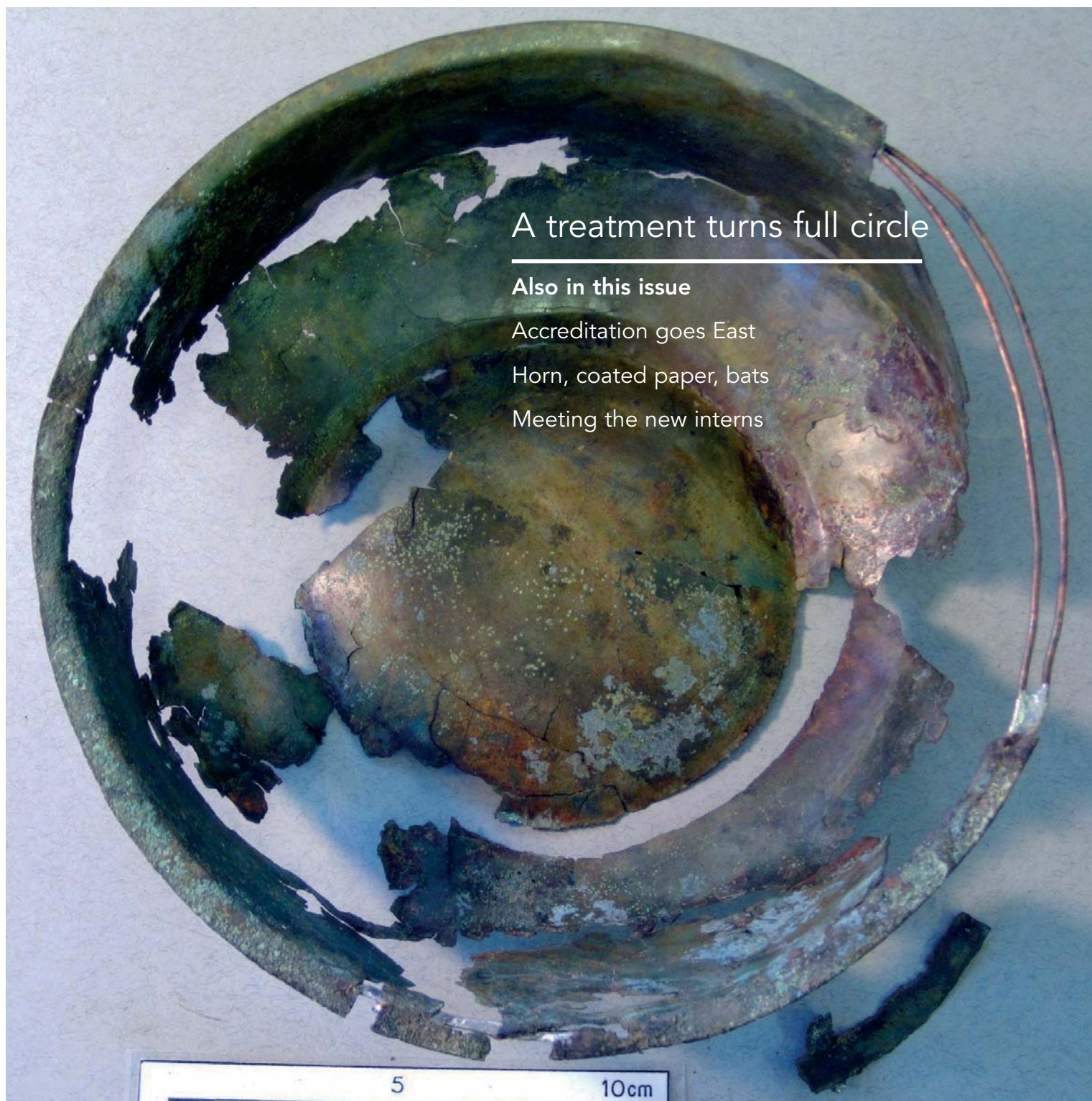


THE MAGAZINE OF THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION • NOVEMBER 2012 • ISSUE 43



## A treatment turns full circle

### Also in this issue

Accreditation goes East

Horn, coated paper, bats

Meeting the new interns

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## NOVEMBER 2012

Issue 43



### From the Editor

With the last issue we completed seven years of publication of Icon News! It hardly seems possible: so many stories told, so many techniques explained, so many members congratulated on awards and honours, so many interns welcomed and so many events attended.

To keep us all on our toes, we are introducing one or two small changes to the layout but the content remains broadly similar and as you, the reader, provide so much of that content it seems the right moment for me to say a heart-felt thank you to all the authors of our first seven years. Whether you were uncertain with your first venture into print or well-practised and fluent, it has been a huge pleasure hearing from you and working with you. I cannot put the magazine together without you, so do keep the stories flowing in and let your colleagues share your triumphs – or learn from your disasters.

At the start of our eighth year, we have two pieces which I think demonstrate Icon's solid worth as a professional body. We hear from a group of conservators in Singapore who decided to undertake accreditation – a great accolade for the PACR concept and process. We also introduce the next batch of interns: a vote of confidence by their funders in Icon's professionalism and dedication to the future of conservation. On which note, early bird booking has opened for next April's conference Positive Futures. Don't miss it!

**Lynette Gill**



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Cover photo:  
A Roman copper alloy bowl seen from above. Old fills from a previous restoration have been removed but the structural supports used to build up the rim can still be seen. © Hampshire County Council Arts & Museums Service

Disclaimer:  
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For January 2013 issue  
Editorial: 28 November  
Adverts: 10 December

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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)

## ABOUT ICON MEMBERSHIP

### Wiebke Morgan, Icon's Membership Manager, writes:



Photo: Matt Wreford

Since arriving at Icon in January I have focussed on making membership renewals and applications a more efficient and smoother-running process, and I am now able to work on other exciting developments, like the membership campaign.

Since 2010, membership figures have been steady at around 2,400, with retention at about 85% and new member growth accounting for 13% of the total. Whilst a stable membership is important, increased membership and its income

are vital to sustain Icon and extend its influence.

In the last membership survey (2008) members said that what they valued most was:

- Advocacy (both government and employers);
- Member communications (Icon News and Iconnect rated most highly);
- Supporting CPD;
- Accreditation.

From a 'Lapsed Membership Campaign' which we conducted in April/May this year, we learnt that most lapses were due to a career change or leaving the sector. Those who re-instated their membership said:

*'I love membership, particularly the skills and training strategy that has just come out'*

*'It helps keep me up to date and I also like attending the conferences'*

*'I am working towards accreditation, I find it helpful to find out about courses etc'*

*'I find the journal interesting but even more so the newsletter – too many benefits to mention!'*

*'When I first started out I wanted to meet new people and mix with the conservation fraternity. I also want to stay up to date with my discipline'*

Although appreciated, the benefits and value of Icon membership need to be profiled more prominently and understood. Anecdotal evidence suggests the potential to increase membership, particularly among emerging professionals.

Taking all this into account, our Membership Campaign has three strong goals:

### 1. to increase retention rates to 96% by 2015

Since March, we have increased member engagement through Facebook, phone contact, an insurance survey, and launched CEO and trustee articles in Icon News. There is more we wish to (and will) do to increase membership satisfaction.

### 2. to increase membership to 3,000 by 2016

We will target those with a profile similar to that of existing members, as they are likely to find our membership benefits attractive. Our Workforce Intelligence Research will tell us about the size of the sector in 2013. Icon's Groups' valuable role in recruiting new members remains vital to achieving our membership target.

### 3. to improve members' satisfaction with membership processes and benefits to 85% by 2015

A membership survey in 2013 will evaluate levels of satisfaction with our service, providing us with direction on priority areas to improve.

We plan to do this in several ways:

- By expanding our social media presence, building on our volunteer-maintained Facebook and Twitter sites, to make the most of these communication tools to spread Icon messages more widely.
- By creating an attractive non-member online newsletter to promote conservation and Icon's work and its sector role to more people.
- By learning about our members and their motivations to stay and why others might join, using the data from our Workforce Intelligence Research and member and non-member surveys
- By continuously improving our customer service, for example, through personally welcoming every new member and looking after current members more closely, improving communication through networking and engaging with members, making joining and renewals easier (online), and by having a presence at events to reach potential new members.

The campaign will involve the entire Icon team and will mean working closely with Icon Groups and members. Happy members make Icon thrive and if Icon thrives we can do so much more to benefit everyone working and learning in our sector. A successful membership organisation will have greater influence and provide even greater public benefit to caring for our heritage and making it accessible to people now and in the future.

# from the chief executive

## WHAT IS ICON DOING FOR ITS MEMBERS?

Alison Richmond writes:



Photo: Matt Wreford

Members often ask: is Icon a membership organisation, a professional association or a charity? The answer is: we are all three.

Icon's membership of 2400 is mainly comprised of conservators, but we also have many supporters and about one hundred organisations representing another thousand individuals. (The pie chart shows Icon's composition in more detail.) This membership allows us to claim that we are the lead voice for conservation of movable cultural property in

the UK. <sup>i</sup>

We are also a professional association because we set standards for the profession and for others involved in the conservation of cultural heritage and we advocate for professional conservation. Our process of Professional Accreditation for Conservator-Restorers (PACR) is based on a set of standards which now underpins the National Occupations Standards for Cultural Heritage. <sup>ii</sup>

Our charitable status is based on our ability to deliver public benefit. We do so through two 'charitable objects', which define how we do this. <sup>iii</sup> Most professional associations like ours are also registered charities. This status makes Icon eligible for funding from grant-giving bodies and foundations,

such as the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. Not-for-profit organisations are given priority in Heritage Lottery Fund applications and our HLF award of nearly £2.5 million, 2007–15, is significantly important for Icon. As a charity we are exempt from paying corporation tax and in some cases can claim back VAT.

These three identities are perfectly compatible as long as we carefully direct the balance between them. As an example, our recent decision to stop claiming gift aid on membership subscriptions (allowed as a charity) enables us to apply for Professional Body Status with HMRC, which in turn frees us to promote membership more effectively and allows members to claim their subscription against their tax.

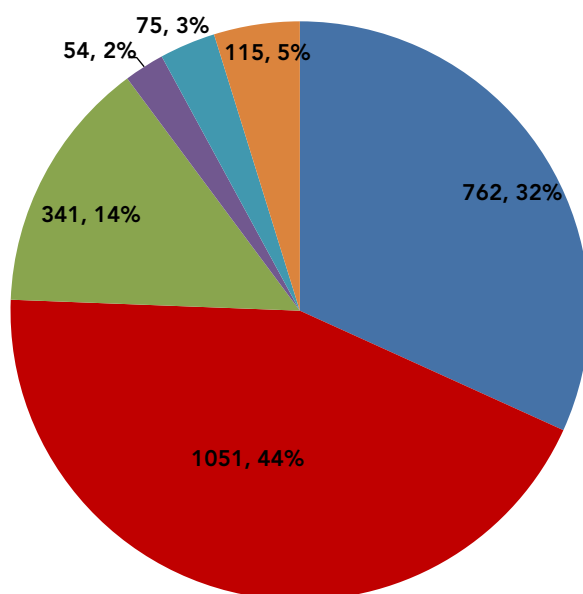
When asked what Icon is doing for members, the answer falls under all these three identities. Everything that Icon does is for members, affecting them directly and indirectly, whether it is providing CPD events, publishing our highly valued journal, advocating for professional conservation, creating an environment for conservation to thrive, or reviewing our peer review process to ensure that 'ACR' builds confidence as the mark of industry quality.

There is always more to do to benefit our members. Increased member satisfaction inspires members to encourage their colleagues, friends and students to join Icon. In this way, our membership will grow. To support this we are planning a membership campaign, outlined opposite. Please let us know your thoughts about it.

- i) 'Moveable cultural property' because there are other organisations who more directly represent the voice of the built heritage
- ii) <http://tinyurl.com/czsyw6k>
- iii) 'To advance the education of the public by research into and the promotion of the conservation of items and collections of items of cultural, aesthetic, historic and scientific value' and 'To preserve and conserve items and collections of items of cultural, aesthetic, historic and scientific value'

### Icon Membership August 2012 2,398 members

- Accredited
- Full
- Student
- Graduate
- Organisation
- Supporter



# professional update

## ICON'S NEW ACTING CHAIR



Our Chair of the Board of Trustees, Amber Xavier Rowe, had no sooner gone on maternity leave than Imogen Susan Rowe arrived on 20 October. Congratulations Amber! In the meantime, Juergen Vervoorst, Icon's Vice Chair, has stepped in to act as Chair until the AGM on 3 December when the results of the Board elections will be announced.

## POSITIVE FUTURES 2013

By the time you read this, registration for our next triennial international Icon conference will have opened. Don't miss the early bird booking rate which ends on 18 January. You will find all the information you need to consider *before* you book on our conference website [www.IconPF13.com](http://www.IconPF13.com)

There was a great response to the calls for papers with sixty five abstracts received for the plenary sessions alone. Volunteers on the Organising Committee and on Group Committees have been working hard on the programme. You will find the draft programme on our website.

We are delighted to announce that Historic Scotland is supporting the conference with funding that includes bursaries for members of Icon Scotland Group to attend. We are also asking other organisations to support delegate attendance in this way.

We are looking for members and student members who are willing to volunteer on the day. If you sign up as a helper, your delegate fee will be waived. If you are interested please contact Wiebke Morgan [wmorgan@icon.org.uk](mailto:wmorgan@icon.org.uk)

## GABO TRUST CONFERENCE GRANT

The Gabo Trust for Sculpture Conservation is offering bursaries of up to £1,000 for suitable candidates to attend the *Positive Futures* conference at the University of Glasgow in April 2013.

Applications will be accepted from now to 31 January 2013 and must be submitted to the Gabo Trust on a completed application form (available by email, post or download from the Gabo Trust website). A letter of support from a Head of Department (if employed by an institution) will also be required along with two professional references.

Successful candidates will receive an award letter confirming the grant amount by 21 February 2013. Payment will be made on receipt of invoices/receipts from those running the event. Successful candidates will be required to submit a brief report no later than one month after attendance at the conference.

Web: [www.gabotrust.org](http://www.gabotrust.org) Email: [gabotrust@btinternet.com](mailto:gabotrust@btinternet.com)

## STUDYING THE CONSERVATION WORKFORCE

It is great news that Icon has been awarded funding for its *Conservation Workforce Intelligence Research Project*. The project will identify the nature of employment and work for professional conservators across the UK in 2012–13. It has been generously supported by Arts Council England, English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund. We are delighted by this endorsement of Icon to carry out this much-needed research.

The absence of up-to-date workforce intelligence for conservation has meant that the sector has previously relied on out-of-date or anecdotal evidence of skill needs in conservation. The new project will collate and review information that has already been gathered about the nature of the conservation workforce across the UK. This will be combined with new data that will be collected by surveying employers in both the private and public sectors to identify the profile of their workforces and their skills' needs for the next five years.

The data will provide a foundation for effective advocacy and be a benchmark for measuring the success of the National Conservation Education & Skills Strategy (NCESS). Acquiring and using this labour market intelligence will allow museums and the conservation sector to plan and prioritise actions that will sustain and support a skilled and diverse conservation workforce.

For more information about the Conservation Workforce Intelligence Research project or the NCESS, contact Kenneth Aitchison, Skills Strategy Manager, [kaitchison@icon.org.uk](mailto:kaitchison@icon.org.uk).

## IMPORTANT REMINDER FOR ALL ACRS

### CPD recall 2013: Do we have your correct email?

From 2013 the annual cpd recall will be co-ordinated electronically. This means that if you have been recalled you will receive notification and feedback by email. If you do not use email please notify us by writing to: Accreditation Officer, Institute of Conservation, PO Box 7452, Hilton, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 1BU.

It is a requirement of maintaining your ACR status that you submit a cpd review when requested and so it is important that your contact details are accurate. If you would like to update your email details please contact either Katherine Cresser, Membership Officer ([kcresser@icon.org.uk](mailto:kcresser@icon.org.uk)) or Shulla Jaques ([pacr@icon.org.uk](mailto:pacr@icon.org.uk)) by 11 January 2013.

## PROFESSIONAL CODES & GUIDELINES

### Icon Trustee Lizzie Neville ACR updates the progress on developing Icon's own codes

Last issue we announced to members that Icon was forming a working group with the goal of developing Icon's own Codes of Ethics and Practice. Drafts of the Codes and supporting guidelines would be made available to members to comment on, prior to balloting members in 2013.



Lizzie Neville

We have been able to bring together a working group spanning the spectrum of Icon's professional membership: archaeology to new media; practitioners, conservation managers and conservation scientists, with backgrounds from both the commercial and institutional sectors. Several of the working group have an in-depth experience of the PACR standards through their contributions as Assessors or Accreditation Committee members and others have past experiences of working on Code of Ethics Committees.

