacement of hard copy salvage organisers with smart phones at the British Library. Sarah discussed the pros and cons of the hard copy salvage organisers and the decisions that lead her and her colleague Kim Mulder (British Library) to develop this idea. Sarah pointed out some of the advantages of using a smart phone to host emergency planning and salvage



At the Care of Collections Group conference

information, such as their portability and ever increasing functionality.

The British Library's emergency plan has been translated onto a number of smart phones and is presented in a clear and easy to navigate fashion. Using a traffic light colour coding system, information is themed and sorted into categories such as salvage team procedures and object treatment guidance. The phone also has a 'get me to the British Library' folder which contains useful information in the event of an incident such as maps and transport information. The launch of the phones at the British Library in December 2015 was accompanied by a programme of staff training and Sarah reflected on the positive feedback so far received.

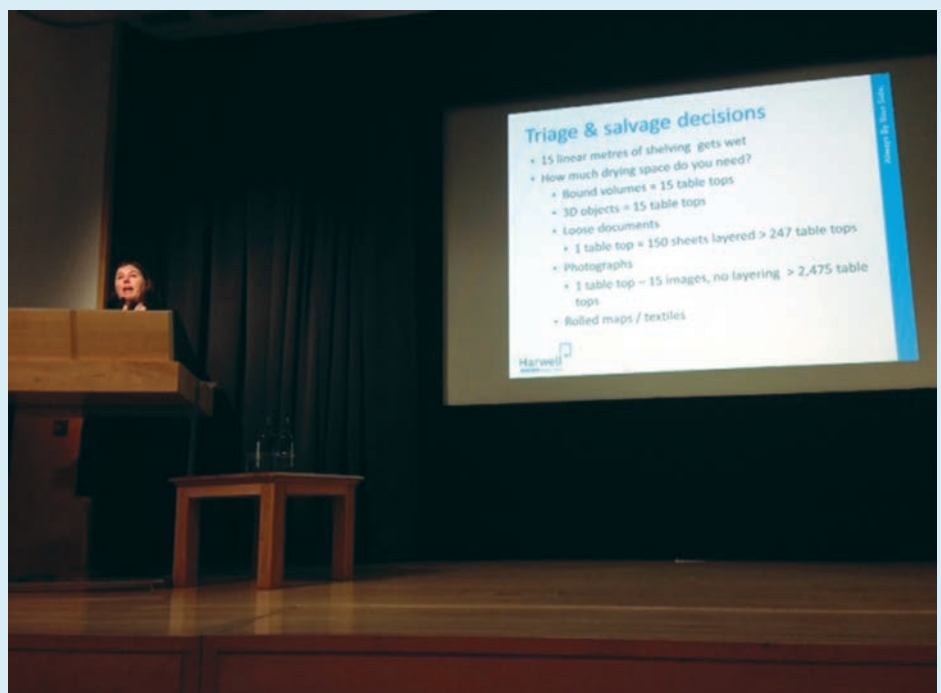
**Fiona Macalister** (Independent Conservator), emphasised how collaborative

working can be key to effective response and recovery following a major incident by describing a number of Emergency Networks in the UK and beyond. Fiona drew our attention to national, regional and city wide networks by describing the work of various groups such as the East Midlands Museums Service Regional Emergency Disaster Squad, the Rapid Response Network (RNN) Yorkshire and Humberside, and the London Heritage Salvage Group.

In the context of collaboration for emergency planning and salvage recovery, Fiona drew the presentation to a close by asking us to consider the appetite within the profession for structured collaboration, the role of professional bodies and organisations, and opportunities for integration with other professions.

In the next presentation, **Sharon Robinson**

**Daniel Heath Cull** described a day of 'disaster' exercises



(Museum of London) discussed Emergency Planning for London. The Museum of London is one of Arts Council England's lead partner museums and therefore has a remit to provide support for emergency planning across London's Regional Museums. Sharon explained that in 2009 the Museum of London commissioned a needs analysis of the collections emergency provision across the London region. The objective of the study was to inform how the Regional Collection Care Development team could better support museums with emergency planning and disaster recovery.

The work highlighted a need for more training and better communication. London-wide network groups were therefore established, allowing staff from different museums to share skills, training opportunities and salvage equipment. Further work to review emergency planning training needs and formats is planned so that the development team can continue to provide current support in this area.

The Museum of London's Collections Emergency Planning E-Learning tool and Pocket Salvage Guide were also demonstrated. Both are freely available online and help to communicate the key principles of collections emergency planning and disaster recovery.

**Natalie Mitchell** and **Gretel Evans** (AOC Archaeology) described the role of AOC Archaeology in the disaster recovery process at Glasgow School of Art (Mackintosh Building) and Clendon House. In the context of the Glasgow School of Art fire, Natalie explained the advantages of excavating the disaster site using archaeological methods. Particularly, the precise recording of the original locations from which salvaged material was removed, and how this helped to reunite fragmented objects and separated collections later down the line.

