

Icon NEWS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION • DECEMBER 2020 • ISSUE 91



Thirty years of benefitting conservators

Also in this issue

An Imperial War Museum project • Back to work in Covid times

CPD CAN BE SIMPLE.

Becoming and remaining a successful conservator requires knowledge and skills which develop over time. By identifying your strengths and weaknesses and creating your own personal and professional goals it is possible to plan a long and rewarding career in conservation. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is an essential part of becoming and remaining Accredited.

But CPD doesn't have to be complicated or difficult.

**We've compiled some quick ideas for your CPD - whether you have
5 minutes, 1 hour or 1 day.**

I've got...

5

min

5 MINUTES

- Take a virtual coffee break and talk to another conservator about your work
- Join an Icon Group, Network or Icon's online Discord community
- Visit the Icon website to look up potential future CPD activities
- Register for an on-line event or course
- Search for any CPD grants available
- Share an idea or resource with a peer
- Identify a skill or competency you would like to develop
- Ask a colleague for feedback

60

min

1 HOUR

- Fill out your Upgraded Listing on the Conservation Register
- Read relevant articles, newsletters, books, websites
- Attend a webinar or virtual seminar
- Respond to a debate on social media
- Record and reflect on your CPD activities in your CPD learning log
- Carry out online research or study a relevant topic
- Consider writing an academic article
- Write an article for Icon's publications
- Research conferences to submit an abstract to
- Peer review an article or find a book to review
- Write a case study for the Icon website
- Chair an on-line team/committee meeting
- If you are an ACR, consider becoming an Icon mentor
- Listen to a TED Talk
- Practice your IT skills by taking software tutorials
- Teach a colleague something online

8

HOURS

1 DAY

- Participate in an online event or workshop such as the many Icon courses planned for the year
- Virtually shadow someone by sitting in on online meetings
- Take a stress management e-learning course
- Present or network at a conference, e.g. Icon's Twitter Conference
- Plan or run an online course or event
- Plan and pitch a research project
- Volunteer in a related field
- Learn a new craft for pleasure

The Institute of Conservation is a membership organisation and charity which brings together those with a passion for the care of cultural heritage. Icon raises awareness of the cultural, social and economic value of caring for heritage and champions high standards of conservation.

Find out more about CPD at:
<https://icon.org.uk/training/continuing-professional-development>

DECEMBER 2020 Issue 91



From the Editor

Not surprisingly, the consequences of the pandemic continue to inform or flavour much of our content in this issue. The impact of lockdown on students is covered in our two emerging conservator pieces. From Glasgow, the MPhil textile conservation students summarise their dissertation projects, completed despite the

problems presented by the pandemic, whilst Fiona McLees ACR of the Bodleian Libraries hosts a placement remotely for Northumbria University student Lena Tanniou. We also have a description of the Cardiff University Lockdown Conservation Mentoring scheme, set up over the summer and, as lockdown began to ease, Arantza Dobbels takes us through the process of bringing conservation staff at The National Archives back to work. Even amidst all the uncertainty and ambiguity of the future, our Chief Executive shares some good news in her column

Away from Covid-19, we celebrate thirty years of the Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust with examples of our members who have benefitted from its largesse, and work on two galleries at the Imperial War Museum exemplifies Icon's core value of collaboration. Finally, I am delighted to have an article from a South American member of Icon, in which she and a colleague review and reflect on a joint Japanese/Latin American paper conservation course. Perhaps it will inspire other international members to contribute to Icon News!

Lynette Gill



THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION

Institute of Conservation
Radisson Court Unit 2
219 Long Lane
London SE1 4PR
T +44(0)20 3142 6799

admin@icon.org.uk
membership@icon.org.uk
www.icon.org.uk

Chief Executive
Sara Crofts
sara.crofts@icon.org.uk

Conservation Register
membership@icon.org.uk
www.conservationregister.com

ISSN 1749-8988

Icon News

Editor
Lynette Gill
news@icon.org.uk

Production designer
Lee Holland
leerh1974@gmail.com

Printers
Calderstone Design & Print Limited
www.calderstone.com

Advertising
Display and Recruitment
020 3142 6789
Advertising@icon.org.uk



14



28



33

2 NEWS

From the Chief Executive, communications policy update, a new Network, ethical sampling guidance and Group news

13 PEOPLE

14 QUEST TURNS THIRTY

The Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust: thirty years of helping conservators

18 A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

An Imperial War Museum gallery refurbishment involves a wide range of skills

21 BACK TO THE BENCH

Changes to working practices post-lockdown

24 REVIEWS

Care of Collections talks, medieval manuscripts, writing funding bids, a Japanese/Latin American book and paper course

30 IN PRACTICE

Mentoring during a Covid summer

32 THE EMERGING CONSERVATOR

Textile graduates summarise their dissertation topics and a remote placement

Cover photo
Detail of a 14th century painted board from Björsäter church in Sweden, held in the Museum of Antiquities in Stockholm
Image: Elizabeth Cheadle ACR