#### Working group members:

Jonathan Ashley Smith ACR  
Dinah Eastop ACR  
Julie Eklund ACR  
Mary Greenacre ACR  
Martin Holden ACR  
Helen Hughes ACR  
Pip Laurenson ACR  
Clare Meredith ACR  
Kathy Tubb ACR

#### Supporting Icon Trustees:

Ylva Dhansjo ACR  
Jane Henderson ACR  
Juergen Vervoorst ACR  
Lizzie Neville ACR

Icon staff Kenneth Aitchison, Susan Bradshaw and Shulla Jacques will also provide support and advice. At various stages of the project we will be asking for help from 'critical friends', outside of Icon, to draw on their own experiences of developing professional codes and guidelines and to ensure that our own documents are framed appropriately for legal purposes and for dealing appropriately with infringements of our professional codes.

We had intended to have the first drafts ready for Icon's December AGM. This was over ambitious and there have been several requests from the working group to extend this project to ensure plenty of development time and give the membership due opportunity to consider the proposals before a ballot. We will let members know, via Iconnect, when relevant documents are put up on the website and we will be holding a discussion session, with Icon members, after the official proceedings of the AGM on 3 December. Members will be able there to question representatives of the working group and discuss any concerns with us.

Developing new codes and guidelines has an impact on every member of Icon and this is an opportunity for all of us to consider what it is that makes conservation different from other professions and how to explain this clearly. We also need to consider what it means to be a professional conservator bound by the Icon codes. All members of Icon will be fellow professionals and should be treated as such and

trusted to behave accordingly but what will be the process to reprimand or remove any member who is found to betray that trust?

Please try to come along to the AGM. Members' input will be very much appreciated.

## DEVELOPMENTS AT WEST DEAN

West Dean College (part of the Edward James Foundation) in Sussex offers a number of graduate and postgraduate programmes of study in conservation disciplines: books, ceramics, clocks, metalwork, and furniture. It is also the venue for a regular series of short Continuing Professional Development courses for conservators, ranging from horology to the conservation of concrete.

The Foundation has recently been undergoing a reorganisation under its new (and first) Chief Executive, Peter Pearce, designed to unify activities across the Foundation under a single management team. In the new structure, the posts of Principal and Head of Academic Affairs have been consolidated and replaced by one new post of Director of Higher Education held by Dr Roger Bown, who has been at West Dean for over a decade as its Head of Academic Affairs. The extensive and popular range of short courses continues to be run by Alison Baxter. Robert Pulley, who as Principal has served and developed the College for eleven years, is moving on to a new challenge. Bob was particularly inspired by the College's potential to expand its offering in art and design-related courses and programmes. He also took a real interest in conservation and listened to the voices of the profession when developing West Dean's conservation offering. I know many Icon members would want to join with me in wishing Bob well in his future career.

The Foundation sees its conservation courses as being at the core of what it offers in the future, and is initiating an external review of its education provision to ensure it meets future needs to the best of its ability; Icon will be closely consulted

#### West Dean's new Chief Executive Peter Pearce



as part of this important project. Funding for the purchase of further analytical equipment and for training Programme Leader David Dorning to use it are further evidence of this strategy.

I look forward to working with Dr Bown, along with the conservation programme leaders and tutors, on West Dean's role in implementing Icon's National Conservation Education and Skills Strategy.

**Alison Richmond**, Chief Executive

*The consultation on education will be led by Dr. Clare Morris. Anyone interested in contributing to this important work please contact Jackie Herrington jackie.herrington@westdean.org.uk*

## EASING THE TRANSITION

...from student to worker, Buckinghamshire New University has recently launched a company to help its conservation graduates access furniture conservation work and private commissions. Called Bucks Conservation, the pioneering enterprise will channel commercial conservation and restoration projects to recent alumni from their BA (Hons) and MA Furniture Conservation, Restoration and Decorative Arts courses. The idea is to help them make the transition from education to employment within the conservation sector.

Under the guidance of the University's furniture conservation experts, graduates will gain valuable experience in a commercial environment, where they will be employed for twelve to eighteen months developing their conservation skills and expertise as well as sharpening their business skills. Selection to join the new company is by interview and a portfolio review.

Dr Campbell Norman-Smith, Course Leader of the MA

John Bly and Lennox Cato, antiques experts who have appeared on the BBC's Antiques Roadshow, with an ornamental torchere restored by Bucks New University Master's graduate, Nicola Little, at The Courtauld Gallery in London, where the new company was launched.



Furniture Conservation and Decorative Arts, comments: 'the launch of Bucks Conservation is a unique opportunity to support our most talented graduates and provide them with exceptional commercial experience, which will give them an edge when looking for employment in the conservation and restoration professions'. It is believed to be the first alumni business model of its kind in the UK.

## ARSENIC RISK UPDATE

In the last Ingestion table, published in 'Safe Handling of Museum Collections Containing Arsenic' article in Icon News, May 2012, Issue 40, p.19, I did not clearly explain how the results from a 2cm<sup>2</sup> sample translate into how much potential arsenic is within the bird, and therefore how much one would need to ingest to become ill. I have had a few requests to explain this, so hopefully the table below will help.

World Health Organisation Guidelines indicate that there is an increased risk to health from ingesting about 3 µg of inorganic arsenic per kg of body weight per day. For a 50kg female, this corresponds to 150 µg of arsenic per day (this has changed since the earlier article, so it is always useful to check for updates on the health sites).

| Samples                       | Lab results            | Amount in whole bird (assumed cylindrical shape)                                                                                                                   | Amount required to be ingested                                 |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lab sample B<br>Spotted crane | 1.6 mg/kg<br>of sample | Total area 360cm <sup>2</sup><br>A 2cm <sup>2</sup> sample weighs approx 0.05g<br>360cm <sup>2</sup> weighs 9g<br>9g of skin contains 0.009 x 1.6 = 14.4 µg As     | You would need to ingest more than 10 whole birds per day      |
| Lab sample A<br>Capercaillie  | 40 mg/kg<br>of sample  | Total area 2080 cm <sup>2</sup><br>A 2cm <sup>2</sup> sample weighs approx 0.05g<br>2080cm <sup>2</sup> weighs 52g<br>52g of skin contains 0.052 x 40 = 2.08 mg As | You would need to ingest 75 x 2cm <sup>2</sup> samples per day |
| Lab sample C<br>Gloves        | 27 mg/kg<br>of sample  | One pair of gloves weighs 11g and contains 0.011 x 27 = 0.297 mg As                                                                                                | You would need to ingest the dust from one glove per day       |

Sample A – 2cm<sup>2</sup> sample weighing approx 0.05g – 40mg/kg

Sample B – 2cm<sup>2</sup> sample weighing approx 0.05g – 1.6mg/kg

Sample C – gloves weighing approx 11g – 27mg/kg

Also be aware that labs can give the results in mg/kg or %. So if you received a result as a percentage, for example, 40%, you would need to carry out the following calculation:

$\frac{\text{Weight of the sample (0.05g)} \times 40\%}{100\%} = 0.02\text{g} = 20 \text{ mg per sample}$

The results might also be in parts per million (PPM) – numerically this is the same as mg/kg.

In conclusion I could say that it is unlikely that one will become ill through ingesting the bird but there is definitely a risk through ingestion from glove to mouth; this in combination with potential absorption through the skin makes the use of PPE vital when handling these collections.

I would like to thank Julian Thompson Webb for his advice and Barry Knight for his help to review the data provided.

**Deborah Cane ACR**

Hoard Conservation Project Manager  
Conservation and Environment Officer  
Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

## WALL PAINTING SCHOLARSHIPS

The Courtauld Institute of Art has announced that AkzoNobel, the world's largest paint and coatings company, is funding three postgraduate students undertaking either a PhD or MA in Conservation of Wall Painting from October this year. These three latest Scholarships are for students from India, China and Brazil.

## LIBRARY NEWS



Ros Buck

### Opening hours

In our last issue we announced changes to the Chantry Library's opening hours. There has been a further change since and the latest news is that Ros Buck will be spreading her hours over three days instead of two.

The hours now are:  
Monday AM (9.00–12.30)  
Tuesday ALL DAY  
Wednesday PM (1.30–5.00)

Ros has been busy recently delivering workshops on Practical Information Skills for Conservators. And look out for

new subject bibliographies coming soon....

### Photocopies

Don't forget that we supply photocopies of journal articles, chapters from books, and conference papers, which are held in the Chantry Library collection. Icon members can claim ten free articles each year, provided either as scanned pages or in hard copy. Email Ros Buck, Librarian at [chantrylibrary@icon.org.uk](mailto:chantrylibrary@icon.org.uk) with your requests, quoting your membership number, or complete and send the copyright form available on the Chantry Library webpages [www.chantrylibrary.org.uk](http://www.chantrylibrary.org.uk) (Library Services).

### Recently received publications

**Contributions to the 2012 IIC Vienna Congress, (10–14 September 2012): The Decorative: Conservation and the Applied Arts**, IIC Director of Publishing, Joyce H. Townsend, IIC (The International Institute for Conservation), London, Maney Publishing, London, 2012, 391pp. ISBN: 978-1-907975-77-6

Details of the conference papers, and posters:

[www.iiconservaion.org/congress/2012vienna/programme](http://www.iiconservaion.org/congress/2012vienna/programme)

A review of the conference can be found on page 30

### The Artist's Process: Technology and Interpretation (Proceedings of the fourth symposium of the Art Technological Source Research Working Group)

, edited by Sigrid Eyb-Green, Joyce H. Townsend, Mark Clarke, Jilleen Nadolny and Stefanos Kroustallis, Archetype Publications, London, 2012, 217pp. ISBN: 978-1-904982-73-9

Further details, and contents:

[www.archetype.co.uk/publication-details.php?id=149](http://www.archetype.co.uk/publication-details.php?id=149)

**Turquoise in Mexico and North America**, edited by J.C.H. King, Max Carocci, Caroline Cartwright, Colin McEwan and Rebecca Stacey, Archetype Publications, London, 2012, 232pp. ISBN: 978-1-904982-79-1

[www.archetype.co.uk/publication-details.php?id=159](http://www.archetype.co.uk/publication-details.php?id=159)

**Emergency Planning and Response for Libraries, Archives and Museums**, by Emma Dadson, Facet Publishing, London, 2012, 230pp. ISBN: 978-1-85604-808-8

### Recently received journals

**Journal of the American Institute for Conservation**, Vol.50, No.2, Fall/Winter 2011

**Restaurator**, Vol.33, Nos. 3&4, 2012

**The Ephemerist**, No.158, Autumn 2012

This special issue of The Ephemerist stems from a study day organised by the Centre for Ephemera Studies at the University of Reading on 4 July 2012, with the theme 'Black ephemera: depictions of people of African descent'.

**WAAC Newsletter**, Vol.34, No.3, September 2012

### Find out more

For further details of new resources and a full listing of all journal articles received over the past two months, check out the library blog 'Library News' at: <http://chantrylibrary.wordpress.com/>

You can also subscribe to our RSS feed and track new books and journals at the Library in real time. More details on how to do this at <http://chantrylibrary.wordpress.com/feed/>

More details about new library resources can also be found in the quarterly Chantry Library Resources Updates, on the website here:

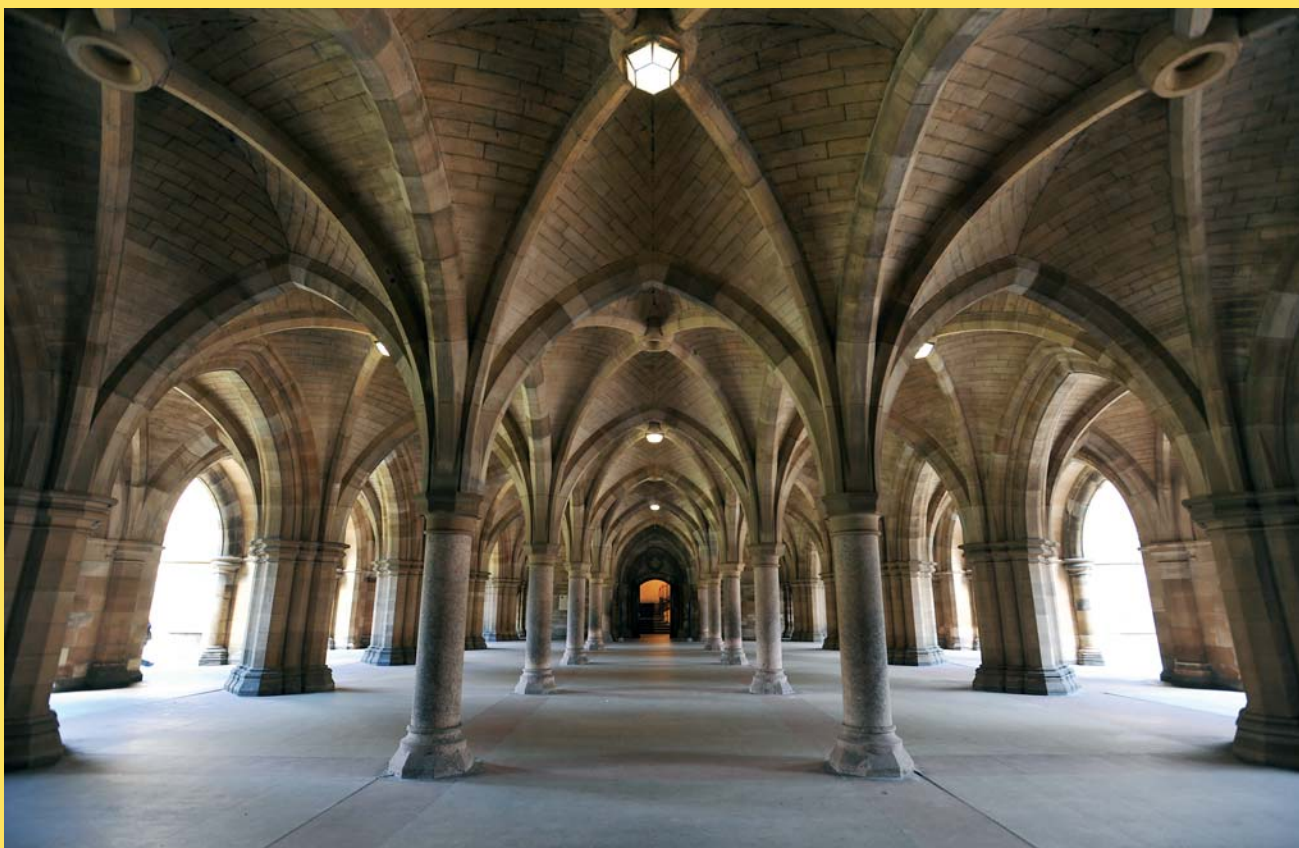
[www.icon.org.uk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1827&Itemid=175](http://www.icon.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1827&Itemid=175)



Icon PF13

Positive Futures  
in an Uncertain  
World 2013

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The Cloisters at the heart  
of the Conference venue

**Booking has opened for Icon's 2nd Triennial  
International Conference**

# Positive Futures in an Uncertain World

In partnership with the University of Glasgow

## 10–12 April 2013

Early Bird booking fees apply until  
18 January 2013

[www.iconpf13.com](http://www.iconpf13.com)



University  
of Glasgow



THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION

## A Trustee writes about your Icon from the Board's perspective



My name is Siobhan Stevenson and I joined the Icon Board of Trustees in December 2009 in the reserved seat for Northern Ireland.

Working with Icon has been an enriching and rewarding experience and one which I would recommend. A Trustee's work is interesting and varied. Being on the Board gives me an overview of the work across the breadth of Icon activities, and responsibility to ensure that it remains

true to its purpose. I have found the last three years eventful ones for the Board: staff changes and a challenging financial climate, not to mention delivery of successful programmes, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund Internships, and new initiatives, such as the National Conservation Education and Skills Strategy.

I have been involved in many different levels as a Trustee: as a member of the Nominations Committee, member of the Professional Standards Committee, as part of the staff appointment process and, most recently, Chair of the Conference Committee and steering group for our upcoming conference *Positive Futures (PF13)*.

Through my time on the Board I have seen many positive developments particularly in the appointment of Alison Richmond as our CEO and the bedding in of a new staffing structure. We have been fortunate to have the support of our funders throughout this process.

These changes have brought a welcome shift of focus for our work on the Board, as the role of Trustees becomes increasingly one of oversight and governance while the day-to-day business of the Icon office is in Alison's and the team's capable hands. This means I can help to continue improving Icon's service to members while taking a more outward-looking approach to developing partnerships and allies with other cultural sector organisations, and play a key part in delivering the Icon three-year strategy.