Natalie also described the importance of fastidious assessment of all recovered material however damaged it appeared, illustrating this point with an example of three enamelled brooches in good condition found wrapped in burnt acid free tissue.

A range of Health and Safety considerations when working on a disaster site for an extended period of time were also discussed. Finally, the importance of collaborative working and building a good working relationship with construction companies also involved in the recovery process was again highlighted.

The final presentation was delivered by **Daniel Heath Cull** (Historic Royal Palaces) who described Exercise Tower Guardian, a full day of emergency planning and disaster recovery table-top and live exercises. The day provided a rare opportunity to bring together a number of organisations that would be involved in the event of an incident

at the Tower of London. The exercise included HRP staff, the London Fire Brigade, London Ambulance Service, the Metropolitan Police Service and even real television news teams! HRP's newly developed Major Incident Plan was put to the test under very realistic circumstances, and provided an opportunity to review how well it worked alongside the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP).

The exercise proved extremely valuable and served as a reminder of the benefits of organising and carrying out large scale practical salvage exercises.

**Abby Moore** Collection Care Conservator Museum of London

## WORKSHOPS

### BOOK CONSERVATION SKILLS FOR PAPER CONSERVATORS

**Icon Scotland Group**  
Edinburgh 20–21 September 2016

I was delighted to attend this two-day workshop for paper conservators, run by an experienced freelance book conservator, **Caroline Scharfenberg** ACR. The workshop was organised by **Erica Kotze** on behalf of the Icon Scotland Group and kindly hosted by Isobel Griffin and the staff at the National Library of Scotland.

The original inspiration for this workshop was a similar two-day course, conceived and run by Sonja Schwoll at the London Metropolitan Archives earlier this year. In the same way as

Sonja's, this course covered basic book conservation theory on the first day, followed by practical work on the second.

The theme of this workshop was particularly useful as paper conservators are sometimes required to work with bound material even if they do not have professional training in this specialism. Although all the course participants had a background in paper conservation, their amount of experience with books varied. Some participants had bookbinding experience, others had experience carrying out collection surveys and condition assessments, and a few had very minimal experience.

The first day began with an introduction to the history of bookbinding and key terminology for describing the structure of a book. The theory was covered fairly rapidly to ensure that we had plenty of time working with a number of eighteenth to twentieth century books, generously supplied by the National Library of Scotland. The books required relatively minimal interventive treatments in preparation for digitisation.

Our first task was to identify and describe key features of our chosen book(s), including: cover material, tooling, board material and attachment, end papers, binding method (tight back or hollow back), text-block spine shape and sewing structure. It was a valuable experience and helped us to become familiar with key terminology.

The remainder of the day was focused on assessing damage, the development of treatment proposals and ethical considerations. Presentations were

Caroline Scharfenberg explaining how to identify the sewing structure of a book.





Caroline Scharfenberg describing how to assess the condition of a book.

interspersed with time writing our own reports for our chosen books. The books had a wide range of damages, including detached boards and folios, damaged corners and broken spine covers.

The sewing of the text block was always intact, so the books were perfect for practising the minimal intervention techniques that would be taught on the second day. At points during the first day it felt a little rushed, but this also meant that we covered a lot of ground in a short space of time. By the end of the day, we had all had a chance to write condition reports and treatment proposals for at least two books.

The second day was dedicated solely to practical work. Caroline briefly introduced

Practical demonstration showing how to consolidate the board corners of a book using wheat starch paste.



Using strips of Japanese tissue and wheat starch paste to reattach loose end papers and boards.

the tools and materials we would be using and then moved straight on to demonstrating the lifting and consolidation of cover materials, the consolidation of board corners and edges, and board reattachment. Caroline gave very clear demonstrations and we had plenty of time to practise the techniques.

As all of the books had slightly different problems, Caroline worked with us individually to help us adapt the demonstrated techniques when needed. In the afternoon, further demonstrations were given, including: reattachment of folios/sections, lining the textblock spine, and spine cover re-attachment. Throughout the course, Caroline emphasised the use of

minimal intervention and at what point a professional accredited book conservator should be called upon.

In summary, it was an enjoyable and useful workshop. It was a pleasure to learn from such an experienced conservator as Caroline, who made the course rigorous yet accessible to beginners. My only wish was that we had time to practise some of the other skills described by Caroline in her presentations on the first day, but it was only a two-day course and we covered a great deal in the time we had.

**Alice Woodward**

Student, MA Conservation of Fine Art, Northumbria University

Caroline Scharfenberg demonstrating how to repair a broken hollow back spine.





Participants on the *Water and Paper* course outside the studio doors of the Scottish Conservation Studio

**WATER AND PAPER: CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES**

**Icon Scotland Group & The Scottish Conservation Studio**

Queensferry Edinburgh 6–7 September 2016

It is always a great pleasure to visit The Scottish Conservation Studio at Hopetoun House, and so I was particularly happy to be one of the sixteen conservators to attend the recent workshop ‘Water and Paper: Conservation Principles’, given by **Hildegard Homburger**, from Berlin, and **Doris Müller-Hess**, from Vienna.