Disclaimer:
Whilst every effort is made to ensure accuracy, the editors and Icon Board of Trustees can accept no responsibility for the content expressed in Icon News; it is solely that of individual contributors

Deadlines for adverts and editorial

For the April 2021 issue
Friday 29 January

For the June 2021 issue
Friday 2 April

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 05201058)

professional update

From the Chief Executive



Sara Crofts with positive news in difficult times

As I write this column the details of the first tranche of the £1.57 billion Cultural Recovery Fund grant awards made by Arts Council England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund have just been published and social media has been enlivened by a blaze of colourful celebratory posts under the banner of #HereForCulture.

Here for Culture is a Government-led movement that aims to unite the public, Government, and cultural organisations in support of the UK's cinemas, theatres, music venues, museums, galleries, and the broader heritage sector – a noble aim. This is certainly a time of rejoicing for many, and it is no exaggeration to suggest that these grants will be a vital lifeline for many charitable and commercial organisations working in the cultural heritage sector. The impact of the Coronavirus pandemic and the lockdown has sorely tested many organisations and, with no immediate end in sight, it seems certain that there will still be challenging times ahead for many.

Looking ahead

Thankfully, Icon has remained relatively stable over the last six months and we have been able to continue with most of our planned activity in one way or another despite the constraints of the lockdown. However, as our attention turns to setting our strategic priorities and our budget for 2020-21, we have also been thinking hard about what might happen over the next twelve to eighteen months and how we can ensure that we equip ourselves to support our members and the profession in the face of a highly unpredictable future.

Money matters

Obviously, securing our existing income streams will be fundamental to maintaining a strong operational base. We were therefore genuinely heartened and encouraged to see that our membership numbers have stayed within the usual range as we reach the end of this year's renewal season. I am also happy to report that we have also had some early successes in response to the renewed emphasis on membership marketing that we've put in place.

However, we cannot rest on our laurels and must continue our efforts to diversify our sources of income. We have been actively exploring new methods of fundraising (our recent Crowdfunding campaign) and have also been investigating

new sources of grant finance. This activity has borne fruit at a modest scale with the welcome news of support for accreditation from The Leche Trust, but we have also been successful in securing funding from the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage.

A major grant

I am delighted to announce that Icon is one of the 445 heritage organisations that have been supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund through the investment of £103 million of Government funding. We have received a grant award of £99,400 which will enable us to commission valuable business development and marketing support as well as a new website project to provide an online gallery for student members. In addition, a portion of the funding will be used to help finance the digital transformation project that will secure our new membership database.

Conservation matters

Aside from making a substantial contribution to our financial wellbeing the fact that we were successful in a competitive application process demonstrates that Icon is seen as a vital organism within the cultural heritage ecosystem. Receiving this grant shows that the work that we do to support the conservation profession has been recognised by funders and by policy-makers; the fact that they have chosen to invest in our future is testament to the importance of the role that we play. So, in addition to using our grant wisely, we also need to capitalise on this recognition and make sure that conservation remains firmly on the radar of our stakeholders.

The imperative to ensure that objects and collections continue to be responsibly cared for at a time when many large cultural institutions are reducing their operational teams was one of the factors driving a major Icon policy initiative over the summer months – the publication of our position statement on the value of the care of collections.

The role of conservation

Having read with increasing dismay the various commentaries on the restructuring programmes undertaken by a range of organisations from the National Trust to regional museums and galleries, we felt that Icon should support our members by offering a comprehensive and coherent message about the value of our profession.

However, we also felt that we needed to collaborate with and offer support to our fellow cultural heritage professionals in order to demonstrate to decision-makers that good custodianship of cultural heritage requires a range of skills and expertise. We wanted to articulate our understanding of how conservation works alongside collections management and curatorial services to ensure that objects and collections remain safe and accessible both now and in the future.

The key messages that we wanted to communicate are that:

- Conservators form a distinct and expert profession with their own 'standards and judgement and ethics', ethical guidance and code of conduct.

- Conservation is one of three pillars of collections care that are essential to ensuring that our shared cultural heritage is safeguarded.
- Investing in conservation supports the economy, offers a way to nurture healthier and happier lives, and plays a role in delivering sustainability in the face of climate change.

We also argued that conservation can contribute to responsible post-Covid rebuilding through:

- Fulfilling the responsibilities of stewardship by safeguarding cultural heritage entrusted to the care of regional and national museums and institutions.
- Retaining valuable intellectual and practical skills and ensuring the continuity of specialist knowledge and expertise in both the public and private sectors.
- Building resilience in a cost-effective way by prioritising early interventions that prevent problems which would be much more expensive to deal with later.