For me, continued work as part of the Professional Standards and Development (PSD) Board will see the committee taking forward consultation and development of a Code of Ethics and new Code of Practice for Icon. As part of the Icon action plan for the National Conservation Education and Skills Strategy there is a busy programme for PSD in overseeing its implementation. Major work streams include: research

which will inform our continued delivery; supporting the development of professional standards and career paths, such as our recently re-launched Conservation Technician's Qualification and our accreditation process, which we will be reviewing next year. Added to these will be work with the recently established National Heritage Science Forum.

I am also particularly excited about my part in leading the delivery of the Icon PF13 Conference, a key element of Icon's three-year strategy. Building on the success of CF10 in Cardiff, all involved hope this will set the pattern for the Icon conference as a regular feature of the conservation calendar. I believe that the theme for next year's conference, to be held in the sumptuous surroundings of the University of Glasgow's Bute Hall, will provide an opportunity to galvanise members and stakeholders in looking positively at our profession and how we can make our contribution and rise to the challenges the cultural heritage is facing in these economically constrained times. I expect that it will prompt some vigorous, provocative and inspiring debate.

The conference is being developed and run by a strong team of volunteers and staff who will oversee the selection of papers, provide a glittering evening programme and offer a pre-conference programme of visits and tours, not to mention carry out all the tasks associated with planning, promoting and running the three day event. The hard work and enthusiasm of staff and volunteers alike is all making my job as Chair comparatively easy!

Glasgow University's Bute Hall, venue for the PF13 conference plenary sessions



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## The 15th Annual Dr Harold Plenderleith Memorial Lecture 2012

## Conservation, Mortality and the Meaning of Life

**Dr. Mark O'Neill** *Director of Policy & Research, Glasgow Life*

This talk will explore what the great skill and effort invested in conserving precious objects tell us about the values of Western culture and in particular about how we think about the passage of time and mortality. Our concern for preservation is not universal - other cultures address similar concerns about the brevity of life by celebrating the poignancy of transience. Some practical implications of these reflections for museum conservation will be addressed, using examples from Glasgow Museums, of which Mark O'Neill was Director for ten years, during the refurbishment of Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum and the development of the Zaha Hadid-designed Riverside Museum.



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DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

## Icon AGM and DRINKS RECEPTION

Don't forget that our Annual General Meeting is coming up very soon!

Date & time: Monday 3 December at 5pm

Venue: The Sackler Centre, Victoria and Albert Museum, London

After the formal business there will be a discussion about the work which has started to develop a new disciplinary procedure and code of ethics for Icon

Come along and meet staff and trustees, colleagues and friends. For catering purposes, please let the office know if you plan to attend ([membership@icon.org.uk](mailto:membership@icon.org.uk)).

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## Meet the new interns!

Since 2006, Icon has managed the UK-wide conservation Training Bursary Scheme funded with a £1.49M grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). In May we were awarded a grant increase of £968,800 to support the delivery of thirty six additional internships over three years. We are grateful to the HLF and our funders and are delighted to announce thirteen new interns starting this autumn.

### Heritage Lottery Funded Internships for twelve months

**Maria Ledinskaya** *Conservation of Sculpture and Architectural Metalwork, Hall Conservation Studio Ltd, London*

My background is in sculpture, prop-making and prosthetic effects. Having just completed a Graduate Diploma in Conservation Studies at the University of Lincoln, I was looking for ways to apply my practical making skills to conservation work and was delighted to be offered an internship with Hall Conservation Ltd. I am especially looking forward to developing my metalworking skills, working on site and getting an insight into an ethical commercial conservation practice.

**Anna Zwagerman** - *Preventive Conservation, National Trust Scotland, Aberdeenshire*

After studying History, I went on to complete both an MA and a Professional Doctorate in Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage at the University of Amsterdam. During my doctorate I specialised in preventive and remedial conservation of Historic Interiors, completing a number of placements, one of which was with the National Trust. Last February I received a Leonardo da Vinci scholarship for a six-month placement at Pollok House in Glasgow, where I learned a lot about working in a historic house environment. During my internship I hope to gain more practical experience in preventive conservation, especially relating to environmental management, project work and providing training for staff and volunteers.

**Danielle Connolly** *Conservation of Banners, People's History Museum, Manchester*

Having undertaken voluntary work on tapestry installations at Dovecot Studios, Edinburgh and work with the textile conservation department at The Burrell Collection, Glasgow, I was keen to broaden my knowledge of textile conservation within a museum setting. This, coupled with my recent completion of the two-year postgraduate course in textile conservation at Glasgow University, means the internship will provide the opportunity to put all the skills I have gained over the past two years into practice within a working conservation studio. I will have the chance to learn the specialist skills and knowledge used in banner conservation and in the conservation of painted surfaces and it will allow me to observe and practise the handling, packing and display of large, fragile, complex objects. I am looking forward to starting the internship, meeting fellow interns and the Icon training team but mostly I am looking forward to the learning opportunity and experience the internship will provide me.

**Rosemarie Wachsmuth** *Preventive Conservation, Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery*

I come from a museological background as my first degree was in History of Art with Museum Studies. From there I moved to doing the Graduate Diploma in Conservation Studies at Lincoln University which I then took to a Master level that I have almost completed. I want to use this internship as an opportunity to gain valuable practical experience in preventive conservation which I eventually want to take to accreditation level hoping to work in the public sector.

**Alexandra Walker** *Collections Care, The Museum of London*

I have recently completed the Preventive Conservation MA at Northumbria and Paper Conservation PgDip at Camberwell the previous year. I have done various work placements in some fantastic institutions such as the V&A, Stanley Kubrick Film Archive and

Wellcome Collection, where I mainly worked on rehousing and collections care projects. I am very excited to be starting at the Museum of London.

**Alice Brown** *Textile Conservation, The Textile Restoration Studio (TRS) Cheshire*

I studied BA (Hons) Embroidery at Manchester Metropolitan University in 2009 before completing the MA Conservation of Historic Objects at the University of Lincoln in 2012, where I specialised in textiles. I hope my internship at the Textile Restoration Studio will help to broaden my knowledge of conservation treatments through a wide variety of objects. Working in a private studio will also provide the opportunity to liaise with clients and gain some business experience.

**Salvador Alcántara Peláez** *Book Conservation, Wellcome Library, London*

In Spain I undertook a degree in Art History, a masters degree in Museum Studies and some training in bookbinding. I came to London two years ago to do the FdA Book Conservation course at the Camberwell College of Arts which I successfully finished last June. During my degree I have had the opportunity to get some conservation experience at the MoDA, Canterbury Cathedral, the College of Arms and the Victoria and Albert Museum. This internship should provide me with the necessary knowledge and practice to cover the gap between university and a genuine professional competence.

**Jihyun Kwon** *Conservation of Archaeological and Historic Materials, CSI: Sittingbourne*

I have a BSc in Conservation of Objects in Museums and Archaeology and a MSc in Professional Conservation. This internship opportunity at CSI: Sittingbourne will allow me to learn and experience community engagement in conservation as well as broaden and deepen my expertise and experience in archaeological and investigative conservation.

## Externally Funded Placements

### Charlotte Gamper

*Textile Conservation,  
Historic Royal Palaces, London  
(12 months)*

In August this year I handed in my dissertation, which marked the completion of my studies on the new two year MPhil course in Textile Conservation at the University of Glasgow. During my studies I undertook two work placements, the first at the Textile Conservation Studio at the British Museum where I was privileged to work on some Ancient Egyptian fragments. For the second, I was working in a private practice with Tuula Pardoe at the Scottish Conservation Studio. I am now extremely grateful to have been accepted as an Icon intern at Historic Royal Palaces. Here, I will fill a gap in my experience, having the opportunity to work within an historic house setting and also to work on objects which I have not previously treated, such as tapestry, to build upon my existing knowledge and repertoire. I am looking forward to seeing how the challenge of working on large objects, such as tapestry and state beds, is overcome.

### Karen Horsley

*Preventive Conservation, National Trust  
Scotland, Bute (12 months)*

I have recently completed the MA in Conservation of Historic Objects at the University of Lincoln. Since then, I have gained practical conservation and collection management experience with Lincolnshire County Council Museums and the National Trust. In the past year, I have worked with staff and volunteers on a variety of collections care projects - protecting objects during building work, helping with the winter clean, improving storage, cataloguing, condition surveys and cleaning outdoor statuary. I am particularly interested in the preventive conservation of collections. During this internship, I am keen to develop my skills by assisting with IPM, light management, environmental monitoring and emergency planning.

### Holly Smith

*Conservation of Books and Bound  
Materials, PZ3, Penzance (18 months)*

I graduated from West Dean College with an MA in Conservation Studies, specialising in book conservation. I volunteered for some time before becoming a Project Conservator at the National Archives. I'm now really looking forward to starting this internship, building on my practical knowledge and gaining new experiences in a private studio environment. I'm especially excited about the involvement with outreach projects as it's something that I've always wanted to do.

*Holly is the author of this issue's  
Graduate Voice – see page 25*

**Makiko Tsunoda** *Conservation of  
Medieval Manuscripts and Rare Books,  
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge  
(6 months)*

I developed a passion for paper and book conservation by working at The Ashmolean Museum and the Bodleian Library of the University of Oxford, and followed this by a Master of Arts in Paper Conservation at Camberwell College of Arts, London, graduating in 2011. I then had internships in the US and Japan in 2012, where I expanded my knowledge and skills related to Western and Japanese paper-based materials. Through the Icon internship, I hope to improve my understanding of a wide range of conservation issues, focusing on developing my interventive conservation skills in 15 -18th century printed books, as well as Persian and Western Medieval and Renaissance illuminated manuscripts.

**Jemma Edwards** *Conservation of  
Paintings Caring for Kenwood House,  
English Heritage, London  
(12 months)*

Having studied for a degree in English and Art History I went on to complete my masters in Conservation of Fine Art, specialising in easel paintings, at Northumbria University in March 2012. After placements working on a variety of projects, including condition surveying for Berwick Museum and conserving paintings at the Bowes Museum, I was commissioned to work on different

projects at the Bowes with the conservation team, where I have gained invaluable experience. This internship is the ideal opportunity for me to expand and develop my knowledge so that I can confidently enter the profession and have a career in paintings conservation.

## Other news

### QEST Scholars

The Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust is as beneficent as ever towards conservation and has this year awarded more scholarships than ever in celebration of the present Queen's diamond jubilee (although the Trust is named after her mother).

Two Icon members who have benefited from this generosity are **Megan Stacey** and **Sarai Vardi**

Megan is studying stained glass conservation and her award enables her to continue her two year MA course in Stained Glass Conservation and Heritage Management at the University of York. Sarai is a book conservator and her scholarship will part fund the final year of her Conservation MA at Camberwell College of Arts. The award will also go towards furthering Sarai's study in the craft of bookbinding through evening classes.

### Moves

**Helen Wilson** has started her first job as a Conservation Research Fellow at The National Archives. Helen is looking forward to developing protocols for the conservation and preservation of transparent paper in the context of its use at The National Archives. The role follows her previous training in conservation science as an Icon HLF intern at The Pigmentum Project (now Art Access & Research) (2007-2008) and as a Science and Heritage Programme AHRC/EPSC PhD student at The University of Manchester and the British Museum (2008-2012). Helen also featured in issue 28 of Icon News as the winner of the judge's award in the Student Poster competition at the Cardiff CF10 Conference

# Accreditation goes East

Conservators in Singapore decided that they wanted the professional recognition provided by the UK's professional practice assessment process – PACR

The Heritage Conservation Centre (HCC), Singapore, approached Icon in 2011 to discuss the possibilities of the PACR process being made available for some of its conservation team. A proposal was presented to identify costs over and above the normal rates of PACR and a timetable was agreed. A PACR clinic was set up via Skype for the potential applicants and a training day was organised for potential PACR assessors – both with the support of Katharine St Paul who had recently been accredited and was now working in Singapore. Rachel Witt, another new ACR working at HCC, also acted as a mentor.

The four HCC applicants followed the same timetable and process as all other PACR applicants and in May 2012 they were assessed by Louise Bacon, Deborah Cane, Corinne Hillman-Farmer and Lesley Thomas, acting in different combinations as the primary or secondary assessor for the object and paper conservators being assessed.

Icon really values the exceptional input from all those involved in this opportunity to test the PACR process further afield and thanks them very much.

This article presents some of the projects used in the assessments at HCC, starting with an introduction from Mr Robin Liu, who led this initiative, to present the HCC perspective.

*Susan Bradshaw*

Icon's Professional Development Manager

## THE HCC PERSPECTIVE

The Heritage Conservation Centre (HCC), Singapore, is committed to ensuring the continuing professional development of our conservators. The initiative to support and nominate four of our conservators for professional assessment for accreditation to a professional body is part of our overall efforts to raise the standards of preventive and interventive conservation practice in Singapore. The accreditation process is also a learning journey for HCC as an institution as it is a framework which allows us to generate greater awareness of current developments in the profession.

The successful accreditation of these conservators serves as a fitting recognition for their years of experience and contribution in taking care of the National Collection of Singapore. The Centre views this accreditation as verification of their conservation knowledge and practical skills. It confirms their ability to apply their knowledge and experience to practice. They will serve as role models and motivation for their colleagues in pursuing a fruitful career in conservation.

HCC is an institution of the National Heritage Board, Singapore. Our key responsibility is to manage, care for and facilitate access to Singapore's National Collection. The Centre also promotes practical standards of heritage preservation through outreach, continuous research and professional development. The Centre is housed in a purpose built centralised collection repository and conservation laboratories. More information about the centre can be found on the website, [www.hcc.sg](http://www.hcc.sg).

In addition, the new ACRs would like to acknowledge and thank National Heritage Board and Heritage Conservation Centre, as well as their mentors for the encouragement, support and advice given to them during their journey to accreditation.

*Mr Robin Liu*, Senior Assistant Director (Conservation Services)

## SOME OF THE CANDIDATES' PROJECTS

**Ms Lee Swee Mun**, Assistant Director/Senior Conservator (Objects), presented **The Pleasure of Being, Crying, Dying and Eating**, a mixed media installation artwork by Montien Boonma (1953–2000) acquired by the National Heritage Board, Singapore.

She writes: The key structure of the artwork is a pagoda-like tower comprising more than a thousand glazed ceramic bowls stacked up together. Standing at 255cm tall with a diameter at 180cm, one intuitively stands an arm's length away from the ceramic tower for mutual safety as well as for appreciating the beauty of the artwork. Every curious mind would probably wonder how these bowls could stack so high up so stably. Well known for his sculptures and installations, the artist had used cyanoacrylate based adhesive, commonly known as superglue to adhere every bowl securely layer upon layer. During de-installation, warm air from the hair dryer was applied to soften the adhesive to take the bowls apart. However, the adhesive remained on the bowls. Due to the substantial efforts and resources which would be required for



Swee Mun carrying out treatment on a drum

conservation, the adhesive stains were left untreated.

Fourteen years later, in 2010, the artwork was selected for display again with less than three months for preparation. The artist has passed on. Little information about the original installation of the artwork was documented. The superglue had yellowed and proved time-consuming to remove. After discussion with the curator, the decision was to display the artwork in its existing condition. Instead of using superglue, a replacement anchoring material with good strength and working properties was sought to safely stack the bowls up whilst enabling ease of complete removal from the surface. A quick test was also conducted on materials available in the laboratory. In summary, 3M's Scotch-Weld 3748 Q jet melt adhesive (a polypropylene based adhesive) turned out to be a very suitable option which not only satisfied the structural safety requirements and good working properties, it also had a setting time which was just right to enable adjustment to the positions of the bowls and make them aesthetically acceptable. The whole adhesive blob could be easily dislodged once in contact with a little ethanol.

After the exhibition closed, the bowls were moved to the laboratory for conservation. A team was formed, including myself, to set up a treatment line to conduct condition assessment and treatment. Aqueous treatment completely removed the old adhesives and other surface dirt and grime. The treatment took 524 hours and was efficiently carried out with minimal use of other chemicals, which reduced risk to human health and maximised safety.

Every contemporary artwork is unique and the conservator often has to be very creative to manage the installation whilst conserving the artwork. This project was selected for accreditation not only because sound conservation strategies continue to play an important role in ensuring structural stability with minimal intervention in presenting works of art, but also because the task of making informed judgments and engaging relevant conservation practice in preserving the

integrity, and presenting the meaning, of a piece of artistic work is also a critical role of the conservator.

**Ms Lee Siew Wah**, Senior Conservator (Paper), presented a conservation project on **the works of art on paper collection of Museum Puri Lukisan in Bali**, funded by the Rudolf Bonnet Foundation.

*She writes:* I selected this project for PACR accreditation because it was one of the most challenging and interesting projects that I had encountered in my career.