The two days were immaculately organised by **Helen Creasy** ACR and her colleagues at the Studio – from a steady supply of sustaining coffee and cake to ensuring mid-day sunshine that allowed the participants to enjoy lunch in the beautiful grounds at Hopetoun. As the course was oversubscribed Helen persuaded the tutors to stay in Edinburgh a little longer, and they

gave the course again for sixteen more participants, this time hosted by the National Library of Scotland.

The workshop was designed to cover the principles outlined in the book ‘*Paper and Water: A Guide for Conservators*’ by Gerhard Banik and Irene Brückle. Having found this a slightly challenging read, it was reassuring to learn from colleagues on the course that I was not alone in making only modest inroads into this hugely comprehensive volume.

It was a huge subject to cover in two days, and a testament to the care and attention Hildegard and Doris had put into the planning and design of the workshop that we weren’t all overwhelmed. Lectures for each topic were generally followed by illustrative practical demonstrations; fascinating case studies were also described that showed how an understanding of these principles can successfully inform conservation treatments.

Each aspect of the paper manufacturing process was covered in detail to explain the potential effect of the many variables (including fibre choice, pulping, beating, sheet formation, sizing and drying) on the subsequent behaviour of a sheet when moisture is re-introduced during a conservation treatment.

There was a particularly interesting discussion of dried-in strain - a phenomenon primarily associated with sheets made on a long-screen machine. It describes the difference in dimension in the machine direction of a paper (and also in a different amount in cross direction) that has not been allowed to fully shrink to its natural dry length, but has further potential shrinkage ‘trapped’ by restraint during the drying process.

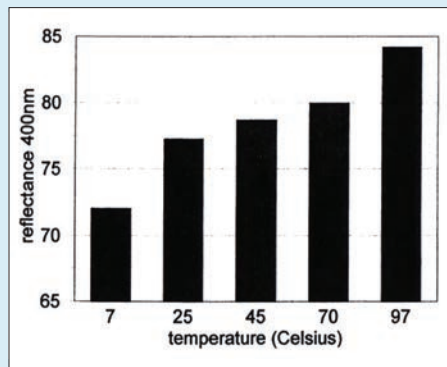
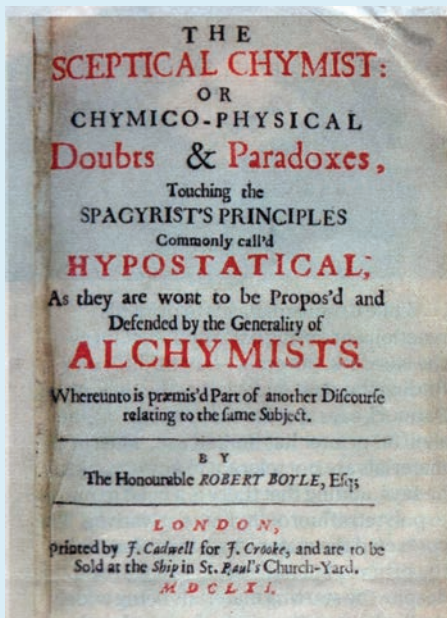
Hildegard explained how this characteristic was exploited to flatten a group of tightly rolled tracing papers with various pressure sensitive tapes in place. As tracing paper is so dense it is possible to carry out a one sided humidification. Rather counter-intuitively, moisture was briefly introduced to the side of the paper sheet on the outside of the roll. With subsequent unconstrained drying, this ‘side’ of the tracing paper shrank back a fraction more than its previous size towards its stress-free dry length, thus flattening the sheet. The tapes were undisturbed as only minimal moisture is required.

We were shown a number of paper samples that had been washed and left to dry unconstrained. The variety and degree of lateral dimensional change was a reminder that it can often be difficult to predict how a certain paper is going to behave and how the three-dimensional characteristics of the sheet (surface texture, planarity, thickness etc.) may be altered; this can be further complicated by any history of wet treatments.

The workshop was a great opportunity for participants to discuss a number of conservation washing and drying methods that were demonstrated, including slant

Water and Paper course participants at the National Library of Scotland





Washing artificially discoloured paper at various temperatures, initial reflectance 46%, washing time 40 minutes

Effect of pre-humidification on wetting of Arches paper	
• Humidification time	Imbibed water
• 1 hour	68.2%
• 4 hours	66.8%
• 24 hours	61.9%
• 120 hours	57.9%

washing, the use of gels and the local removal of tide-lines. It is always interesting to hear of conservators' previous experience of these techniques and how they might be adapted to overcome particular problems. I would like to thank Hildegard, Doris and Helen for providing such an informative, stimulating and jolly two days.