We have now shared this document, and the shorter summary, with a wide range of stakeholders. It has been very well received and widely disseminated, and we very much hope that members will continue to find it useful to support their personal advocacy within their own organisations and with clients.

The bigger picture

Although it was a response to the particular threats arising from the Coronavirus pandemic, it is worth noting that developing this position statement is part of a wider programme of work that aims to ensure that we are equipped with powerful and positive messages that we can use in our ongoing advocacy work.

POLICY BRIEF

Let's talk communications!

In the last issue I introduced our Values of Conservation project, which seeks to articulate and evidence the values of conservation to society, increase understanding of its importance and build public support. My favourite stage of the project took place in September when we asked conservators on Twitter pressing questions like what their superpower was (time travel and X-ray vision came up top). We also encouraged a broader audience to think about why they look after their possessions and what connotations the word conservation has to them.

While the findings of the two-day social media campaign can hardly be described as academically rigorous, the campaign itself was an important output of the project. It showed that there is an appetite to talk about conservation in light-hearted ways and to think about it from different perspectives. This is a vital element of communications: having the ability to see and convey your messages in ways that are meaningful to target audiences.

We must continue to ensure that policy-makers, and the wider public, embrace our belief that preserving the physical remains of the past can help us understand ourselves better, which in turn equips us to make better decisions for our future. Investing in conservation therefore shows moral responsibility to future generations. It also helps organisations make a successful case for support that demonstrates the important contribution they make to delivering Government priorities in areas such as jobs, skills, soft power, and innovation.

An advocacy toolkit

In the article below you will be able to read about the progress of our 'value of conservation' project, but I would also encourage you to explore the policy and advocacy section of the Icon website. We have added a wealth of new advocacy tools in the form of key messages, which can be found at icon.org.uk/about-us/icon-policy-and-advocacy/messages. You will also see that we have published our first ever Impact Report for the financial year 2019-2020 at icon.org.uk/about-us/icons-impact. This new illustrated document sits alongside our Trustees' Annual Review and summarises our activities during the year, as well as outlining our achievements in pursuit of our strategic objectives. We hope that you will agree that it has been a busy but productive time!

And finally, in the light of a worrying upturn in the Coronavirus statistics, I once again express my personal hope that all our members, your friends and your families remain safe and healthy. Please take care of yourselves both physically and mentally.

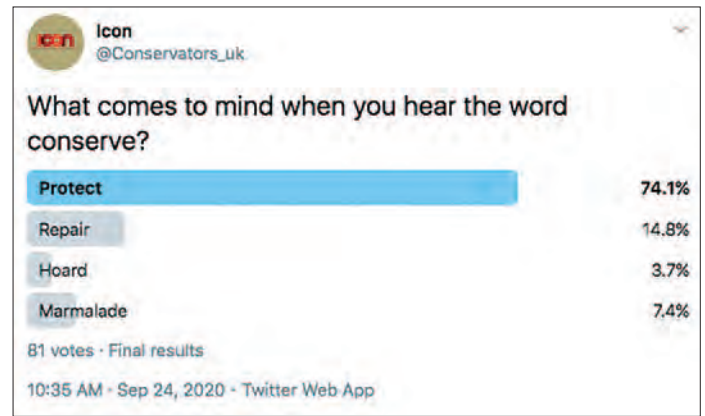
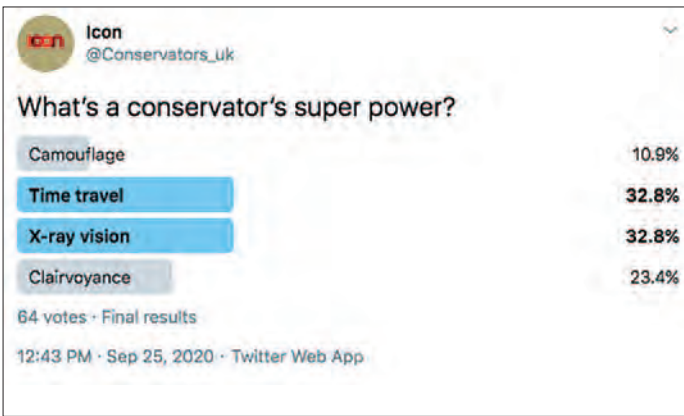
It's not all been games and silliness and the Values project is hardly the only bit of communications work we've been up to. In fact, it's been a rather busy year of communications - throughout 2020 we've published a variety of resources to make the aims and methods of our communications more transparent and to support our members in their own activities.

In case you missed any of them, below is a brief run-down of some of the resources we recently made available to you:

1. Communications Strategy

A milestone was the completion of our first Communications Strategy, which aims to maximise stakeholders' awareness, understanding and commitment to Icon and conservation through a planned approach to messaging. We developed the Strategy to help staff and members to plan and implement communications by providing information about aims and objectives, target audiences, messages, channels and roles and responsibilities.