The museum collection is based on early modern Balinese art, consisting mainly of watercolours on western papers. A total of eighty one works of art on paper were surveyed in 2010 with assistance from the museum staff and my fellow paper conservator, Mr Tay Jam Meng. There was no climate control and pest management in the museum, hence conditions resulting from humidity, such as cockling and foxing, and insect activities were common. The majority of the artworks were framed with plywood backings, and mounted onto wood-pulp mounts using PVA-like glue or pressure-sensitive tapes. As a result, there were stains and discolouration on many works, as well as some artworks having brittle and fragile supports. The conservation treatments proposed sought to address problems arising from less than satisfying framing materials.

The treatments were conducted in August and October 2011 for six weeks at the Bali museum. Given the time-constraints, we treated nineteen artworks of higher treatment priority. The rest of the collection would be treated by a member of the museum staff, Mr I Wayan Sumadi, who completed his internship in Singapore before the treatment phase commenced.

As conservation materials were not as readily available as basic art materials, we decided to adapt our treatments to the various alternative materials and those we could bring with us. Our intention was also to allow the museum to continue the conservation work independently after our trips and to make use of the materials available in Bali, for example, white non-woven synthetic fabric used for gift wrapping in place of

Demonstrating mounting mock-up to staff of Museum Puri Lukisan



Reemay. We had created a humidification setup using a wooden frame, nylon netting, weights, plastic sheet and a bath towel, which were all found locally.

It was a challenge to preserve the watercolours after the treatments. Fortunately, the museum managed to get from Jakarta museum-quality mountboards and corrugated polyethylene boards for conservation framing. Chinese papers from Bali's art shop and wheat starch were used in hinging and the frames were sealed with pressure-sensitive kraft tapes. Although conservation framing will not address the environmental concerns totally, the corrugated boards and kraft tape sealing should help to reduce moisture and insects from penetrating the frames.

**Ms Esther Ng**, Senior Conservator (Paper), presented **Microclimate Framing in the Tropics** as one of her projects

*She writes:* The natural environment of Singapore ranges between 25–35°C in temperature and 70–90% in RH. Framed works of art on paper are potentially at risk, especially when they are on loan to institutions which have no climate control. The high RH and its constant fluctuations could cause damage, such as structural distortion and/or mould growth, to these works of art.

Microclimate has been discussed widely in conservation literature as a viable solution to problems of distortion and mould on paper artefacts. Hence, this project aims to establish the effectiveness of using different materials to microclimate – frame a work of art on paper and to determine the length of their effectiveness in the tropics, so that some form of guidelines can be established.

In order to meet the aims of the project, three sets of framed microclimates were placed in three different scenarios. These scenarios are: a museum environment with controlled temperature and RH; an office environment with only temperature control for ten hours a day, five days a week and lastly, an indoor housing environment without any form of



Esther in the process of microclimate framing one of the test frames

temperature or RH control. The frames were microclimated in the way that Hugh Phibbs taught. Differences in the frame configurations for the project are listed in the table below.

For monitoring and capturing of data, there is a Temperature and RH datalogger within each individual frame. One logger is also placed in the external environment of each of the three scenarios. The results will be extracted and interpreted at the end of the study.

The project has been in progress for over a year and has yet to yield its final outcome and conclusions. At the end of it, however, the results should not only benefit the centre's national collections, they should also be shared with private and public collections and industry partners in Singapore, such as framers.

**Mr Alvin Tee**, Conservator (Objects), presented a project **Conserving a Straits Chinese Hearse**

*He writes:* The hearse is a large wooden artefact which was conserved for display at the National Museum of Singapore's History Gallery. It is the funerary hearse of Tan Jiak Kim (1859–1917), a prominent individual in Singapore history. A Straits Chinese, he was a merchant and a community leader.

Table showing the test scenarios and frame configurations of the project

| Test Conditions                                                               |                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Test scenarios                                                                | Frame configurations                                                                                            |
| A: Control. Placed in a controlled environment of 23°C and 55% RH             | Frame package with perspex glazing and sealed with aluminium/PE laminate                                        |
| B: Natural environment in a public apartment without climate control          | Frame package with glass glazing and sealed with aluminium/PE laminate                                          |
| C: Office environment with app. 10 hours of airconditioning for 5 days a week | Frame package with glass glazing and artsorb and sealed with aluminium/PE laminate                              |
|                                                                               | Frame package with glass glazing and mylar as barrier as backing and sealed with aluminium tape                 |
|                                                                               | Frame package as glass glazing and framed normally without any microclimate sealing materials. (Only for set B) |



Final installation of the hearse in the gallery

The elaborately-carved hearse is a rare Singapore artefact and it represents a period of reform in Straits Chinese funerary practices during the early twentieth century. Its carvings bear distinct evidence of European, Chinese and Malay styles. The hearse was acquired in the 1970s in a completely disassembled state, with no documentation or images of how the parts should be re-constituted, nor what the assembled hearse looks like. Putting the component parts together was one of the challenges of the conservation treatment.

The objective of the treatment was to retain its historical and aesthetic integrity by restoring it to the extent that it can bear its structural load when fully constituted. There were seventeen structural components of which only thirteen were in fairly complete form. Poor storage had resulted in accumulated dirt and metal corrosion. There were numerous broken carvings, severe structural damages, missing structural pieces and termite infestation.

Treatment was carried out in several stages. Thirty to forty per cent of the structure was either damaged or missing. The missing parts included two major roof structures and a wheel – important support structures. Identifying suitable skilled craftsmen to fabricate replacement parts proved another challenge. The specifications then needed to be carefully and precisely communicated to the craftsmen and builders.

The hearse posed challenges in various respects. These ranged from the assessment of the condition, problem-solving, researching the historical background to decisions to replace and restore missing parts, managing stake holders

and the complex installation. I managed this project from start to completion. It pushed my boundaries then and tested my decision-making and judgement.

The accreditation assessment criteria require applicants to demonstrate nuances of in-depth considerations. This hearse project presented various situations where several factors needed to be considered in the decision-making process, and also where decisions needed to be continuously assessed during the work. Hence, I selected it for assessment and feedback.

During the assessment, my assessors provided valuable feedback on our projects and practices. The assessment day is a platform for applicants to interact meaningfully with highly-qualified professionals in our field; it raises opportunities for the applicant to reflect upon our work and consider revisiting some issues or making changes. The whole accreditation process was not a piece of cake but the fruits of the process are definitely sweet.

**P.S. As Mr Liu's overview on page 14 implies, all four of the Singapore candidates were successfully accredited. Hearty congratulations to them all!**

# around and about

## A unique technique?

A selection of Roman archaeological material from Blackmoor in the parish of Selbourne, long held in store at Hampshire County Council Arts & Museums Service (HCCAMS) recently arrived in the studio for a routine condition check before its return to the stores.

One of the items in this box attracted particular attention: a copper alloy bowl, heavily restored with what appeared to be painted papier mâché. This seemed an unusual solution and one which had not yet been encountered among our collections. Although not of a current standard, it also seemed to have been carried out with a degree of skill – at least in the shaping and colour matching. There were no known conservation records for this work, which is estimated to have been carried out several decades ago. The extent of the restoration, although obvious on inspection, had actually



Detail of bowl underside, showing lifting of papier mache



The bowl as received

Top view of bowl as received, showing old fills shrinking away from edges



remained undetected while the bowl remained in storage and it had previously been assumed to be a complete example.

The true state of the object indicated that further conservation would be necessary: the old work was failing; shrinking and pulling away from the fragile edges of the bowl. There was a danger that the degree of repair was hiding not only a large proportion of original material but also the true fragility of the bowl and further damage may as a result occur through careless handling. Aside from this, the bowl had a thick layer of particulate dirt and small areas of active 'bronze disease' corrosion.

As the dismantling of the old restoration got underway, its complexity was revealed. Strips of very thin sheet lead had been used in larger areas of loss as the basis for a gap fill, covered and built up on either side with further strips of gummed, painted paper. As this material was carefully

As the fill material is peeled back, layers of paper and sheet lead can be seen





During removal of extensive old fill material

stripped away by hand, it was interesting to see a marked difference in the level of skill employed on the outer surface compared to that on the areas which would have been hidden. There was extensive scratching of the original surface to prepare areas for the application of solder, fragment edges were not aligned, pieces had been replaced where they may not have necessarily originated, and solder had been generously applied in rough lumps. The rim had been built up where there was loss with two bent lengths of copper wire, soldered into place, over which the sheet lead and papier mâché had been laid. The front cover image shows the copper rim clearly.

Following removal of the fills, the bowl was further cleaned, mechanically and with deionised water on cotton swabs – the only solvent found that would remove the over-painting. It was then dehydrated and degreased with acetone. It had been decided as work progressed that the areas of solder and copper wire would remain, since they were still valid as structural supports. Removing them would also entail unnecessary risk to the object and more in-depth work than needed at this stage.

Immersion in benzotriazole under vacuum for forty eight hours was carried out to stabilize any active corrosion, before final rinsing in Industrial Methylated Spirits. An application of Incralac was considered but not carried out, as the bowl is to be returned to store and will certainly need further work if required for display in the future. It was felt important to

The bowl will return to store with new temporary supporting fills of spider tissue and Paraloid B72



minimise the level of intervention at this stage, as stabilisation was really the only outcome required. Since our sensitive store is totally dark for the majority of time, it is hoped that the benzotriazole will not degrade.

This object is a reminder of the changing nature of conservation and of the inevitability that what is considered best practice today will also become outdated. Although objective criticism of previous work is necessary for improvement, I hope that what comes across from this article is the sharing of a past treatment solution that I find genuinely interesting, rather than a judgment. However inappropriate certain actions may seem against our modern guidelines, and however unfortunate some of their consequences, the past restorer still deserves credit for the continued survival of the bowl. It did, after all, arrive in my hands in much the same state as it left theirs.

As I was considering my own options for a light, easily reversible yet strong material which would provide both structural support and protection for fragile edges, I realized that I was in fact going to end up echoing the past treatment: in preparation for the bowl's return to storage, the gaps were temporarily filled with spider tissue strips impregnated with Paraloid B72 in acetone, built up to form a thin papier mâché.

*Claire Woodhead ACR*  
H.C.C.A.M.S

## Bats at Work!

One of the National Trust for Scotland's preventive conservators, Mel Houston, has recently been awarded a bat licence from Scottish Natural Heritage. This follows a year-long training programme which Mel fitted in around her preventive conservation duties.

Mel says 'At first it may sound strange that a preventive conservator has gone through this training but many of our collections are stored or displayed in properties with bat roosts. We need to do the best by the collections and by the

The cage ensures that bats are not at risk from sticky traps



## What to do if you find a grounded or injured bat

### Never handle bats with bare hands.

1. Find a suitable box, something like an ice cream tub or check the stock room for sweetie boxes! Put some air holes in the lid.  
(NB: Why not keep a box handy at your property for this purpose!)
2. Put a shallow container (such as a jam jar lid) of water in a corner of the box.
3. Pick the bat up by covering it loosely with a towel, gently scoop towel and bat up together and put both in the box.
4. Make sure the lid is securely replaced, bats can escape through very small spaces!
5. In the evening place the open box on a window ledge away from cats and let the bat take its time to fly away.
6. If the bat appears injured contact the NTS Nature Conservation Team or the Bat Conservation Trust Bat Helpline for advice.

## What to do if you find a dead bat

Dead bats must be handled using disposable gloves (or layers of paper towels). Contact the NTS Nature Conservation Team who will give you advice on what to do next as they may wish to collect it for research or to check the species. Always note down where you found it, the date it was found, and any other information that may be relevant, for example, 'bat found after internal wall fitting removed'.



Adults are often mistaken for juveniles due to their small size.

## Did you know?

- 9 bat species are found in Scotland, although other species do turn up occasionally.
- British bats eat flying insects and therefore hibernate during the winter when there is not enough food.
- Bats usually have one baby each year.
- Bats are adaptable creatures and often roost in buildings as older or damaged trees with suitable roosting spaces are often felled for H&S reasons.
- Bats do not build nests or chew things; they roost in existing spaces.
- Oh, and they don't get tangled in your hair!

### Cover image:

In Chinese, the word for good luck and the word for bat sound the same (fu). Bat symbols are therefore used to represent good fortune. This ceramic jar is displayed in the Chinese Sitting Room at Newhailes.



More information on bats, situations that may arise and what to do will be made available on Sharepoint in the future.

## Contacts

|                                     |               |                                                      |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| NTS Nature Conservation Team        | 0844 493 2454 | <a href="http://www.nts.org.uk">www.nts.org.uk</a>   |
| Bat Conservation Trust Bat Helpline | 0845 1300 228 | <a href="http://www.bats.org.uk">www.bats.org.uk</a> |
| SNH                                 | 01463 725 000 | <a href="http://www.snh.gov.uk">www.snh.gov.uk</a>   |



Photo credits: Mel Houston (cover), Laurie Campbell (back cover), and Natalie Rodman (all others).



the National Trust  
for Scotland  
a place for bats



## Bats at work!

Bats and Collections Care in  
the National Trust for Scotland

### Guidance for staff working with historic collections

Bats may roost near historic collections in attics, cellars and roof spaces, and even occasionally in the historic display rooms. As bats are protected by law, we collaborate with the NTS bat workers to protect both our collections from damage and our bats from disturbance.

©NTS

## The leaflet about bats for NTS property staff

bats. It is important to give correct advice to our property staff and having someone in our team who is licensed helps do that. The licence allows me to enter roosts if necessary but more importantly has enabled me to work with our Nature Conservation Team to understand how we can work with the bats and comply with the legislation which protects them. We have produced a bat leaflet for property staff with the help of a licensed bat ranger and this gives practical advice on how staff can protect our collections from damage and our bats from disturbance. We have also built up a great working relationship with the Nature Conservation Team and there is a mutual appreciation and understanding of the work each department needs to do.'

The bat licence training is a progression from the Integrated Pest Management work Mel leads on for the Trust. She has worked with their nature advisors to make sure the IPM programme does not put bats at risk, for example, by producing cages to 'bat proof' sticky traps used to monitor insect pest activity. This highlighted the need to provide accurate, clear information for property staff and Collections Conservation Service and so Mel began training for her bat licence.

The Trust would like to know if there are other conservators out there in the UK with or working towards gaining a bat licence. Get in touch if you do with Mel Houston, Preventive Conservator, on [mhouston@nts.org.uk](mailto:mhouston@nts.org.uk)

practice in planning and delivering talks to groups of increasing size and diversity.

One of the strengths of the new programme is its relationship with Glasgow Museums, part of Glasgow Life, the local government body responsible for culture and sport in the city. Frances Lennard, the Programme Convenor, worked with the Learning Manager at Glasgow Life to identify community groups within the city who might appreciate hearing about the work of a textile conservator.

Mark Langdon, one of Glasgow Life's Community Action Officers, came to brief the second year students on speaking to community audiences. In an inspiring forty minutes he got the students talking about their passion for conservation, demonstrating how engaging a genuine enthusiasm for your subject can be. He advocated making the talks personal rather than general, suggesting that a non-specialist audience would identify with talks that described how the students came to be interested in textile conservation, what they hoped to do, and why it was important. He explained how humour can help to draw your audience in too, and asked them what props they could bring to help their audiences understand the topic, while suggesting the use of film to give a better idea of the work. When asked how to combat nerves

## Engaging with the public



© University of Glasgow

## Glasgow students meet the public

Earlier this year the MPhil Textile Conservation students at the University of Glasgow had a taste of promoting textile conservation to the public. When developing the new programme in Glasgow, it was considered important to reflect the increased emphasis on the need for conservators to engage with the public, following the publication of the Demos report *It's a Material World* in 2008. Communication skills are also such an important part of the conservator's work that one of the aims of the programme is to give students



Displaying a rare student gown for the tv cameras

he recommended Kalms, or chamomile tea!

In small teams of two or three, the students gave talks to three groups in the city: an over 55s art class based at the Tramway Arts Centre, a sewing group in Pollok and the 'Big Green Sunday', a community event with an eco theme in Scotstoun. The students talked about their own conservation projects and explained their work within the context of what conservation sets out to achieve. At the Tramway, students tried to articulate the distinction between conservation and restoration; they broached the subject of object biographies, explaining how objects can gain significance over time and with use. The second group talked about their own particular interests, in ethnographic textiles and contemporary textile art. Care for individuals' own treasures was a good entry point to conservation for the environmentally friendly theme of the Scotstoun community gathering, and the students touched on the causes of damage in textiles and the principles of preventive conservation.