**Harry Metcalf** ACR Paper Conservator  
Bristol Museum & Art Gallery

## TALK

### THE SCEPTICAL CHYMIIST AND PAPER CONSERVATION

Independent Paper Conservators' Group  
London 11 October 2016

This talk 'will focus on some paper conservation practices that have struck me as odd and which I still struggle to accept after forty one years observing conservators at work', stated **Vincent Daniels**, in the announcement of the forthcoming event.

Vincent Daniels started his academic career researching the bleaching of thermally degraded PVC in solution. He joined the British Museum as a scientist in 1974 to work with A.D. Baynes-Cope on the conservation science of paper and other library materials. In 2003 he became a Research Fellow at The Royal College of Art and continued his research into dyes and colorants. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry and of the International Institute of Conservation. He has been awarded the Plowden Medal for conservation and is a visiting professor at the University of the Arts.

As promised, after a brief explanation of the title *The Sceptical Chymist* (borrowed from the renowned man of science Robert Boyle's title to his book of 1661), Daniels proceeded with various examples questioning conservators' choices of materials and procedures – from the use of starch pastes, which are of 'variable product/rapid biodeterioration/crystallises on storage/not

reversible/and [serve as] insect food', to ways of washing: should we wash our artworks on paper for six days at 20°Celsius, or should it be two hours at 70°Celsius, to achieve similar results... and claims that humidification would improve the water intake when washing. After all, testing uptake of water after humidification showed that water intake reduces the longer we humidify, while paper samples that were dehumidified, not only wetted quicker but also cleaned better.

Scientific research into conservation, no doubt, has modified our understanding of the degradation and damages we observe and improved our practices. In her forward to Gerhard Banik and Irene Brückle's seminal text on *Paper and Water: A Guide for Conservators*, published in English in 2011, Kate Collieran, who started off the lively debate following Daniels' presentation, wrote: 'Washing in paper conservation has a long, if not always illustrious, history... In the last twenty years or so two developments merged to inform and change our understanding of this complex process', that is progress in scientific research into washing paper and philosophical/ethical approaches to conservation treatment, yet 'the application of scientific investigation to practice is one of the most difficult areas of conservation and its teaching, particularly when unquestioned practice has been embedded over a long period of time'. Furthermore, as in any branch of natural sciences the translation of the controlled and reproducible results into real world, unique cases is a complex matter requiring the understanding of the complexity of the object as a whole and, all the more so, the subjective/intuitive insight that comes with daily practice and experience.

To conclude my report, in which I hope I have managed to not only describe Vincent Daniels engaging talk, but also convey the spirit of the event, I would like to borrow a quote used to illuminate the discrepancies between the constraints of the scientific experiment and the reality of the practising

conservator, from Gerhard Banik and Irene Brückle: 'An organic chemist's perspective – theoretical and experimental – focuses primarily on molecules. By contrast, the biologist looks at the entire system: a cell; a leaf; a tree' (C. Djerassi, *Cantor's Dilemma*, London: Penguin Books, 1991, p.7), possibly replacing the biologist with the conservator and the cell/leaf/and tree, with paper/media/and history of the object.

**Michal Sofer**,  
Independent Paper Conservator

The Independent Paper Conservators' Group, IPCG, was set up fifteen years ago to create better contact between conservators who work independently or alone. IPCG is independent of Icon or any other professional organisation and there are no charges for being a member.

Meetings and workshops are mostly mid week evenings in London but we have also had day trips to institutions, studios and manufacturers.

Our next evening lecture is on Monday 20 March 2017 and the speaker is Richard Hawkes – title to be announced. Please note that our evening lectures will now be on Mondays. Further details and booking instructions will be announced later.

Contact Laila Hackforth-Jones if you wish to have more information about the group at [laila.hj@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:laila.hj@blueyonder.co.uk)

## THE SCIENCE MUSEUM 'BUBBLE CRATE' SYSTEM

**Louisa Burden ACR and Dennis Kelles Krause describe the crating system created for ship models moving from gallery to store at the Science Museum**

The Science Museum (SM) has completed a large number of object decants from galleries in recent years. The Shipping Gallery was the first of these in 2012. This decant provided a number of challenges, one of which was the significant difference in relative humidity (RH) between the old gallery and the storage locations for the objects coming off gallery. The 'Bubble Crates' we now use were developed as one of the strategies for mitigating the difference in RH.