Perhaps the most vital part of the document is its Message grid, which explains in our voice who we are, what we do and to what impact. The messages are the bread and butter of



our messaging and help us stay consistent when telling people about Icon, conservation and why it matters.

You can find the full Strategy in the Members' documents page on the Icon website.

If you want to skip ahead to the Messages grid, you can find it on our Policy pages too: <https://icon.org.uk/about-us/icon-policy-and-advocacy/messages>

2. Social Media Policy

We want to encourage and empower our members to make effective and appropriate use of social media by providing the right tools and advice to participate in and enhance our positive social media presence. Our new Social Media Policy provides an overview of the appropriate use of social media accounts representing Icon, and outlines how to clearly identify professional and personal accounts.

The policy is complemented by a practical guide, which



explains how and why we use social media with useful tips on hashtags, tone of voice, posting frequency and much more.

The Social Media Policy and Guide are available in the Group Resources Hub: <https://icon.org.uk/support-for-group-webpages-and-social-media>

3. Advocacy factsheets

In our advocacy work, we aim to translate what cultural heritage conservation means for us in our everyday lives as individuals, communities and a society. Icon's practical, plain language factsheets outline some of our key messages in more detail, providing evidence-based arguments that anyone can use to advocate for conservation.

Available on our Policy webpages, the factsheets cover a range of topics including skills, soft power and wellbeing. When you're next in need of some punchy phrases or evidence to back your arguments, make sure you check them out here:

<https://icon.org.uk/about-us/icon-policy-and-advocacy/messages>

4. Trustees Annual Report

You may have noticed that this year's Trustees' Annual Report was accompanied by an Impact Report - a condensed snapshot of the year's achievements. As its name implies, the report focuses on demonstrating our impact through a 'our year in numbers' page and selection of impact case studies. It also aims to present some of the more meaty content found in the Trustees' Report in a visual way to make our facts and figures accessible to all audiences.

Access our Trustees' Annual Report and Impact Report from the online Icon Document Library: <https://icon.org.uk/about-us/who-we-are/icon-document-library>

5. Coronavirus Resources Hub

In addition to our own resources, we've also done our best to share and consolidate resources produced by others. We have continued to enrich our Coronavirus support hub with the latest in government guidance and sector advice on Coronavirus to make it easier for members to access essential information. Due to the wealth of resources on the hub, we recently simplified the front page to enable easier navigation to different topical pages on business support, policy and CPD.

Find the hub here: <https://icon.org.uk/resources/coronavirus-guidance>

6. The Icon Newsletter

Tired of your friends and family not understanding what you do? Then encourage them to sign up to the Icon Newsletter!

Delivered monthly, our newsletter is here to engage new audiences into conservation. By shedding light on what goes on behind the doors of a conservation studio and offering simple advice for lay audiences to look after their family heirlooms and treasures, we want to show how conservation has something for everyone.

Each edition brings subscribers behind the scenes access to conservation and restoration projects, fun reading and watching recommendations (no more mindless scrolling!), handy conservation hints and tips, event listings and much more.

Signing up is easy: <https://icon.org.uk/join-our-free-mailing-list>

Over to you!

Communication is a two-way street. So while we've been productive in terms of outputs, we'll need to make sure our messages are being heard and having an impact. That's why our Communications Strategy includes a plan to evaluate the success of our outputs and outcomes to make sure we're on track to achieving our desired impact.

But equally important is ongoing real-time feedback. And that's where you can help. Are you finding our communications resources useful? Is there anything else you would like to see? Are we totally off the mark? Whatever it is, I want to hear your thoughts. Drop me a line at: amantyniemi@icon.org.uk

Anni Mantyniemi

Policy and Communications Manager



ICON'S 16TH AGM

Icon's 16th Annual General Meeting on 21 October was held on-line, following on from the Annual Lecture. Attended by nearly a hundred members, the virtual experience was very different from the usual assembly, especially in lacking the social aspects at the end. But both lecture and AGM gained instead in informal intimacy and warmth – with the speakers talking directly to you in your own living room, office or studio.

After an opening welcome, our Chair James Grierson explained that the ability to hold the AGM on-line was made possible by an amendment to Icon's Articles of Association after a thoughtful debate at a special General Meeting held in August.

He praised the dedication and professionalism of the Trustees, with especial thanks to those leaving the Board and to Siobhan Stevenson for her help as he took over the role of Chair.

In his overview of the year past, James recalled a raft of achievements including the establishment of two new Icon Networks, two successful major conferences, valuable

developments in advocacy and communication tools and the redevelopment and ongoing promotion of the Conservation Register. He particularly noted the plaudits Icon had received for its committed and speedy response to the pandemic and the exceptional achievement of the *Conservation Together At Home* webinar series, harnessing grass roots power from our dedicated Groups and Networks. On the revision of our Professional Standards and the development of the Ethical Guidance document, James considered that the rigour of Icon's work in this area was outstanding, as viewed from the perspective of his experience of other standard-setting organisations.