All three talks were extremely well received, with varying reactions from the different audiences. The art group members were very engaged and asked lots of questions about how to care for their own textile possessions. The sewing group members already had an interest in the museum world having had their own work exhibited at the Burrell Collection, and they were interested in the students' stitching exercises and the needles and threads they took along to demonstrate their work. One listener was particularly intrigued by how exactly the students would go about threading one of the tiny curved needles and asked for a demonstration. The 'Big Green Sunday' community was the hardest to crack (especially the woman who fell asleep) but one audience member admitted that it had been 'more interesting than he thought it would be'!

Nikki Chard commented 'I think what gave me the most pleasure was the way that the audience reacted to things that you don't think about much, such as the sewing techniques or needle and thread sizes. I watched them looking at our samples and they seemed fascinated. The questions we received about conserving objects were interesting too. I remember someone asking if we were going to clean the doll's face and it is interesting that the general public appreciate the aesthetic side of conservation and seem to identify with it more – making things look good regardless of whether it compromises the object's integrity.'

The students really enjoyed delivering the talks and found it a very useful experience. Charlotte Gamper concluded 'After studying for two years with most of our time spent at the university, it was great to have the opportunity to go outside and tell people about textile conservation and the work we do, and even better to see their enthusiasm and genuine interest for it.' And the students can take satisfaction from having played a small part in promoting understanding of museums and conservation within the Glasgow community.

### Making the local news

Julie Benner's treatment of a rare 1830s student gown from the university's Hunterian Museum was also the focus of a piece on the BBC local news programme *Reporting Scotland* in May this year. See [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-18061961](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-18061961). This exercise demonstrated the real challenge of getting accurate information across while still creating a good story. Its success is demonstrated by the number of people we've met since in Scotland who remember seeing the clip and who clearly now understand something of textile conservation.

**Frances Lennard**, Programme Convenor MPhil Textile Conservation, and students **Julie Benner**, **Nikki Chard** and **Charlotte Gamper**

## The Art of Travel

From March to June 2012 an exhibition of Scottish railway art entitled *See Scotland by Train* was held at the National Museum of Scotland (NMS), Edinburgh. It predominantly showcased original posters, but oil paintings, photographs and artefacts were included to complement and highlight the story of railway art in Scotland from the turn of the 20th Century until the present day. Paper conservators Lisa Cumming, ACR, and Vicki Hanley dealt with the conservation, mounting and installation of these complex objects against a very tight timetable and budget. A full article about the project can be found at [thebookandpapergathering.org](http://thebookandpapergathering.org). Their blog about this fascinating exhibition also features on the NMS website <http://feastbowl.wordpress.com/2012/06/08/the-conservation-of-railway-posters-for-the-see-scotland-by-train-exhibition/>

### The *See Scotland by Train* exhibition





The Oxford Conservation Consortium's new equipment in action

## Grasping the nettle

### A professional approach to conservation photography in the digital age

The past two and a half years have seen a concentrated effort at the Oxford Conservation Consortium (OCC) to raise funds to update the photographic system used for conservation documentation. The speed of change in digital photography has progressed so fast that it was becoming increasingly clear that the rather basic 'point and shoot' digital camera being used for all studio photography (including documentation) was no longer 'fit for purpose' and the system of image management was also unsatisfactory.

It was clear from the start that there was an urgent need to assess the pros and cons of different systems and that in order to find the most appropriate equipment and image management available, research was needed. To that end, Maria Kalligerou visited a number of conservation studios to see what equipment was being used and what was working best for others in the conservation world; we are extremely grateful for all the guidance and support that we have had from conservation colleagues along the way, in particular at the Bodleian Libraries, the Ashmolean and Pitt Rivers Museums, to name just our closest colleagues. In addition to this, in 2009 all staff members of OCC undertook training at the Oxford University Computer Service on the capture of digital images and a JISC course on 'Building a Departmental Image Library'. The information thus gained helped us to formulate a plan of action.

Once we had decided what was required, it was immediately apparent that the project budget exceeded the scope of our

annual materials/equipment budget and that before we could do anything, a fundraising campaign was needed. A large number of charitable trusts and grant-giving organisations were approached and whilst many were unable to help, we received very generous contributions from all the bodies listed below. We are extremely grateful to them all. In January of this year we reached our goal of £34,000.

The equipment we purchased included a Nikon D800 camera with two lenses, a new fixed lighting system, a moveable microscope stand with a digital camera for photomicroscopy, Manfred Meyer's 'Traveller's Copystand', a flexible light sheet and fibre-optic light source, and a new laptop for both capturing and storing the images. We have also acquired a scissor lift trolley with lockable wheels on which to support smaller objects for photography. We have had four days of photographic training with conservation photographer Mike Halliwell, which has refreshed skills acquired many years ago and introduced new ones. Already we are finding it much easier to light and photograph objects, and the images produced are infinitely better.

There is still some way to go in the project and we have yet to finalise the management system for the images but a start has been made and the studio is keen in due course to share the knowledge that has been acquired with other conservators.

We are extremely grateful to AMARC, the Aurelius Trust, the Cromarty Trust, the d'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust, the Leche Trust, the Mercer's Company, the National Archive, the Pilgrim Trust, the Radcliffe Trust, and all our members for their generous support and help in enabling this project to come to fruition.

**Celia Withycombe** ACR and **Katerina Powell** ACR  
Senior Conservators, OCC

# news from the groups

## ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP

### Christmas event: Conservation Mysteries

Book now for the Archaeology Group Christmas Meeting and Party at The Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, Chippenham on Friday 14 December. This is an informal meeting discussing mysterious objects and conservation projects. There will be talks, a pub quiz style activity and tours of the Wiltshire Council Conservation and Museums Advisory Service facilities. A Christmas celebration will follow with nibbles and good cheer! Further information and booking details are on the Group web pages or contact Beth Werrett: [beth.werrett@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:beth.werrett@wiltshire.gov.uk)

## BOOK AND PAPER GROUP

### CTR: Courses and Conference

The latest Co-operative Training Register (CTR) course, *Environment for Objects*, presented by Dr Tim Padfield, took place in Oxford on 29 and 30 October. Developed in response to a member's request via the online CTR forms on the Book and Paper Group website pages, this event was our fastest selling course to date and we were very fortunate to have been able to add a second day so members weren't disappointed. Our thanks go to Tim and our host institutions, Conservation and Collections Care at the Bodleian Library, Oxford Conservation Consortium and Magdalen College. A review of the course will be available in the next edition of *Icon News* as well as the course bibliography being available via the Chantry Library.

### The future is positive for the Book and Paper Group

Another focus of the CTR committee's activities has been preparation for the Book and Paper Group's sessions at *Positive Futures 2013*. The Book and Paper Group has again joined forces with the Photographic Materials Group to provide a broad based forum for the benefit and enjoyment of both Groups' members. We had a very strong response to our call for papers with excellent and varied submissions from members and students alike on our theme of *Current Solutions for Mutual Issues*. The committee would like to thank everyone who submitted an abstract for consideration and we will announce the final programme via an *Iconnect* shortly. As well as combining our efforts with the Photographic Materials Group, and in line with our group theme, the committee is working to organise a cross-disciplinary session on adhesives as part of our conference programme, and is currently in contact with Textiles, Science, Ethnography and Furniture and Wood Groups to see if this can be arranged.

### Broad horizons: to 2013 and beyond!

Finally, the committee has also been working on a packed 2013 CTR programme which will include courses on *Stationery Bindings* in Stafford on 4 February, *Print Identification in Reading* in April and hopefully a repeat of the very popular *Medieval Palette* course in the latter part of spring. As the piece de resistance of our efforts so far, the CTR committee has already begun to develop the programme for a specifically Book and Paper Group conference on eastern

print, papermaking and conservation techniques, scheduled for the first half of 2014, so watch this space for further news.

Victoria Stevens ACR

## GILDING AND DECORATIVE SURFACES GROUP

### Conference Announcement.

The Group's Committee is pleased to announce our first Conference since 2009. It will be held at the Wallace Collection in London on 14 March 2013 on the subject of *Conserving Context: relating object treatment to collections & settings*.

The Conference will explore the complex issues involved in making decisions that correspond between objects, collections and settings. It will focus on how treatments conserve or change the whole context of their collection and setting; whether inside or outside a house, museum, gallery or other location such as an industrial context. In both museum and private contexts it is often difficult to rationalise the necessarily nuanced approaches which are taken with these issues. However, in seeking to maintain whole contexts, an integrated approach is required to be applied right down to individual objects as elements within.

The Gilding & Decorative Surfaces Group Conference

**Conserving Context:**  
*relating object treatment to collections & settings*

14 March 2013, The Wallace Collection, London  
For information and bookings: [www.tinyurl.com/gdsconf](http://www.tinyurl.com/gdsconf)

Icon  
THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION

The Conference wishes to highlight commonality and collaboration between disciplines and to include a variety of periods, materials and approaches, with each paper concentrating on a specific case study. We are planning the Conference's sessions to be focussed thematically:

To book a place: please contact Claire Daly at [GDSC.Conference2013@gmail.co.uk](mailto:GDSC.Conference2013@gmail.co.uk). Early-bird ticket prices are available until 14 February 2013 (members £90 and student members £50), with fees increasing by 10% thereafter.

## HISTORIC INTERIORS GROUP

This year's annual Historic Interiors Cambridge Conference *The Country House in the Eighteenth Century* held on 13 April was a great success. (See review on page 31.) This was the Group's fourth conference and followed the format of the previous ones: the papers were presented either side of a long lunch-break which included an extended visit to various eighteenth century interiors of various Cambridge Colleges. At the end of the day the delegates enjoyed a punt ride to a local Italian restaurant. Rooms were available in the Corpus Christi College and so the day extended to breakfast in the College Hall the following morning. Each year the conference attracts a growing group of regular attendees, historic interiors experts who would not miss the event. It has been hailed as '*the best conference*'.

### Cambridge Conference 2013

Next year's conference will consider *Church Interiors in the Eighteenth Century* and will be held on Friday 22 March 2013. For further details contact Mette de Hamel 40 Lansdowne Gardens, London SW8 2EF ([mdehamel@btinternet.com](mailto:mdehamel@btinternet.com)) Tel. 0207 622 1620

### Historic Interiors Christmas Party

On Thursday November 29 2012, the Historic Interiors Group is celebrating Christmas early with an special evening at the historic George Inn in Southwark. Owned by the National Trust but leased to Greene King Breweries, it is the only surviving galleried London coaching inn. The evening will start with a short walking tour of the area followed by a talk on historic sites in Southwark. Wine, cheese and nibbles. Booking essential. Meet at the George Inn promptly at 6.30. Members £10, non members £15.

*Helen Hughes*

## STONE AND WALL PAINTINGS GROUP

### Bursaries

We're delighted to announce that in 2013 the Stone and Wall Paintings Group will be offering several bursaries to help student or trainee conservators attend conferences organised by the Group. The aim is for each bursary to cover conference fees and reasonable travel expenses. Watch this space for further information.

### SWP at PF13

For the Icon PF13 conference the Stone and Wall Paintings group will be holding a session that will include project talks

on, amongst others, wall paintings from Westminster Palace and Gloucester Cathedral, and Scottish stone projects.

### 2013 Events

The Committee is busy preparing forthcoming events for 2013. If you have any suggestions for conference topics, training or continuing professional development, then please let us know.

### You!

Our Group currently has one hundred and sixty members, which makes us a community. But what are you working on at the moment? An interesting object or building? A challenging project? Share it with your Group and Icon by sending us details and we can publish it in Icon News or on the website. Please don't be shy, this is your professional and friendly community and you make it so!

Just drop a line to Clara at [clara.willett@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:clara.willett@english-heritage.org.uk).

## TEXTILE GROUP

With regard to the Icon Conference 2013 'Positive Futures in an Uncertain World' in Glasgow, a very exciting opportunity has arisen for us to take part in interdisciplinary sessions involving the Book and Paper, Science, and Paintings Groups and perhaps more. The sessions will cover Adhesives and Consolidants: Research and Practice. It will provide an opportunity to listen to and possibly watch demonstrations from various groups. The sessions will cover all aspects of adhesives from what they are and how to use them through to current projects using them.

In an Iconnect last month we asked for submissions on the subject, which will combine a poster with a ten-minute talk. This idea is similar to a system used at the Adhesives and Consolidants Conference organised by the Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI), in Ottawa, Canada last year. See the Icon website for more details about the conference

Because of the exciting change to our plans for Glasgow, we have decided to carry the Ethics theme over to our Spring Forum 2014, so please keep this in mind over the next twelve months and be prepared early for 2014! We are also looking at other suggestions from the feedback forms such as collaborating with groups such as Historic Interiors or Preventive Conservation for future forums.

I understand that the V&A Ballgowns event in early November was fully booked but we also have a visit to the new V&A Textile Study centre lined up for next year and hopefully a trip to the Leather Conservation Centre. Dates for these are yet to be confirmed. Details will be posted on the Textile Group pages of the Icon website and also on the Icon facebook page.

*Deborah Phipps*, Chair of the Textile Group.

## COATED PAPER CONSERVATION PROJECT

*Looking at glossy paper and ways to repair it by Holly Smith*

### Introduction

Coated paper has a long history, and evidence of paper coating practice can be traced back as early as ancient China, where it was used to add density and a luxurious whiteness to paper. Since the industrial revolution, when coated papers began to be mass-produced, these papers have become synonymous with high-quality printing and clear glossy images which can be found in expensive hard-backs as well as the more ephemeral magazines. The sheer volume of material printed on coated paper throughout the 20th century is considerable and continues to increase. Conservation issues specific to this type of material are becoming apparent within collections, as the papers start to deteriorate. Solutions need to be implemented soon in order to preserve them and before their accessibility is compromised.

The issues arise mainly in treating coated papers, when the coatings themselves can inhibit the use of traditional adhesives and repair techniques. Another consideration is the aesthetic value of the paper and problems associated with surface replication for infills or repairs.

The increased interest in exhibiting ephemeral objects such as posters and magazines by cultural institutions is evidenced by recent exhibitions such as *The Vorticists: Manifesto for a Modern World* (Tate Britain, 2011); *Modernism: Designing a New World 1914–1939* (V&A, 2006) and *Beatles to Bowie: The 60s Exposed* (National Portrait Gallery, 2009). Popular culture is often used to contextualise the art, design or time period being exhibited. For this reason, we can expect this type of material to feature more prominently in the future.

As a book conservation student at West Dean College I studied some issues surrounding the use of infills on coated paper materials. The relatively small amount of conservation research into the material, compared to the prevalence of coated paper materials in modern collections, was both a challenging and interesting part of this project. In order to identify key conservation issues associated with this type of paper, a survey was conducted in the Victoria and Albert Museum's National Art Library. A collection of three hundred of their coated paper periodicals dating from the first half of the 20th century was assessed from these periodical titles: *The Illustrated London News*, *Vogue*, *The Sphere*, *LIFE*, *The New Yorker*, *The Sketch*, *The Graphic* and *Country Life*.

The author burnishing one of the made samples by hand.