### THE ISSUE

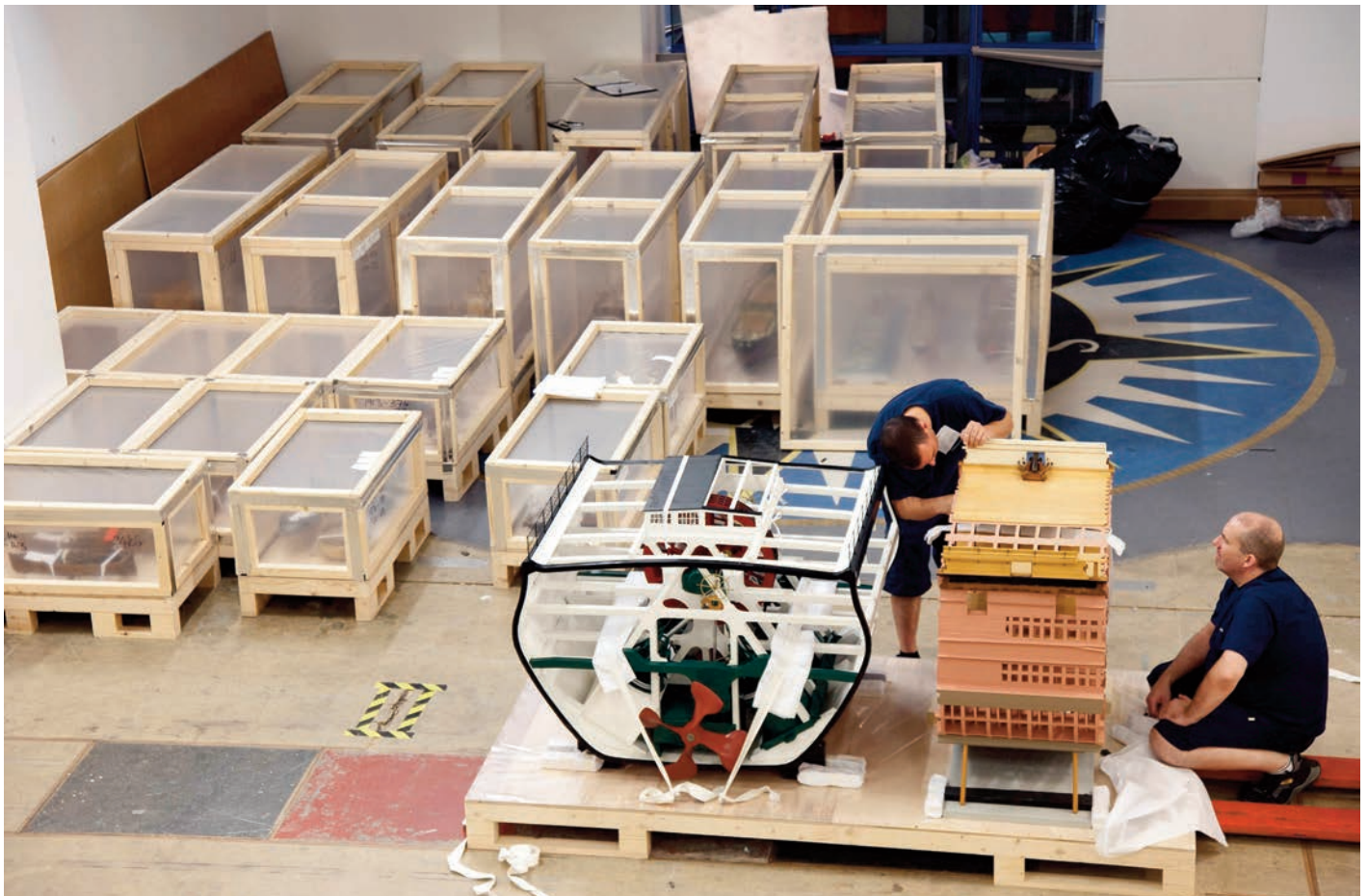
The Shipping gallery was dry, averaging 30% RH across the year and on occasion it could drop to 12% RH inside the bespoke 1960s' built-in cases. The proposed storage locations for the models ranged from 50 to 65% RH. The gallery contained four hundred and twenty five fragile wooden models that needed protection from such an immediate sharp increase in RH that at worst could be from 12% to 65% if no other

mitigation was put in place to improve the difference.

A number of strategies were put in place to mitigate the RH issues from 2011. These included discussions and agreement to reduce the Gallery temperature with Estates and the teams whose offices ran off the same heating system as the gallery. This helped to reduce the heating and thus raise the RH, a double win as fuel costs reduced and RH increased. This provided significant improvement in the range of RH in the gallery, as you would expect. We negotiated the timing of the moves so that they would be at a time of year when the RHs at the sites were closest. Also a Hemplime building<sup>1</sup> at the Wroughton storage site would provide collections storage with a buffered environment for the very large ship models, as there was no space for these within the existing stores.

These strategies all contributed to the care of the objects, however there was still a need to find a solution to reducing the risk of damage through potentially sudden, significant RH change when moving objects out of buildings to vehicles, for example. Also, the team wanted to be able to easily see if damage had occurred as part of the move and initial acclimatisation without opening up crates. The cost of this solution was also an important factor.