He was also impressed with the care and time given to sound financial management and although the year ended with a small deficit, costs continue to be managed tightly; the key to a successful and resilient future will be based on income-generation rather than cost-cutting. He concluded on the theme of excellence, with especial mention of the MBE recently awarded to Icon founding Chair Carole Milner. (Read about Carole on page 13).

Chief Executive Sara Crofts then took to our screens to venture a look into the future, although she noted that attempting to 'read the tea leaves' was risky in the present challenging circumstances. However, the award to Icon of over £99,000 from the Cultural Recovery Fund would help our ability to cope with whatever 2021 brings. (You can read more about this and the uses to which it will be put in Sarah's column on page 2).

Although the future is uncertain, Sara noted that resting on our laurels is not an option, and income generation will be an important strand of next year's work, already kick-started by the crowdfunding project that had raised over £11,000 for digital transformation work. The results of the project to articulate the value of conservation will be published soon (read more about this in Anni Mantyniemi's column above) and three Task and Finish Groups are underway to study Board/membership communications; the future of the Icon triennial Conference, which needs a strategic rethink in the light of present circumstances, and the important issue of diversity and inclusion.

Sara concluded by observing that lockdown had proved that preventive conservation is critical to the ongoing care of collections and to delivering responsible custodianship within our museums, galleries and institutions but what we conservators do is not yet visible enough or well enough understood. How might we raise our profile further on this topic? This is a live discussion with the Care of Collections Group committee but further input is very welcome. Send your ideas in on feedback@icon.org.uk

Following a short Q & A session, James Grierson closed the meeting with a commitment to continue to be outward-facing and to share our stories, highlighting our expertise, experience and ingenuity.

THE ICON ANNUAL LECTURE

If you missed the Icon Annual Lecture, which took place in the afternoon before the AGM, you missed a treat. The topic was *Houses of Parliament Restoration and Renewal Programme* and three speakers shared the talking: Andrew Piper, the Design Director for the Programme, Julian Flannery, the Architecture Lead on the Delivery Authority, and Aimee Sims ACR, who is the Heritage Collections Conservation Manager for the Programme and a member of Icon's Care of Collections Group committee.

Between them we learned about the complex history of the building, its size and layout and the huge problems (asbestos, fire hazards and many more) which make remedial work essential and fraught with challenges. Within this context, Aimee introduced the six major collections to which the Houses of Parliament are home, with artefacts ranging from medieval parchment to statues, furniture, stained glass and wall paintings. As with everything else about this project, the scale of the work needed to store and care for the collections as the building work unfolds will be massive and could have significant implications for the heritage landscape more widely.

We will have more on this topic in the near future, so please stay tuned!

THE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY NETWORK

The Icon Environmental Sustainability Network (ESN) is live!

Founded by four Icon members, **Lorraine Finch ACR**, **Fiona McLees ACR**, **Pierrette Squires ACR** and **Jenny Williamson ACR**, we held the launch webinar of the ESN on 20 August 2020. It was lovely to welcome so many of you. It shows how important environmental sustainability is to you as both members and individuals.

The ESN is for all members whether you are a volunteer, a student, an emerging professional, a manager, an educator, a heritage scientist, a conservator or anything else.

During the webinar we covered:

- Background of the ESN
- Objectives of the ESN
- What we have planned
- A call out to you
- Open discussion

The ESN was set up with six objectives:

1. To encourage the take up of positive environmental practices in cultural heritage
2. To support the global endeavour to reduce biodiversity loss and reach net zero by 2030
3. To disseminate knowledge and understanding of environmental sustainability in cultural heritage
4. To create a 'best practice hub' for environmental sustainability on cultural heritage

5. To support the environmental sustainability leadership activities undertaken by Icon

6. To champion sustainable practices within Icon

We will also follow the seventeen UN Sustainable Development goals. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

After running through our objectives, it was time to move on to our ideas for what we have planned. These include:

- Webinars
- Twitter conferences
- Case studies with visits
- Creating resources such as 'How To' guides
- Crowdsourcing to find solutions to questions around environmental sustainability
- Acting as a signpost to resources relating to environmental sustainability

At this point, I put out a call to members. We will only be successful with your support. We need you to get involved. The ESN is run by members for members. The more you get involved, the more we can do, more quickly. If you'd like to give a webinar, have a resource you'd like to share, hold an event or have suggestions about what the ESN should deliver, then please get involved. You can contact the ESN at sustainability.icon@gmail.com

The questions we asked members to discuss during the webinar were:

- What do you want from the ESN?
- What topics would you like the ESN to explore?
- Which of these topics are the most urgent/a priority?
- How would you like the ESN to deliver its work, e.g. webinars, podcasts, Twitter, Instagram, Iconnects etc. ?
- Are there other organisations that you feel the ESN should collaborate with?