© V&A Images, 2011

| Type of Damage              | % of surveyed collection with damage type |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>Use Damage</b>           |                                           |
| None                        | 3.6%                                      |
| Tape                        | 12.9%                                     |
| Notations                   | 53.5%                                     |
| Loose or torn pages         | 57.4%                                     |
| Missing pages               | 7.9%                                      |
| Food stains                 | 3.0%                                      |
| Dirt, Fingerprints          | 57.8%                                     |
| False Folds                 | 22.4%                                     |
| Inserted Objects            | 0.7%                                      |
| Other                       | 5.9%                                      |
| <b>Environmental Damage</b> |                                           |
| None                        | 82.2%                                     |
| Light Damage                | 0.7%                                      |
| Pest Damage                 | 0.7%                                      |
| Mould Damage                | 3.0%                                      |
| Water Damage                | 12.2%                                     |
| Fire Damage                 | 0%                                        |
| Other                       | 7.9%                                      |

Table 1. Condition survey findings

| Made Samples     | Samples unburnished (GU) | SD  | Samples burnished with agate (GU) | SD  | Samples press-dried on Melinex | SD  |
|------------------|--------------------------|-----|-----------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------|-----|
| GSB Plain        | 4.8i                     | 0   |                                   |     |                                |     |
| GSB AcrylBI      | 1                        | 0   | 2.9                               | 0.2 |                                |     |
| GSB AcrylGr      | 1.6                      | 0   | 5.4                               | 0   |                                |     |
| GSB SCMC         | 5.1                      | 0   | 13.8                              | 0.1 | 10.6                           | 0.1 |
| GSB AcrylBI SCMC | 1.2                      | 0   | 3.3                               | 0   | 5.4                            | 0.1 |
| GSB AcrylGr SCMC | 1.7                      | 0   | 4                                 | 0.1 | 5.3                            | 0.1 |
| GSB EVA          | 10.2                     | 0.1 | 5                                 | 0.1 | 69.9                           | 0.4 |
| GSB AcrylBI EVA  | 17.3                     | 0.1 | 9.3                               | 0.2 | 86.8                           | 0.2 |
| GSB AcrylGr EVA  | 9.2                      | 0.1 | 5.3                               | 0.1 | 85.4                           | 0.2 |
| GSB WSP          | 5.1                      | 0   | 6.5                               | 0   | 48.3                           | 1.2 |
| GSB AcrylBI WSP  | 2.1                      | 0.1 | 5.8                               | 0.1 | 63.9                           | 1.0 |
| GSB AcrylGr WSP  | 2.5                      | 0   | 9.7                               | 0.7 | 47.3                           | 0.8 |
| GSB G            | 4.6                      | 0   | 11.4                              | 0   | 11.1                           | 0   |
| GSB AcrylBI G    | 1.5                      | 0.1 | 4.7                               | 0   | 8.1                            | 0   |
| GSB AcrylGr G    | 2                        | 0   | 7                                 | 0.1 | 11.3                           | 0.1 |
| GSB KG           | 5.2                      | 0   | 9                                 | 0   | 10.1                           | 0.1 |
| GSB AcrylBI KG   | 1.3                      | 0   | 3.3                               | 0.1 | 19.1                           | 0   |
| GSB AcrylGr KG   | 2                        | 0   | 4.8                               | 0   | 11.7                           | 0.3 |
| GSB PB72         | 5.7                      | 0   | 6.6                               | 0.2 |                                |     |
| GSB AcrylBI PB72 | 7.1                      | 0.3 | 10.9                              | 1.0 |                                |     |
| GSB AcrylGr PB72 | 7.1                      | 0.2 | 17                                | 3.5 |                                |     |

**Sample Key:**

GSB: Gifu Shoji Buff (Paper)

SCMC: sodiumcarboxymethyl cellulose

EVA: ethylene vinyl acetate

WSP: wheat starch paste

G: Gelatine

KG: Klucel G

PB72(2): Paraloid B-72, 2 layers

PB72(4): Paraloid B-72, 4 layers

AcrylBI: Ivory Black Acrylic

AcrylGr: Emerald Green Acrylic

SD: Standard Deviation

Table 2. The results of the glossmeter readings from the made samples

## Surveying the problem

The aim of the survey was to identify specific conservation issues associated with this type of material and its general condition. The surfaces were also examined to note the changes in the appearance of the coatings between 1900 and 1960 – the time period covered by the survey. The amount of gloss on the surface of all the objects documented in the survey was quantified by using a control scale of nine graded paper samples. A survey spreadsheet was created which initially identified the object itself, its age, dimensions and publication information, followed by a series of tick boxes, which categorized the types of damage found on the object when being surveyed. These types of damage were divided into two parts: damage through use, and damage as a result of the environment and each of these were further subdivided into specific types of damage within those parameters. The results from the survey are shown in Table 1 above.

The survey identified that 6.6% of the total collections examined either had significant losses which would require infilling or contained previously repaired losses which could be improved with a more aesthetically sympathetic replacement. Although this percentage is small in terms of other types of damage sustained by the surveyed items, it is

most relevant for its effect on accessibility, safe handling and exhibiting. Areas of loss in periodicals compromise the structural strength of the object, as a torn edge is usually weakened and at risk of further damage. Previous repairs to this type of paper, whether due to historical treatment conventions or due to the fact that periodicals are considered an ephemeral material, did not always attempt to match the surface appearance.

A practical project was therefore designed to create a suitable repair paper sample and to evaluate to what extent the gloss created matched up visually with that of existing coated paper surfaces.

## Methodology for repair samples

Although communications with practising conservators suggested that both Western and Japanese papers were currently being used for this type of conservation repair, a Japanese paper was chosen as the most appropriate paper for the practical testing for this project. The paper, Gifu Shoji Buff, was used as the base for all of the samples of the repair papers. The samples were to be coated and then burnished. Fifty six samples were created: one sample had neither acrylic colourant nor adhesive coating and was used as the control



The discrepancy in surface reflectance between the original coated paper and the infill can be seen clearly. The image is of *Vogue* (July 1941) back cover

but all of the other samples were then coated with either an acrylic colourant, an adhesive coating or both. Two thirds of the samples were given an acrylic base to examine the way in which the colourant affected the appearance of the gloss while the other third of the samples were left uncoloured. In order to achieve a smooth coating of pigment the acrylic colourant was applied through a silk screen. Two different paints were used on the samples, *Liquitex Ivory Black* and *Liquitex Emerald Green*. Black was chosen to see how a very dark tone would affect the appearance of the different burnished adhesives and green was chosen in order to study the effect of a bright undertone on the appearance of the surfaces.

Each plain, green and black acrylic sample was then coated with each of the chosen adhesives: SCMC (1% w/v sodium carboxymethyl cellulose dissolved in warm water), EVA (100%), cooked-wheat starch paste (12.5% w/v), gelatine (3% v/w in warm water), Klucel G (2% w/v dissolved in Isopropanol) and Paraloid B72 (20% w/v dissolved in xylene). Each of these was applied to the samples with a wide soft-haired brush and left to dry on blotter. Xylene was chosen as the solvent for Paraloid B72 because the Paraloid B72 dissolves more fully in it than other more commonly used solvents like IMS (industrial methylated spirits); it also evaporated more slowly, which allowed the Paraloid to spread and create an evenly distributed film, reducing the appearance of brush marks. These quantities of adhesive and solvent were chosen because they produced a solution with good flow properties and similar consistencies. A third of the samples, once coated, was burnished with a dog-toothed agate burnisher. Each sample was burnished for two minutes and a break was taken every five samples to ensure equal pressure was applied throughout. One third was press-dried on Melinex, by applying the coating and then placing the sample on Melinex before the coating had dried and leaving it overnight in a nipping press. Once dried the samples were peeled carefully from the Melinex.

### Assessing the gloss

Gloss is measured in gloss units (GU), which is an attribution of a number between 1 and 100. This number represents the specular reflection of a beam of light shone onto a surface. A gloss unit reading of 100 means that all of the light is reflected from the surface back to the glossmeter without any scattering or diffusion. For each sample, ten readings were taken with the glossmeter and the gloss unit for that surface was calculated as an average of those readings.



Samples being coated with SCMC (sodiumcarboxymethylcellulose), one of the chosen adhesives.

The results – see Table 2 – show that a wide variety of surface qualities can be achieved using different adhesives and burnishing methods. The EVA coating was found to most significantly increase the gloss units for a sample both with and without burnishing but especially when press-dried on Melinex. Paraloid B72 was also found to achieve a very high gloss when burnished with an agate burnisher. These created surfaces similar to what would be used on the cover of a contemporary magazine. SCMC was the coating which least significantly altered the glossiness of the sample's surface and created an irregular shimmering pattern when burnished. It is also important to note that some of the adhesive coatings altered or distorted the sample. This occurred particularly with the water-based adhesives such as wheat starch paste and SCMC. The effect of this distortion was reduced on samples which were also coated with an acrylic colourant as this acted as a barrier between the adhesive and the paper fibres.

The significant finding from this study has been the ability to create many different surfaces using adhesives found in most conservation studios; a greater variety means the likelihood of being able to create an aesthetically sympathetic infill is increased. The subject is definitely in need of further research but this is a promising initial result for a project looking to develop our approach to coated paper conservation.

### Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank Anne Bancroft, Jane Rutherford, Bhavesh Shah and everyone at the V&A for their help; Isabelle Egan from the British Library for her valuable input; and David Dorning and Lorna Calcutt of West Dean College for their support and guidance throughout my research.

*Holly Smith has just started an internship – read about her on page 13*

## BOOK

### THE AIC GUIDE TO DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY AND CONSERVATION DOCUMENTATION (2ND EDITION)

Jeffrey Warda, ed., et al.

American Institute for Conservation of

Historic and Artistic Works 2011

ISBN: 978-0-9760501-3-1 223pp

I approached this book not as an expert in the use of digital photography for conservation documentation nor as an expert in digital photography more generally. I suspect my experience in this area is similar to many other conservators. I am an enthusiastic amateur, I make use of a point and click camera to document life more generally, and at work, when in doubt, I tend to rely on the automatic settings of a DSLR camera. What I do know about the use of digital photography for conservation documentation has mostly been learnt on the job, from colleagues who share advice and experience of best practice, and from following the protocols set down by institutions where I have worked.

Coming to the subject from this perspective, I believe this book is invaluable for developing a more informed approach, and I fully expect to see the benefit in my images as I instigate some adjustments to my practice. However, this doesn't mean that this publication should be seen merely as a 'Digital Photography for Conservation Documentation for Dummies'. The book is well structured, and principal facts are explained clearly so those of us with less experience of the more technical elements of equipment selection, image capture and preservation can grasp them quickly and easily. The language used is technical where necessary, but not inaccessibly so, and the comprehensiveness of the subject coverage will ensure that those with a more developed knowledge will find information to advance that knowledge further.

This is the second edition of this publication which was first published in 2008. The aims remain the same: to provide recommendations for the use of digital photographic equipment for conservation documentation and to address concerns associated with maintaining the long term access and preservation of those records. However, the contents have been expanded considerably. In fact, at 223 pages, the second edition is double the size of the first. Whilst the book echoes the format of the original, following a logical progression through the photographic documentation process, a number of key areas have been expanded, updated, or completely revised:

- Chapter 2 'Equipment' has been updated to reflect advances in technology in the intervening years, introducing new equipment and tools, and providing a greater degree of guidance overall;

- Chapter 5 'Storage and Backup of Electronic Records' has been rewritten to provide a more detailed overview of the subject and again updating details to reflect developments in this area. There is, for example, the inclusion of a small section on cloud computing;
- Chapter 6 'Photographic Techniques for Conservation' has been expanded, particularly the coverage of IR and UV photography.

This is a constantly developing area, and such a comprehensive revision is reassuring: there is a strong impression that current thinking and developments are reflected throughout. However, it would be wrong to assume that this means that the content will date quickly. Inevitably some aspects, particularly the step-by-step guides to using specific equipment and software, will date and as more advanced technologies currently outside the budget of most conservation studios become more commonplace, the chapter on equipment may demand a new edition. However, one of the great strengths of the book is that most of the information within, although contextualised with current trends and standards, goes beyond specific technologies to deal with the bigger picture: more general considerations associated with the selection of equipment; key standards and how they are best implemented, and developing a logical workflow that reflects the priorities, budget and needs of your local situation.

Where specific technologies are discussed, for example in the section about choosing a printer, the reader is referred to a free and more frequently updated website. This, while good practice in theory, is one of my only criticisms of the book: the most recent update to this website (at time of writing) was July 2010. Not so recent at all. However, this is a minor gripe. Current reviews of equipment are easily found elsewhere, and what this book does do is give the reader the tools to interpret the more technical information found within them and to focus in on the specifications that are important to the use of photography to document conservation.

I have recently been involved in the set-up of a new conservation centre at the University of Aberdeen. Our photographic equipment was mostly purchased prior to reading this volume. Decisions made were based on advice from other conservators, the combined experience of the team, and through consultation of online reviews. In most cases, specifications of equipment purchased have tied in with recommendations in this book. In areas where we might have made different decisions about equipment, the authors point to how to optimise the potential of what we have. This emphasises one of the

key strengths of the book. It has been written with consideration for a variety of audiences working in a variety of contexts.

For those who are happy with the decisions they have made about equipment and who already adhere to recommended standards and protocols for documenting conservation work the book offers more beyond the basics. For example, the newly expanded chapter on photographic techniques for conservation provides exhaustive guidelines for the use of visible light photography to not only document, but also to inform treatment decisions in conservation practice. The more experienced digital photographer is also likely to find much of interest in the detailed sections on IR and UV photography.

For the conservator who is looking to set up a new studio, or those looking to build on their existing set-up, the book provides a step-by-step guide that covers everything from selecting equipment, to using a range of manual settings to achieve higher picture quality, to setting up a system for storage and back-up of electronic records that will meet digital preservation standards.

Similarly, the authors have considered the variety of needs and resources of readers, ensuring that the content of this book applies equally to those in smaller private or institutional studios as it does to those based in larger studios. Appropriate routes through the text are clearly signposted ensuring easy navigation.

In all, I feel that this well pitched book is an invaluable addition to any conservation studio. It will allow readers to make more informed decisions, and will hopefully encourage more of us to consider long term digital preservation issues as related to our own documentation practice.

**Louisa Coles** Paper Conservator  
Glucksman Conservation Centre,  
University of Aberdeen

## COURSES

### ADVANCED JAPANNING & LACQUERING Icon Gilding and Decorative Surfaces Group London April 2012

This three day course, which was taught by **Alex Schouvaloff**, was attended by professional conservators from private practice and two students of furniture restoration. Unlike the introductory course run by Icon last year, where attendees learnt how to use modern and traditional materials to produce a japanned recipe box, the advanced course focused on the conservation and restoration of japanned and lacquered objects.

Each attendee brought a lacquered or japanned object to work on. Although this, coupled with the fact that participants were required to have completed the introductory



A 19th century Chinese lacquered sewing box made for export – the object worked on by Catherine Silverman at the Advanced Japanning and Lacquering Course

course, may have deterred some less organised prospective attendees, it was, from my perspective, wonderful, keeping the class to a friendly five and ensuring that there was ample time for Alex to give each of us his individual attention when needed.

Alex began by presenting an 'antiques hunter's guide' to lacquered and japanned objects, using examples from a selection of objects he had brought with him. We looked at key British makers, and learnt how to distinguish japanning from lacquer, how to spot Chinese lacquer made for export and how to date an object through an examination of shape, fittings and iconography.

The course comprised a series of demonstrations and discussions on the methods and issues surrounding the conservation of japanning and lacquer work, from cleaning and consolidation to flattening, filling and retouching. In each case, Alex carefully weighed up the advantages and disadvantages of the treatments available, imparting the sort of useful tips for each product – from application to preferred brands – which could only otherwise be learnt through careful testing over many years. He even shared his adaptation of a Victoria and Albert Museum recipe used in the conservation of the Mazarin Chest, with substitutes for some of the ingredients that are difficult to procure.

We discussed the reversibility of restoration procedures, looking at common unethical practices used by restorers past and present. It was refreshing to hear about the quick fixes (accompanied by the carefully enunciated caveat that such procedures are highly unethical!) such as using nail varnish to mimic mother of pearl and superglue to replicate the high gloss of lacquer and japanning. We also looked at the different attitude to reversibility held by Japanese and Chinese restorers and the resulting use of urushi gatame and suri urushi treatments.

During these presentations, participants were able to work on the objects they had brought with them, putting their newly acquired knowledge into practice, with Alex at hand to guide us towards the most appropriate treatment. The varied nature of objects being worked on in the studio at any one time – from japanned desk tidies, to beautifully intricate Chinese export lacquer tea caddies – also enabled us to learn from the challenges encountered and surmounted by our classmates.

The course was absolutely invaluable for those wishing to learn about the restoration of japanning and lacquer, especially given the absence of an up-to-date 'how to' guide. Having previously relied upon Marianne Webb's excellent though somewhat outdated book and found some of the methods to be at odds with current practice, I was delighted to leave the course with an extremely thorough set of notes including step-by-step instructions as well as a comprehensive list of suppliers and products.

Alex's relaxed teaching style and clear explanations struck the perfect balance between informal and informative. I left at the end of the three days equipped with the tools and confidence to restore japanned and lacquered objects in the future.

Many thanks to The Icon Gilding and Decorative Surfaces Group for organising the workshop, to Alex Schouvaloff for leading the course, to Suzanne Sacorafou for letting us use her fantastic workshop and to the people at the café at Netil House for providing delicious lunches and superior cake.

*Catherine Silverman*

## BIBLIOGRAPHY AND THE STUDY OF PAPER

**Centre for the Study of the Book,  
University of Oxford**  
Oxford 9–13 July 2012

It is hard to believe that this was the first year that the Bodleian Library's Centre for the Study of the Book has hosted a specialist summer school focusing on the fields of bibliography and papermaking during the hand-press era. The stunning medieval setting and access to one of the world's finest book collections makes Oxford an obvious choice for a summer school; and this year's week-long course really lived up to Oxford's amazing reputation as a centre for excellence in book and manuscript studies. The course drew participants from seven different nations whose backgrounds extended through a range of specialisms including librarians, antiquarian book sellers, print and manuscript researchers, curatorial students and book conservators.