Massed crates ready for transport; Constantine Ltd team preparing the next crate with objects in place





Smaller models and crates in position at the Science Museum's London storage site

## CRATE TESTING

A discussion with colleagues at the National Maritime Museum (NMM) confirmed that they had commissioned bespoke packing crates made for their ship model moves. These were wood walled except for one side which was covered in polythene. As a result of this and some internal discussions, the SM conservators ordered two packing cases from Constantine Limited. One designed like the NMM model and another designed with a wooden frame and polythene envelope, or 'bubble', covering all surfaces inside the wooden frame.

The two crates were then placed in one of the preferred areas for ship model storage with environmental monitors inside for a month. The results of this monitoring proved that both crate types buffered the RH and confirmed, as expected, that neither were going to buffer temperature changes. The buffering provided was a minimum of 2% to 6% difference between inside the crate and outside. On one occasion during the monitoring period the RH dropped externally very quickly whilst the internal crate environment did not, which suggests that the crate construction mitigated against this sharp drop. The wooden crate was a little more effective in delaying RH changes, by about a week in the test, before the RH started to move to follow the external environment.

## THE SPECIFICATION

As we were also trying to keep costs as low as possible we decided to use the Bubble Crate option as the results were so close between the two crates. The Bubble Crate was considerably cheaper and enabled easy view of the contents of the crate.

The ship models came in a very wide range of sizes. It would have been very much more expensive to make a bespoke case for each one. So a limited range of crate sizes were requested within the packing and transport tender to reduce costs. There were some bespoke bubble crates commissioned for the very large models but these were kept to a minimum number.

The specification is:

- Pallet or base with a Polythene lined frame, to be able to be moved by pallet truck. Frame to be wooden and fixed securely to the pallet/base with screws to prevent collapse of the frame.



The prototype bubble crate, with the five-sided wooden crate behind it

- Polythene – 250 micron Polythene sheeting, to line base, all sides and top. 45 x 45 mm smooth timber for all framing. 4 x 12 mm ply triangles for strengthening corners (optional dependent on crate size).
- Aluminium tape for sealing all edges, once object in place.
- The object is secured via fittings to the base, so top heavy objects cannot be fitted into this type of crate. For the ship models packing fittings included chocks and strapping with cotton tape.

Science Museum team starting to prepare a large model junk for movement.





A ship installed in its crate

## POST MOVE OBSERVATION

The move was completed in 2012. Since then the ship models have been left in the Bubble Crates firstly to acclimatise and secondly as dust protection.

There were two items that shifted within the crates when transported. These were seen easily due to the all round polythene walls and actions taken to remedy the issue. None of the ship models have had any visible damage occur in the period between moving from gallery to store.

Model of the 'Sovereign of the Seas', Scale 1:96; 1943-0211



## CONCLUSION

The Bubble Crates proved to be very successful in protecting the objects whilst they are acclimatising to the change in RH at the new storage locations. Wooden crates do provide a slightly delayed acclimatisation but without additional insulation added to this type of crate this is only by a few days.

As a result of the success of the Bubble Crate the specification continues to be used during decants when appropriate for the object, new storage location and distance to be travelled. Another advantage of the polythene walls is that once the object is acclimatised they can be easily removed if the object is required for research.

### Authors & contributors

**Louisa Burden** ACR, Head of Conservation & Collections Care, Science Museum Group

**Dennis Kelles Krause**, (former) Conservator, SMG Wroughton

### References

1. Leskard, M., *A sustainable storage solution for the Science Museum Group*, Published in Autumn 2015, Issue 04, Article DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15180/150405>, Science Museum e-Journal [accessed 23 May 2016]

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# the emerging conservator

## INTERN INTRODUCTIONS

**Recent Centre for Textile Conservation (CTC) graduate, Hannah Sutherland, introduces us to her new role as Tapestry Conservation Intern at Historic Royal Palaces**

## INTRODUCTION

This article marks the start of my internship - the first of three one-year funded tapestry conservation internships at Historic Royal Palaces (HRP). Generously supported by The Clothworkers' Foundation and HRP, last month I embarked on my twelve months with the tapestry conservation team, based at Hampton Court Palace in London. Although it may be more usual to look back and reflect on an internship, this piece is intended to look ahead and highlight just some of the experiences I hope to gain over the coming year.

## TAPESTRY AND ME

Prior to my textile conservation training I completed an undergraduate degree in the construction of costume for film and television. Research trips to museums soon moved my interest towards conservation: the maker in me wanting to know how the materials and construction of an object impacted its deterioration. I therefore never turn down the chance to learn a new textile skill and soon found myself in a tapestry weaving workshop.

I was later introduced to tapestry conservation during the CTC programme and followed this up with voluntary work at The Burrell Collection in Glasgow. I read further into the area during my dissertation research. This research, looking at the spacing of laid-thread couching, utilized Digital Image Correlation (DIC), a technique previously used to monitor strain in hanging historic tapestries. When the opportunity arose to work on tapestries at HRP, it was one that I couldn't let slip by.