We had a very interesting discussion around these questions. There was a very strong feeling that the ESN should inspire environmental sustainability from the top down, and that the ESN should lobby stakeholders. It was suggested that the ESN should advocate for the role models in environmental sustainability. There was a strong desire for the ESN to provide resources, such as a database of sustainable materials, information on waste, recycling and the circular economy, and for the ESN to disseminate and signpost to environmental sustainable practices in cultural heritage created by others.

We are working on these. We will be holding webinars on waste and the circular economy before the end of 2020. We have set up Twitter and Instagram. You can follow us and contact us: Twitter: [@icon_esn](https://twitter.com/icon_esn) Instagram: [@icon.esn](https://www.instagram.com/icon.esn)

Please do get involved.

Lorraine Finch ACR
Chair of the ESN



© Lorraine Finch

Venice: heritage at risk from rising sea levels because of climate change

ETHICAL SAMPLING GUIDANCE

An introduction to the Icon Heritage Science Group's Ethical Sampling Guidance document

The Ethical Sampling Guide is a new, freely downloadable document that aims to provide guidance to anyone involved in the sampling of historical and archaeological objects and sites. Sampling for scientific investigation carries great responsibility as the objects are often of high value and unique; and samples have to be minimal in number and size but still representative and informative for the research question.

Deciding whether to sample can be a difficult task, since each case is unique in its purpose and context. As well as this, heritage materials are usually heterogeneous, aged or degraded which makes sampling within conservation more challenging than in other applications. Current standards for ¹sampling within conservation describe a method and criteria, but do not incorporate the decision-making process and ethical considerations.

To address this critical gap, Icon embarked on an innovative project in 2017. The process was initiated by the committee of the Icon Heritage Science Group who drew from the extensive knowledge and expertise available within the Icon community and wider field of conservation and heritage science. The consultation included:

- An online survey with one hundred and twenty-one UK-based and international participants, comprised of Icon members and the European Research Infrastructure for Heritage Science (E-RIHS) preparatory phase.



© Lorraine Finch

- An invited workshop with twenty UK-based participants from seven heritage organisations and three universities. The group represented scientists, academics and managers involved with heritage science and conservation; who identified and discussed case studies, key factors and common ground for ethical sampling decisions.
- A four-month online consultation for comments on the draft report, which resulted from the online survey and workshop.

Input from Icon members and the wider field was an invaluable contribution to the guidance. The collaborative approach of working with scientists, academics and practitioners from the UK as well as abroad also ensured a considered and versatile tool that can be used in a wide array of sampling scenarios.

As well as this, the consultation was useful in identifying crossroad challenges that resonate with anyone involved in sampling decisions, especially whether to sample or not, ownership and responsibility for data and samples, and managing expectations.

The guidance document was published in 2019. It includes an easy-to-follow decision-making flowchart outlining

considerations for both the researcher and owner/custodian. It provides a comprehensive checklist of the typical sampling scenarios in which users will find themselves, where the perspective of both the researcher and owner/custodian are considered. The guidance document is also suitable for new researchers who may be unfamiliar with sampling best practice in a heritage context and serves as a useful refresher for any seasoned professional.

This document is intended to be a practical aid that is accessible to everyone involved in the sampling process, and is situated within the framework of professional conservation ethics. Since it was launched in January 2019, the PDF has been viewed over three hundred times and has been cited in six peer-reviewed journals. It has been highlighted at several events, including: the Icon 2019 conference in Belfast, the E-RIHS UK open day at Historic Environment Scotland in Stirling and the Icon Heritage Science Group AGM in London.

Going forward, the guidelines will be disseminated further and we will continue to track its impact on the conservation and heritage science sector. We also hope that the guidance will not only be used as a standalone tool for individuals, but will be adopted by institutions in the further development of their best practice sampling protocols.

The Icon HSG Ethical Sampling Guidance can be freely downloaded from the Icon HSG web page: <https://icon.org.uk/groups/heritage-science/guidance-documents>

Natalie Brown

Senior Conservation Manager – Engagement
The National Archives

1 BS EN 16085:3023. Conservation of Cultural property. Methodology for sampling from materials of cultural property. General rules

THE PLOWDEN MEDAL

It is not too late to suggest a Nomination for the 2021 Plowden Medal.

The Plowden Medal is awarded annually to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the advancement of the conservation profession and whose nomination would be widely welcomed within the conservation community. The award covers all aspects of conservation, be they practical, theoretical or managerial, and it is open to those working in private practice or institutions.

More information and the Nomination papers can be found on www.royalwarrant.org. Nominations must be received by the end of February.

Established in 1999 to commemorate the life and work of the late Hon. Anna Plowden CBE (1938 – 1997), this gold Medal was endowed by the Royal Warrant Holders Association, of which she was Vice-President.