Each day started in Merton College with morning lectures organised by our excellent course convenors: **Dr Alexandra Franklin** – CSB Coordinator, **Andrew Honey** – Book Conservator and **Dr Mark Bland** – Bibliographer. The lectures covered different aspects of paper history and manufacture, the economics of the trade and bibliographical methods, followed by practical sessions in which historic moulds and papers were examined and discussed. The classes were supplemented with visits to several of Oxford University's finest libraries including the college libraries of All Souls, Magdalen and Merton, and Duke Humfrey's Library at the Bodleian. Participation in the course also bestowed readership access to the OULS libraries, so that additional study was possible in the evenings.

The afternoons were divided up into a variety of master classes given by leading academics and conservators. We were fortunate to explore topics such as the types of papers used in 18th century music manuscripts, Jane Austen's notebooks, 15th century blockbooks and paper board manufacture in the 18th century. Many participants commented on the enthusiasm that each presenter brought to their classes. This made for a relaxed and informal setting for each workshop which allowed for plenty of Q&A and hands-on examination of relevant examples from Oxford's wonderful collections.

Of particular interest to me was the master class with **Professor Kathryn Sutherland** who gave us the wonderful opportunity to see two of Jane Austen's literary notebooks from the Bodleian. Recent examination of these manuscripts by Andrew Honey and Professor Sutherland confirms that Austen constructed her own notebooks in her later years. Evidence from the sheet size indicates that she folded the paper and cut it with



Examining books with paper boards from Magdalen College library with Jane Eagan

scissors to achieve notebooks of a particular size and format which she appeared to favour for writing her later literary works.

A further highlight was a trip to the Oxford Conservation Consortium to hear about a project that head conservator **Jane Eagan** is carrying out to translate Lalande's account of board manufacture in the 18th century, as described in 'Art du Cartonnier'. Paper boards are often misunderstood or completely overlooked in analyses of bound volumes and clearly warrant further study to understand the separate paper-making tradition from which they are derived.

From a conservation point of view, I found the CSB course most beneficial for the confidence it can bestow when you are recording details of paper in flat and bound forms. This course takes you well beyond how to spot physical features and watermarks, as it helps you to understand why these features are important, what they can tell you about the historic setting that the document has come from, and how to record these characteristics in a manner that is systematic and accurate. As **Professor Nicholas Pickwoad** demonstrated in his master class on early bindings, having a better understanding of the features and marks in paper can help you to evaluate whether something is important, unusual or rare; and thus can inform conservators about appropriate levels of treatment for early printed and manuscript material.

The study of paper and bibliography is an extremely complex field and can deceive the unwary observer. So, if you have ever wondered what a traunchfille is, why watermarks are 'twins', how to identify mould types, or if you simply wish to improve your paper recording skills and terminology, then the next CSB course will have something for you.

**Rachel Sawicki**

Book Conservator, Chester Beatty Library

## CONFERENCES

### THE DECORATIVE: Conservation and the Applied Arts

IIC 2012 Congress

Vienna 10–14 September 2012

As a fledgling conservator in the early 1980s I had little awareness of the International Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC) other than that it was the organisation which produced *Studies in Conservation* – a prestigious but extremely intimidating journal. It published the occasional articles which were of some relevance to me then, a paintings conservator with very limited access to any form of material analysis. But years passed and I eventually joined IIC. Now I really value their web-site which is a fount of information about forthcoming events and produces the bimonthly electronic newspaper *News in Conservation* which provides up to date information and comment on current issues. IIC also organises innovative Dialogues for the New Century round table discussions and has an active social media network.

I did not attend an IIC Congress until the 2008 London Congress (*Conservation and Access*) and I was pleasantly surprised by the variety of the papers presented and the intimacy of the event. As the membership of IIC is not sub-divided into specialist groups, the Congress does not run break-out parallel sessions. For the four days of the conference the delegates from a wide range of specialisms sit together in one auditorium listening to all of the papers. This togetherness contributes to the success of the IIC conferences – making it a much more cross-disciplinary event.

The planning and delivery of the Vienna Congress was meticulous. The organising and technical committees and Joyce Townsend and her band of pre-print editors deserve huge praise. Conferences are so much more than the papers presented and IIC provides lots of opportunities for behind the scenes discussions. The four days of

papers and poster presentations were broken by a day of site visits, with delegates offered a choice of sixteen 'Backstage Tours' providing an opportunity to talk to Viennese conservators in a variety of museums and historic buildings. One imaginative event, *Not my Grandmother's Chair* chaired by Jerry Podany, was streamed on-line and provoked interesting discussion and further thought. Throughout the conference important business was conducted: the IIC Fellows considered what IIC should be offering to the conservation community; student delegates developed international links and the IIC Editorial Board wooed new members.

**Jerry Podany**, IIC's President, opened the proceedings tackling the pejorative understanding of the term 'the decorative arts'. **Dr Manfred Koller** then presented the Forbes Prize Lecture, an illuminating guide to the development and decoration of Vienna – an excellent introduction to many of the objects and sites discussed during the course of the week. I must admit to being a little disappointed by the rather limited range of the papers delivered. The call for papers had been very broad, asking for consideration of tangible and intangible heritage in the decorative arts, but the papers actually delivered had a decidedly Western European bias and many dealt with the high end of the decorative arts spectrum and, in the main (about 75%), focussed on material analysis. I had expected a more global discussion of the use and significance of the decorative, particularly in third world nations. The lack of this variety may have been due to several factors. The cost of attending the conference may have inhibited the participation of conservators from more far-flung or poor countries.

Many conservators who had submitted abstracts, like myself, felt that IIC, despite its outgoing engagement with current conservation issues in *News in Conservation*, as the publisher of *Studies In Conservation* would expect some scientific content. So although I had thought of submitting a paper on the role of the conservator as negotiator when communities dislike the 'authentic' decorations favoured by the professionals, instead I sent an abstract for a more routine case-study paper that contained a technical element of rather simplistic pigment analysis. Others I spoke to admitted that they too had submitted more technical papers for exactly the same reason. So maybe the conference selection panel did not have a great variety of choice? Perhaps IIC suffers from a split personality: while admirably fulfilling its mission as a forum for international communication, the historic bias of *Studies In Conservation* nevertheless casts a weighty shadow over the Congress.

The standard of technical analysis discussed in the journal is incredibly high but it focuses



IIC Congress welcome reception at the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna

on the work carried out by conservation scientists with access to well equipped museum laboratories – hardly representative of the majority of the members and potential members of IIC. Understanding the material nature of the objects we work with is vital but there is a vast body of extremely relevant work carried out by conservators who do not engage in material analysis. If *Studies in Conservation* is to fulfill its claim to be 'the premier international peer-reviewed journal for the conservation of historic and artistic works' it must embrace and reflect the activities and concerns of all its members. The Editorial Board is well aware of this problem and is seeking submission of a broader range of papers. Indeed there has been an inclusion of non-scientific papers in more recent editions, such as Iris Kapelouzou's excellent paper 'The inherent sharing of conservation decisions' (SIC Vol. 57. No.3, pp 172–182). But it may be

necessary to reword the invitation to authors if they want to attract non-technical papers. The very assurance that 'scientific content is not necessary' does, I think, 'protest too much' and is not re-assuring on that point. I suspect that the sixty year old tradition of the journal still adheres to a rather outmoded idea of objectivism at odds with the current celebration of subjectivity and multiple values.

The many technical papers I listened to in Vienna did provide me with a useful reminder of analytical techniques but there were just too many and some of the papers failed to convince me of the significance of the research or provided justification of the expense they involved. At a time when the discipline is undergoing so many financial cut-backs I think this is a valid point to make. An exception was **Joanna Whalley's** fascinating analysis of the gem-stones in the jewellery collection of The Victoria and Albert Museum which revealed the tricks of the trade in gem fakery and enhancement and a surprising reappraisal of the 'value' of the V&A collection (*Faded glory: gemstone stimulants and enhancements*). Another memorable paper was the discussion of the conservation of textiles in Iraq delivered by Dinah Eastop on behalf of the authors **Anne-Marie Deisser** and **Lolan Sipan**. *Decorative art or art practice?* outlined the continuous tradition of textile production and role of conservators as 'translators' of cultural heritage.

**Renee Riedler's** work on the conservation of feathers in California addressed the cultural significance of feathers and their use by American Indian tribes. Showing appropriate respect for an object's significance and 'power', an image of one of the items under discussion could not be displayed because of its special status and was simply signified by a blank slide (*Featherwork: beyond decorative*). There were several talks about making objects, collections, sites and even reports more accessible to the public. **Dinah Eastop** explained her own research investigating methods of making a vast design archive accessible through the use of 'smart thumbnails' to aid intuitive image browsing (*Design, digitization, discovery: enhancing collection quality*). **Katy Lithgow** presented an evaluation of the 'conservation in action events' where the conservators' role

is to engage with the public rather than simply 'getting the work done'. She argued that the massive enhancement of the visitor experience justified the additional costs to the project. Katy observed that conservators had to learn to be less passive and 'become part of the show'. (A 'once in a lifetime' experience).

Half a morning of the conference was devoted to sessions viewing the Posters and Student Posters. This was a very successful, informal, interactive event which possibly provoked more animated discussion than the paper question sessions.

Conference papers clearly provide an important focus to the proceedings and should reflect current trends and attitudes in conservation and should provoke discussion. But, as we all know, conferences are more than the sum of their parts and the IIC event was a great success. The conference concluded with the announcement that the next 2014 Congress will be held in Hong Kong. I would certainly urge you to consider making plans to be there.

**Helen Hughes** FIIC ACR

**THE COUNTRY HOUSE IN THE  
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY**  
**Icon Historic Interiors Group**  
Corpus Christi College Cambridge  
13 April 2012

Enthusiasts of 18th century interiors are advised to search out Arthur Young's 'A six weeks tour through the southern counties of England and Wales' published in 1768. His account provides fascinating descriptions of the houses he visited and other observations on life during the 18th century. The Fourth Annual conference of the Historic Interiors Group was not unlike Young's book in terms of scope and diversity. **Professor David Watkin's** paper, *The Development of the Eighteenth Century Country House*, began the day with his consideration of the role of patrons and their collaboration with craftsmen, and how their design often related to the architectural prototypes of classical antiquity.

**John Hardy's** paper on *Kedleston Hall: Lord Scarsdale and World Wide Trade* opened our eyes to the connection with water that flows through almost all the imagery there: the sculpture outside, the marble within and the carving on the furniture. **Emile de Bruijn** discussed the changing tastes for chinoiserie since the seventeenth century, and its links with the Jesuits, traders and opposition politics. **Richard Ireland** outlined his examination of Adam's decorative scheme at Headfort, a stately home located forty miles north of Dublin. It is the only surviving Adam house in Ireland, and represents what Richard calls Adam's 2nd class of commissions. **Peter Thuring** provided an excellent account of his restoration of Linnell Sofas at Kedleston and demonstrated how he made full use of the 'bit box' to

#### 'The decoration of Vienna'



reconstruct the cascading wooden carvings and feet. His eight-minute video, shot at his Petworth workshop, gave an insight into his working methods and just how much time needs to be spent sharpening his tools to carve tough Scots pine. Carpet conservator **Heather Tetley** explained the work she had carried out at Dumfries House for Prince Charles and introduced delegates to the concept of an *imat drugget* – a drugget imprinted with a digital image of the protected carpet below. The use of *imats* greatly enhances the visitor's experience without protective ropes.

**Richard Lithgow's** account of his work on Thornhill's wall paintings at Hanbury Hall outlined the use of stainless steel mesh to allow the plaster substrate to move, minimising further damage to the painted surface. A viewing platform had been specially created so that members of the public could witness the work in progress. The newly opened Kitchens of George III at Kew Palace were introduced by **Marc Meltonville**. The doors of these buildings were effectively locked for nearly 190 years, until someone rooting around in what they thought was an old store room found a bread oven. The discovery of a complete set of service rooms – last used in 1818 – has allowed Historic Royal Palaces to continue its practical experimentation of historic cooking technology.

The annual Cambridge one day conference has established a winning formula and now has a band of regular attendees. It is a very sociable event. Many delegates book rooms in college and assemble the following morning to enjoy breakfast together in the Great Hall of Corpus Christi College. As one regular explained 'It is simply the best conference!'

**Magdalen Evans & Helen Hughes**

## TALKS

**A WOVEN ALLIANCE: Tapestry Yesterday, Today and for Tomorrow**  
Icon Textile Group  
Edinburgh September 2012

The Dovecot Studios in Edinburgh are currently marking their centenary year with a wonderful exhibition looking back at one hundred years of tapestry weaving. On a gloriously sunny September day this setting provided the perfect backdrop to the Icon Textile Group symposium entitled 'A Woven Alliance: Tapestry Yesterday, Today and for Tomorrow' where delegates, both with and without a conservation background, gathered to hear a range of presentations on the subject.

**Michael Bath's** paper was presented by Ksynia Marko, who relayed his investigations into sources of the many emblems found in the *Four Seasons* tapestries at Hatfield House. This was then followed by a



Weaver Jonathan Cleaver introducing delegates to the weaving floor at the Dovecot Studios

fascinating insight from **Susana Hunter** into the re-display of a number of tapestries at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

**Philippa Duffus**, who is currently completing her PhD in Conservation Strategies for Historic Tapestries, then took us through her findings into the mechanical properties of tapestries. Philippa comes from a science background and was kind enough to explain her complicated graphs and fascinating results. We are all familiar with the fact that historic tapestries are often faded after decades of display, but **Maria Jordan** from Historic Royal Palaces showed how much this fading can effect interpretation of the image in the case of the *History of Alexander the Great* tapestries at Hampton Court.

**Julie Bon** and **Sophie Younger** presented a joint paper on a project they had headed, caring for and improving the display of a set of 17th century Verdure tapestries at Falkland Palace. This project utilised the available volunteer workforce and involved incredibly innovative use of Velcro to allow staff and volunteers access to both the front and back of the tapestries as they hung in situ. This was followed by another joint presentation from **Elaine Owers** and **Ksynia Marko**, who described the collaborative work between the National Trust and students at Lincoln University and Bishop Grosseteste College to treat eight pieces of tapestry at Doddington Hall. **Helen Hughes** and **Louise Treble** then reported on the vibrant and successful public programme which accompanied the Burrell Tapestry Project.

**Mieke Albers** and **Dr Elsje Janssen** described an innovative technique they have devised to improve the appearance of faded previous tapestry repairs using a pointillist technique. The day was then rounded off with a presentation from **Dr Jane Fenlon** and **Isabel Fernández López**, who worked on a joint project to treat the *Decius Mus*

tapestries at Kilkenny Castle.

Many thanks to the organising committee for co-ordinating such a fascinating day.

**Zoë Lanceley**

Student, Centre for Textile Conservation  
University of Glasgow.

*Postscript:* On Saturday 22 September many of the delegates visited Stirling Castle. After a rousing introduction to the history of the castle we visited the tapestry weaving studio, where many of the specially commissioned set of Unicorn tapestries are woven. The tapestries are closely based on a set of seven held by the Metropolitan Museum of New York. Here we were able to view the current tapestry on the loom and the special display about the weaving, introduced by one of the Historic Scotland stewards. We then went through the Castle with Rob Thomson (preventive conservator) and were able to see five of the seven Unicorn tapestries on display in the Queen's Inner Hall.

Following the symposium and Stirling visit, a small group took the opportunity to visit the Centre for Textile Conservation and Technical Art History at the University of Glasgow on Sunday morning. The new academic year had just begun so the visitors weren't able to see conservation work underway but some of the staff and second year students gave a tour of the facilities and discussed the MPhil Textile Conservation programme and the work undertaken by students. Textiles from the Centre's extensive reference collection were being used for initial documentation exercises, but the Centre's close relationship with the University's Hunterian Museum and Glasgow Museums, among others, allows students the opportunity to work on 'real' objects as they progress through the programme and to learn about the place of conservation in the cultural heritage sector.

**FL & LM**

## EAST ANGLIAN CONSERVATORS FORUM Norwich June 2012

The June East Anglian Conservators Forum (EACF) meeting was held at Norwich Castle, one of the city's iconic heritage buildings now home to the museum and art gallery. The meeting took on a textile theme, offering a number of papers on textile conservation projects along with the chance to view some of the museum's collection.

The day started with a presentation from the National Trust Textile Conservation Studio on the treatment of the King James II Bed from the Trust's Knole property. **Ksynia Marko** opened the talk with an overview of the project, detailing previous restoration work and repairs while raising the issues of time and funding. **Rosamund Weatherall** discussed the process of wet cleaning the curtains and explained the adhesive treatment used for the project so far. **Claire Golbourn** concluded with the proposed conservation of the head cloth, which is currently undergoing treatment.

**Poppy Singer's** paper focused on the analysis and symmetry of the Hardwick Daybed cushion and how these factors assisted in the interpretation of the embroidered design. From researching and examining the materials and imagery, Poppy and colleague Annabel Wylie were able to discover more of the cushion's provenance, which helped during the conservation of the object.