Surface cleaning an early 16th-century tapestry, prior to installation in The Great Hall at Hampton Court Palace



Setting up my tapestry sampler. All the right support stitching, just on a small scale

## AIMS AND IDEAS

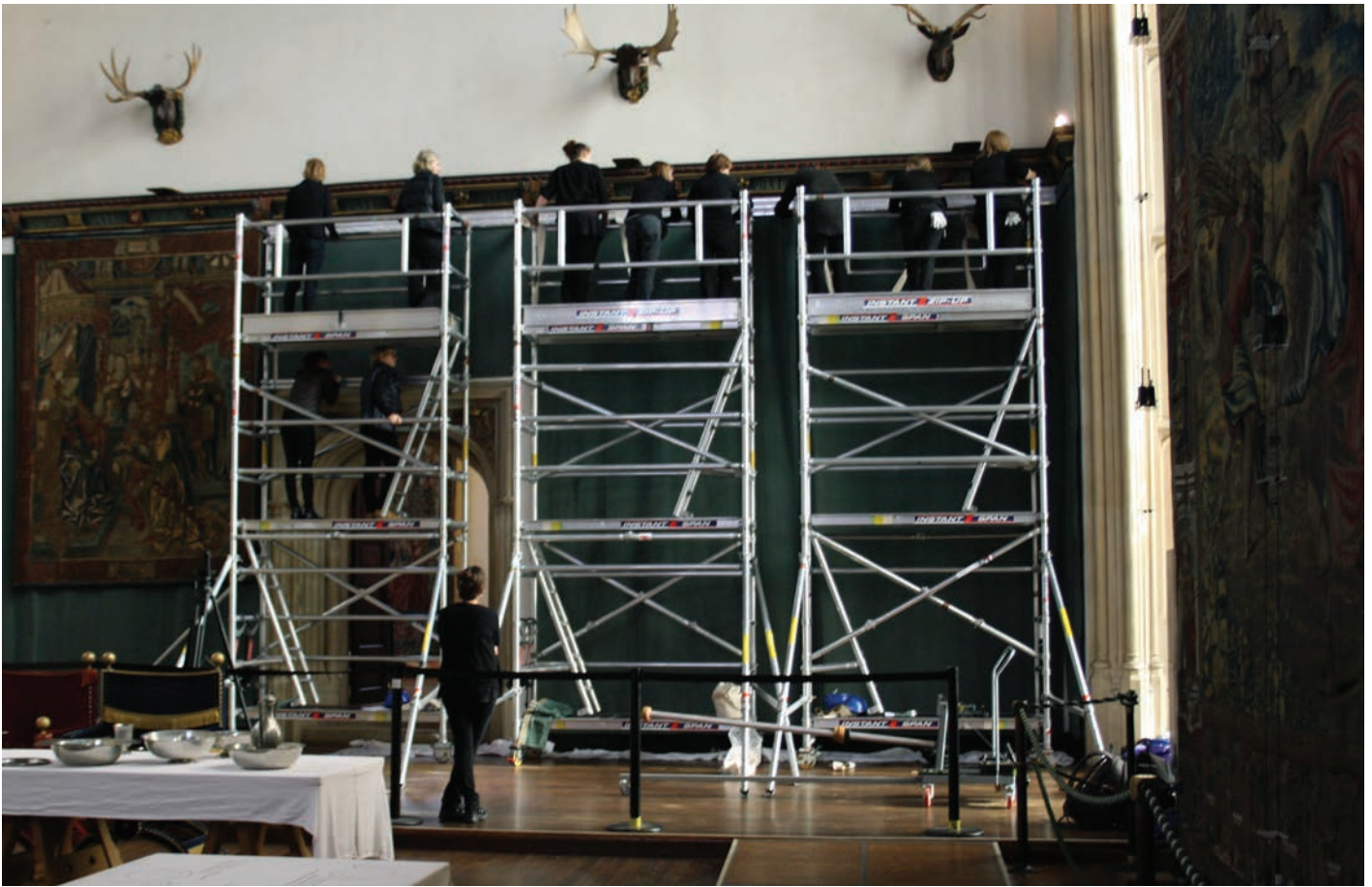
The first few weeks of my internship have given me the chance to get to know my colleagues in Conservation and Collection Care, Collection Management (CCC-CM), as well as the sites and collections. It has also given me a chance to reflect on my current knowledge and experience and consider the areas in which I would like to see development over the next year. As well as gaining specialist experience in tapestry conservation, I hope to build skills such as planning and managing long-term conservation projects, and the safe moving and handling of large-scale objects. Working at HRP will also give me an understanding of how conservation needs are met when work is spread across multiple sites. I have worked in museums before, but not in a historic-house environment, so this is also an exciting opportunity for new experiences. Overall, I hope to gain practical, personal and professional skills, which will ultimately make me a better conservator.