NIGEL WILLIAMS PRIZE 2021

Call for applications
deadline 2 February 2021



For more info
please visit Icon's Ceramics&Glass group pages
or email nwp@icon.org.uk



The Royal Warrant Holders Association also founded the Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust and you can read more about how QEST benefits conservation on page 14

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Archaeology Group

The Archaeology Group 2020 AGM was held on 29 September via Zoom. As well as the AGM we were delighted to welcome three guest speakers. Sara Crofts, Icon Chief Executive, who presented on Icon's strategy. Michael Nelles, Head of Membership at Icon, who provided an update on the Conservation Register and its new features, and Lorraine Finch ACR, Icon Trustee and accredited archives conservator, who concluded the meeting and gave a presentation about the newly formed Environmental Sustainability Network. We were very pleased with the attendance and would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who joined in and the wonderful guest speakers!

We are looking forward to hosting more online events in the future. We are currently planning an Emerging Professionals Zoom Webinar as well as another Twitter Conference. We are always looking for ideas for future events and workshops and would love to hear your suggestions.

Please contact us using our new Group email address - archgroup.icon@gmail.com - if you have any suggestions or ideas.

Please watch Iconnect, Twitter (@ICONArchaeology) and the website for further announcements. We always love to hear about your archaeological conservation projects big or small; please tag us and #FindsFriday in your posts and follow us on Twitter to see what everyone else is up to and how exciting our jobs can be!

Charlotte Wilkinson
Icon AG Communications Rep

Book and Paper Group

BPG21 is underway

The Book and Paper Group are well into the planning of the 2021 conference, *Mod Cons: Modern Conservation, Modern Constraints and Modern Conveniences*.

The theme puts a spotlight on issues beyond the bench and how they influence and inform our practice. The conference looks to understand how sustainable practices have changed our work, what opportunities digital innovations created for the field and what financial and business model practices are becoming prominent. This conference also encourages sharing of new techniques and tools that have been created at the bench for treatments.

After listening to members through a survey sent out through Iconnect, the conference will be moved completely online. A majority of 75.4% preferred a complete online conference. This aligned with priorities to be internationally accessible and lends itself to being more environmentally friendly.

When bridging the gap between online versus face-to-face, challenges of hands-on skill sharing and tours looked initially quite limited, however the BPG have risen to the challenge creating a diverse programme with makers, how-to workshops and more. If you are interested in collaborating for a virtual tour or workshop, then please do get in touch. The conference will run over four afternoons between 4 – 7 October 2021.

The call for papers was announced earlier this quarter and closes on 31 January 2021. Watch out for the photo competition and a call for posters early next year.

Pamela Murray

BPG21 Co-chair
Icon Book and Paper Group

Care of Collections Group

Pest Odyssey 2021 – the Next Generation

Detect, Respond, Recover – best practice IPM in 2021

Call for abstracts

This will be a fully virtual conference, 20 - 22 September 2021, and will enable participants to focus on changes and new developments in Integrated Pest Management (IPM) over the last ten years.

Submissions are invited for the third Pest Odyssey Conference. We invite contributions looking at science, sustainability and climate change in relation to IPM. Additionally, papers examining how to carry out IPM well and what a successful IPM programme looks like over ten or more years. Methods of advocacy and successful ways to share the IPM message both in your organisation and the wider world will be welcomed.

Abstracts should be a maximum of 500 words and should be submitted to pestodyssey@gmail.com by 12 a.m. (midnight) GMT on 8 January 2021.

Successful authors will be notified by 8 March 2021.



Completed papers will be required by 30 June 2021 for peer review for inclusion in the conference publication.

Poster abstracts will be invited, but the call for these will follow later.

Ceramics and Glass Group

On 12 September, the Ceramics and Glass Group hosted its first online AGM. Over recent months, the pandemic has forced all of us to adjust to a new normal and for the committee this has meant rethinking our working practices. One of the biggest changes has been meeting more online as a committee and now as a wider group. We were delighted to see so many faces at the Zoom AGM, which saw a greater attendance than previous years, we suspect partly due to the ease of accessibility.

There were a lot of changes to the committee this year. Our co-chairs **Dana Norris** and **Tiago Oliveria** stepped down from their positions, however, Dana will continue to work with the committee as Events Coordinator. The Group is still seeking a new Chair. If you would like to apply please send a two-hundred word statement outlining your relevant experience and interest in the role to iconcgg@gmail.com. We also said goodbye to our Student Rep **Mandy Garret** and welcomed new members **Marisa Kalvins**, **Shannon Campbell** and **Lily Griffin**.

Anyone who would like more details of the meeting, and to find out a little more about our new members, can find the minutes on the Group's resources page of the Icon website.

In other news, the committee was sad to announce the postponement of the 'Stain Reduction Workshop' because of current Covid-19 restrictions, but are pleased to say that the Nigel Williams Prize is going ahead as usual and applications are now being accepted.