The recently conserved Egyptian shroud was revealed by **Man-Yee Liu**, Head of Conservation at Norfolk Museum and Archaeology Services. The treatment, completed in partnership with the British Museum, was extremely effective and the discussion was aided by the examination of the mounted object and before treatment images.

The viewing was then followed by a tour of the Decorative Arts gallery where Textile Conservator **Debbie Phipps** discussed her role in the conservation treatment and display of specific objects exhibited within the museum gallery.

The afternoon session commenced with an introduction to Norfolk Museum's costume and textile collection. **Ruth Battersby Tooke** (Curator) reflected on the planning and preparation required for moving this entire collection and the positive and negative aspects raised during the process. We were then treated to a tour of the new store rooms where the impressive shoe collection was admired by all...

Due to the absence of one speaker, Ksynia Marko kindly stepped up to present the current treatment of 'Penelope'; the 16th Century appliqued wall hanging from Hardwick Hall. The talk outlined the importance of the specialist stitching table created for this object which was too delicate to roll. The addition of a time lapse

film to enhance public interaction was also explained.

The day combined a mix of talks and presentations with viewings and discussions, offering an opportunity for all to be involved. It was an enjoyable and informative day attended by established and new conservators and museum professionals within the East Anglia region.

**Stella Gardner**

MPhil Textile  
Conservation Student,  
University of Glasgow

## REVEALING THE ESSENCE OF BEAUTY: 500 YEARS OF ITALIAN ART

Icon Scotland Group  
Glasgow July 2012

Glasgow Museums has one of the finest civic collections of Italian art in the UK. This summer forty six paintings dating from the late 14th century to the 19th century were displayed in the exhibition *Revealing the Essence of Beauty: 500 Years of Italian Art* at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum. On 24 July a group of conservators came together to see the exhibition and to hear talks from three of the conservation team who had worked on the paintings and frames at an event organised by Glasgow Museums for the Icon Scotland Group. **Pat Collins**, Curator of Medieval and Renaissance Art, introduced the exhibition and showed the catalogue *Glasgow Museums: the Italian Paintings* by Professor Peter Humfrey.

**Polly Smith**, Senior Conservator (Art Group), explained what a major project this had been for the conservators, who had been working on the paintings since 2008. Funding from Museums Galleries Scotland paid for a contractor to work for one year specifically on the exhibition but otherwise the major conservation treatments carried out had to be fitted into all the other work for exhibitions across Glasgow Museums' ten venues. As well as the conservation treatment, the conservators contributed to the catalogue, making use of their close observation of one hundred and fifty paintings to prepare technical notes. The conservation also had to take future plans into account: after the exhibition at Kelvingrove the paintings are going on to Compton Verney and then will tour several US museums.



*The Adoration of the Magi* by Master of the Glasgow Adoration, painted c.1503-10.  
Painting and frame after conservation

Polly also talked about the work undertaken on the *Adoration of the Magi*, a large panel by an unknown Neapolitan artist, known as the Master of the Glasgow Adoration. The painting had been so dirty that much of the detail was obscured and it was in such poor condition that it had not been on public display for over twenty five years. The major treatment involved the removal of aged varnish and discoloured retouching. The flaking paint was consolidated and losses filled and the three-dimensional pastiglia used for the decorative details was restored; finally the painting received extensive retouching. A time lapse film of the conservation work was displayed next to the painting in the exhibition, a clever touch which drew visitors' attention to the many stages of work involved in the conservation treatment and demonstrated its successful outcome.

**Suzanne Ross**, Painting Conservator, summarised the technical examination techniques employed throughout the project and explained how historical records had been used to help with conservation decisions. She described several treatments that she had undertaken which had involved



Icon's Scotland Group advance on Abbotsford

structural work to the canvas supports, consolidation, varnish removal, filling and retouching. It is easy for non-specialists to overlook the importance of the frames when paintings are displayed, but major work on around forty frames carried out by **Sophie Kostin**, Frame Conservator, demonstrated how this had helped to create an authentic and harmonious display. Treatments included the replacement of missing ornament, cleaning, regilding and toning. All the frames are fitted with specialist glazing and backboards to protect the paintings on tour. New reproduction late 15th century tabernacle frames were commissioned for two major Renaissance paintings, Botticelli's *Annunciation* and Bellini's *Madonna and Child*. While the original frames are kept in storage as part of the paintings' history, the new frames had clearly improved the paintings' overall presentation enormously.

The three conservators explained their work with impressive clarity and enthusiasm and talked about the ethical and philosophical principles which guide their conservation decision making processes. Polly highlighted the need to balance both curatorial and conservation priorities and the need for pragmatism while applying the highest conservation standards so as to work within available resources. Following this preview and armed with a better understanding of the work carried out, the visitors greatly enjoyed their tour of the exhibition.

**Frances Lennard** Senior Lecturer  
Centre for Textile Conservation and  
Technical Art History  
Glasgow

## VISIT

**ABBOTSFORD**  
**Icon Scotland Group**  
7 September 2012

The latest visit of the Icon Scotland Group was to Abbotsford, the Scottish Borders home of the writer Sir Walter Scott. In 1811 Scott bought a modest farm then used the income from his highly successful writing to

build Abbotsford itself and to develop the grounds and gardens. After Sir Walter died in 1832, the house remained the home of his descendants until the death of Dame Jean, one of his last direct descendants, in 2004. Now in the care of the Abbotsford Trust, a major project is under way which will ensure the physical survival of the house, collections, gardens and estate, enabling Abbotsford to become a viable 21st century visitor attraction.

Our visit was led by the Abbotsford Project Conservator **Joanna Cook** who told us about the conservation work that began at Abbotsford early last year. Scott was a great collector; indeed he created a home he called 'a museum for living in' so the decant of the contents prior to the structural work was a considerable undertaking. This uncovered a few surprises such as the original carpet from Scott's study being found rolled up in a ball and forgotten in the basement! All the contents are now being conserved as appropriate and necessary by a range of specialist conservators. In addition to Sir Walter's collections, his descendants' possessions also filled the house. E.g. Dame Jean was lady in waiting to Princess Alice and among the contents are around sixty suitcases from the 1940s–60s when she travelled extensively as part of her official duties.

Clad in our hard hats and other PPE, our group was allowed to enter Abbotsford itself. We were shown the Chinese Drawing Room, so-named because of its hand-painted Chinese wallpaper. This was a gift to Sir Walter from his cousin, Captain Hugh Scott who served as a naval officer in the East India Company, and it is now being conserved in situ. The house is surrounded by scaffolding so we were able to ascend this to look closely at the external work. We could examine the stone, slate and lead work from the scaffolding and Surveyor **Grant Davidson** was on hand to answer our many questions. From the heights of the scaffolding we could also admire the view out over the lovely gardens and landscaped grounds with the River Tweed flowing past.

A wing was added to the house by Scott's



Looking closely at the external work

granddaughter Charlotte and her husband James Hope in the mid-19thC. After inheriting the house, they adopted the surname 'Scott Hope' hence this is known as the Hope Scott Wing. The plan is to present the original part of the house as it had been in Sir Walter's time with the Hope Scott Wing being refurbished to offer luxury self-catering accommodation. This will provide income to support the historic rooms and sustain the Abbotsford Trust.

The adjacent newly built Visitor Centre had only just been opened so we were able to enjoy all the impressive facilities there: Sir Walter Scott exhibition, shop and café. All aspects of Sir Walter and his work are covered in the exhibition, featuring objects from the collections to illustrate them. **Dr Sandra McNeil**, Learning and Engagement Officer for the Trust, showed us round and highlighted many items of interest such as the Abbotsford visitor book. Scott's home has long been visited by his admirers as a place of pilgrimage and, among many others, there are signatures of Charles Dickens in 1841, Charlotte Bronte in 1850 and Oscar Wilde in 1883 in the book. We were all shamed by her telling us that the visitors who arrive best-informed about Scott today tend to be not the British ones! She also made us aware of how significant Scott's international reputation was in his lifetime and how his financial success allowed him to build Abbotsford. Joanna Cook showed us a display containing Sir Walter's clothing and explained the details of how she carried out its installation. The visit was rounded off most satisfactorily with tea in the new café and much discussion. This visit was perfect for our multi-disciplinary group as all were represented in the conservation of the building and its contents.

The collections will be returned to Abbotsford in spring 2013 and it will be re-opened to the public in July. Icon Scotland Group will then have the perfect reason to make a return visit to this wonderful property.

**Gill Keay**  
Icon Trustee

## CONSERVATION OF A 9TH CENTURY CE ARCHAEOLOGICAL HORN FLASK

by Emilia Kingham

*Emilia Kingham is currently working as the Junior Clothworkers Fellow\* at the British Museum in the Department of Conservation and Scientific Research, organic artefacts section. She is focusing on the conservation of protein-based materials for her fellowship.*

For a recent project, an archaeological object made of horn was assigned to be treated. After performing a literature search, it was found that there was not much practical information on specific treatments for deteriorated horn. However, literature on the *properties* of horn and on the *history* of horn processing was available (McGregor 1985; Greep 1984; O'Connor, 1984).

The object is a small flask from the 8th-9th century CE made of horn with a wooden stopper. It was excavated from Xinjiang, China, during Sir Marc Aurel Stein's Second Central Asian Expedition, 1906–1908. The horn itself was badly deteriorated; much of the surface was delaminating and there were areas of loss (see figure 1). Beneath this the horn was also very friable. It had been previously consolidated and the adhesive had pooled in areas that contained fragmented and loose chips of horn. In addition, there was an excess of adhesive on much of the surface of the lifting horn fragments (see figure 2). The adhesive had been applied some time ago and there were signs that it was aging. It had yellowed and had possibly shrunk, which could be contributing to the surface delamination.

After considering treatment options, the decision was made to remove the old yellowed adhesive, consolidate the crumbling horn substrate and stabilize those lifting fragments that would not relax back into place.

The old adhesive proved soluble in acetone and was removed by lightly swabbing with cotton-wool buds. The areas of adhesive that were holding loose, unattached chips of horn together were reduced but left with enough adhesive to hold the horn together so that there would be no loss of material.

As the horn had a crumbly, laminar substrate with lifting layers on the surface, it was important to choose a consolidant that would penetrate far enough to consolidate all the friable areas effectively. A 1% solution of Paraloid B72 (Ethyl methacrylate copolymer) in xylene was chosen and applied by a fine tipped sable brush that had been shaped to a thin point. The treated object was allowed to dry in a fume cupboard overnight before a second application. Xylene was chosen as the solvent as it evaporates more slowly than IMS (industrial methylated spirits) or acetone and would therefore

allow for a deeper penetration of the consolidant.

The next stage of treatment involved supporting and stabilizing the lifting pieces of horn. In some areas, there was as much as a 3mm gap between the lifting piece and the underlying horn. These pieces either would not relax down or were not supported by any material underneath them and an overhang had been created. In these instances, the lifting sections were supported by inserting a tiny ball of tengujo 11 g.m<sup>2</sup> Japanese paper tinted with acrylic paint, using Lascaux Medium for Consolidation (aqueous dispersion of acrylate ester, styrene and methacrylate ester). Flakes that were only slightly lifting and could be relaxed down to the surface were consolidated, also with Lascaux Medium for Consolidation. A pre-treatment application of white spirits was applied so that the Lascaux did not penetrate too far into the material and

Figure 1. Horn flask before treatment



\* See the advert on page 10 inviting applications for the latest round of the Clothworkers' Foundation Fellowship scheme. The Senior Clothworkers' Fellow in this case is Barbara Wills, who is working on naturally preserved Sudanese mummies



Figure 2. Detail showing excess adhesive on lifting horn fragments

stayed relatively near the surface. The water content in the Lascaux significantly helped to relax the flakes down to the surface. Both white spirits and Lascaux were applied by brush.

The choice of adhesive proved to be the most challenging as there were many options that could potentially have worked. For example, when enquiring with colleagues in another institution, methylcellulose had been used to consolidate deteriorating horn. This was considered but eventually deemed not strong enough to consolidate the lifting flakes effectively. A certain degree of flexibility was required for the treatment of the lifting flakes on the surface and this, combined with previous experience with Lascaux Medium for Consolidation, decided the choice of adhesive.

This multi-staged approach for treatment proved to be successful and resulted in the horn flask being suitable for handling (see figure 3) Moreover, the Paraloid B72 in xylene did not leave the surface shiny, while the Lascaux Medium for Consolidation remained slightly flexible and sympathetic to the horn material. The technique of supporting lifting flakes with Japanese tissue provided added strength to the object and prevented large pieces from breaking off during handling. Moreover, the tinted tissue balls blended easily with the horn and were not readily visible. In total the treatment took twenty four hours to complete with additional hours for researching past treatments and materials. The conservation of this horn object was a challenging project that required continual consideration and re-assessment during its many stages.

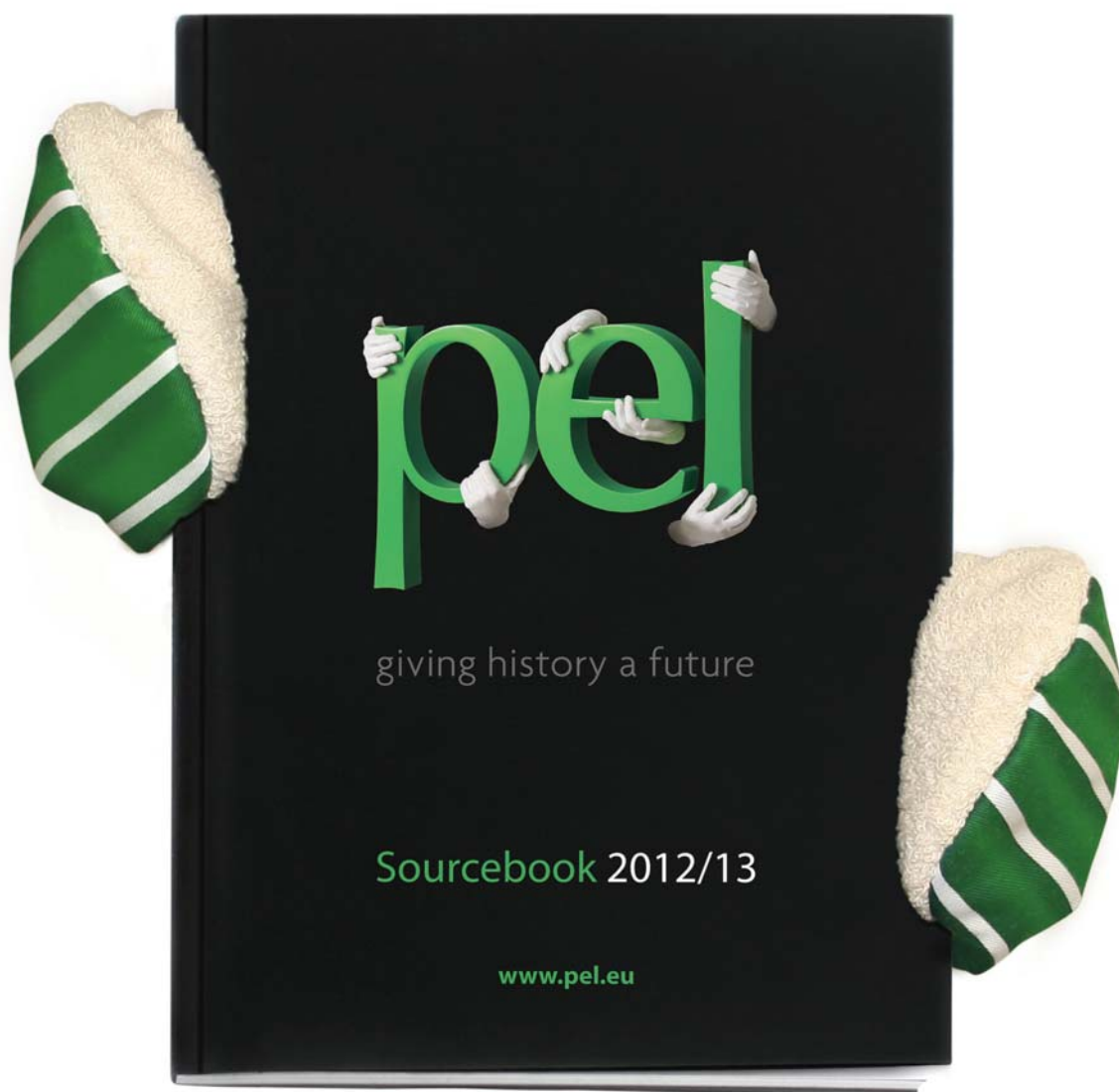


Figure 3. The horn flask after treatment

I would like to thank Arianna Bernucci and Clare Ward for their advice and input into this project.

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