## LEARNING FROM THE TEAM

One of the reasons I was keen to intern with the tapestry team at HRP is their wealth of knowledge and experience. Being an intern is a fantastic position to be in for asking questions – something I haven't been shying away from. The team are currently working on three large-scale tapestries, each with their own unique condition issues and treatment plans. In the New Year we will be adding a fourth tapestry to the studio, as I begin work on my own project, a verdure scene\* previously hanging at the Tower of London. This Verdure is apparently a small tapestry, 'only' measuring 3m x 3m!

Between now and January I will be undertaking various tasks alongside members of the tapestry team, which will introduce me to the various stages of tapestry conservation. At the

\* Verdure refers to a style of tapestry depicting scenes of nature, such as wooded landscapes or foliage



© Historic Royal Palaces

Members of the tapestry and preventive conservation teams hanging green curtains in The Great Hall. These curtains hang behind the tapestries to separate them from the walls and provide a backdrop colour

moment I am working on my tapestry sampler; a small, practical project designed to introduce the various stitching techniques and layers of support for a tapestry. Over the coming weeks I will also be helping with condition-auditing on site, post wet-clean documentation of a large tapestry and setting it up on the loom.

## WORKING ON-SITE

The first large project I have been involved with so far is the reinstallation of five Tudor armorials and six Tudor tapestries into the Great Hall and Great Watching Chamber at Hampton Court Palace. As with most things tapestry-related, this was a large scale endeavour. It is quite hard to be subtle when scaffolding is involved so, in addition to working out-of-hours, we also embraced the chance to explain in-situ conservation work to the visiting public. Whilst helping to surface clean and prepare tapestries for this redisplay, I have also prepared the posters and set up the short film clips on our Conservation Cart. This cart is intended to share a wider picture of 'behind the scenes' tapestry conservation work on site with visitors.

## LOOKING FORWARD

Although this internship is specialising in tapestry conservation, it has already been hugely beneficial for my understanding of the wider role of a conservator within a large institution. I have always loved the decorative arts and definitely feel at home working as part of a large team. With eleven months still to go, I am looking forward to finding out exactly what further opportunities will present themselves over the course of the internship. Afterwards it is my hope to continue working in collections with a variety of textile objects

and build my experience of treating different types of material.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank The Clothworkers' Foundation and HRP for generously supporting this internship, and all of the CCC-CM staff for making me so welcome during my first weeks at Hampton Court.

The Conservation Cart: this gets wheeled out to help inform our visitors about various conservation works around Hampton Court Palace



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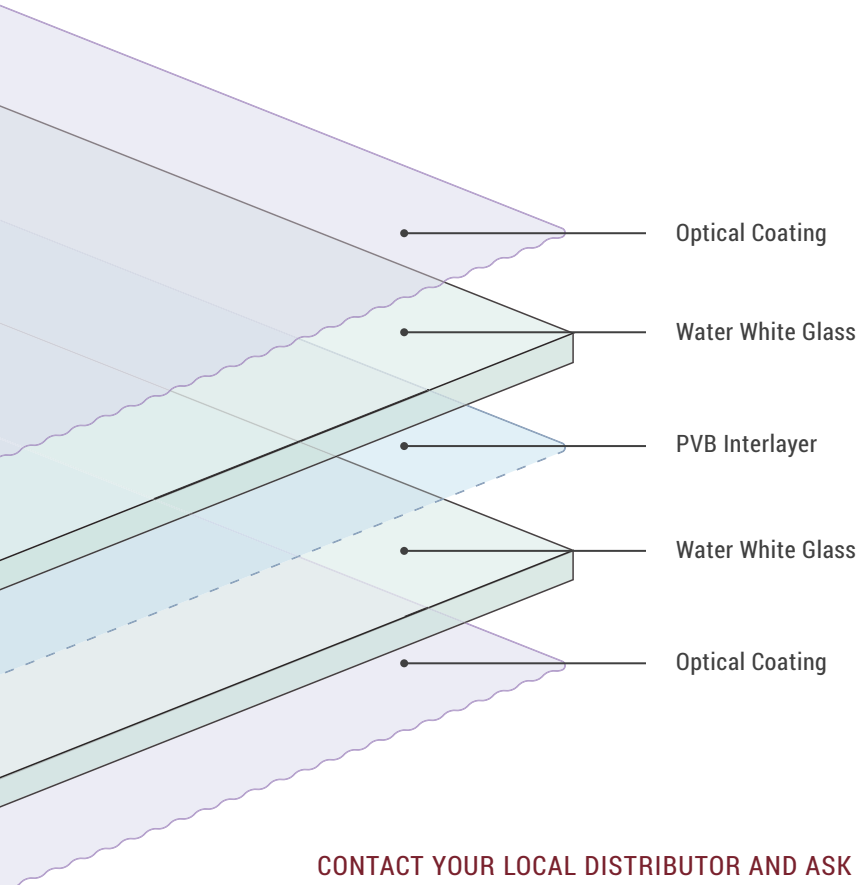


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