After the meeting, we had the pleasure of hosting an excellent talk by **Phil Jell**. Phil works at the British Museum as an Assistant Collections Manager in the Loans and Display team. He specialises in mount-making for exhibitions and

touring loans. In his talk, 'Mount-making for Museum Artefacts', Phil discussed the general principles of mount-making for display and then went into more detail about some of the challenging ceramics and glass objects he has worked with. The talk was followed by a Q&A where Phil answered a broad range of questions from members. The talk is available to Icon members on the Ceramics and Glass webpage on the Icon website.

In other news

We would like to remind all students and conservators of ceramics, glass and related materials that applications for the Nigel Williams Prize are open! Head over to our webpage on icon.org.uk to find out how to apply. The deadline for applications is 2 February 2021. We look forward to receiving your applications.

Icon Scotland Group

Training and events

Over the summer we held two webinars consisting of a series of five-minute presentations on a range of subjects. We have called this format 'Take Five' and we hope to run further sessions subject to having enough content.

We also recently held our 23rd Annual Plenderleith Lecture, which was an online event on Thursday 26 November. Our speaker was **Euan Leitch**, CEO of The Built Environment Forum Scotland (BEFS), and his lecture was entitled 'A great disruption or 'plus ça change'?' It explored the impact of the events of 2020 on the culture and tourism sectors and included Euan's personal vision of the future for the historic environment in Scotland, giving the audience plenty of food for thought. Keep a look-out for a full review in the next edition of Icon News.

The Plenderleith lecture was preceded by Icon Scotland Group's AGM, at which we were delighted to fill the vacancies on our committee for a new chair, treasurer and events coordinator. Their names have been publicised through an Iconnect.

Other happenings

We have been involved in various lobbying and networking activities during the coronavirus pandemic. For example, our participation in the stakeholders group for Museums Galleries Scotland and the advisory group for The Built Environment Forum Scotland has allowed us to raise awareness of the issues affecting conservators in Scotland. We have also recently undertaken a survey specifically for conservators in Scotland about the effects of the pandemic, and the results of this will be published soon.

Contact and keep in touch

We obviously welcome primary and secondary members, but remember that all you need to do in order to receive the emailed Scotland Group Iconnects is tick the Group on your Icon membership form. You can also see our latest updates on social media: our blog is at <https://iconscotland.wordpress.com>, our Facebook page is

<https://en-gb.facebook.com/iconscotlandgroup> and our Twitter feed is @icon_scotland. Comments and suggestions for events can be emailed to scotland@icon.org.uk.

Paintings Group

On 17 November we hosted a virtual talk from **Joyce Hill Stoner** on 'Whistler's Labour-Intensive Evanescence'. This presentation looked especially at his veil-like techniques that revealed the canvas weave supports below.

Joyce Hill Stoner has taught for the Winterthur/UD Program in Art Conservation for forty four years and served as its director for fifteen years (1982-1997). She received her MA and diploma in conservation at the IFA NYU Conservation Center (1970/73), and a Ph.D. in Art History (1995, UD). She has been a Visiting Scholar at the Metropolitan Museum and the Getty Museum. Both art historian and practising paintings conservator, Stoner has treated paintings for many collections (including serving as senior conservator for the examination and treatment of Whistler's Peacock Room in the 1990s). Stoner has authored over a hundred articles and book chapters and also coordinates the FAIC International Oral History file with 430+ available transcripts of interviews with conservators, conservation scientists and related professionals.

In 2021 we have two virtual talks planned from conservators at the Art Institute of Chicago. In February, Alison Langley, Katrina Rush and Julie Simek will give a presentation on the conservation undertaken in Mozambique at the AIC, for their current exhibition of a contemporary African artist: *Malangatana - Mozambique Modern*. Later in the year we hope to hear from Elizabeth Wigfield on her conservation treatment of two Del Sarto portraits. We look forward to welcoming many Icon members as well as other interested people to our online talks.

The postprints from Icon's Paintings Group conference 'Wet Paint - Interactions between Water and Paintings', held in Edinburgh on 12 October 2018, are still available for purchase at the reduced price of £17.20 (including postage within the UK). Payment by BACS and cheques will be accepted. Please email Julia Jablonska at icon.paintingsgroup@googlemail.com to place an order.

Icon Paintings Group Committee

icon.paintingsgroup@googlemail.com
@IconPaintings

Photographic Materials Group

Many of our events have had to move online this year. This has forced organisers to adapt to a new format, but has also opened up talks and conferences to a wider audience. If you've been involved with any photography-related virtual events in the last few months, we'd love to share your experience through our blog (<https://iconphmgblog.wordpress.com>).

Our latest posts include reviews of the Royal Photographic Society's conference on the collodion medium 'Don't Press Print', which took place online at the beginning of October,

and the Tate talk 'Women Photographers; Conflict and Documentary'. Towards the end of the month, also look out for the PhMG's end of year blog post, which will attempt to conclude this year of uncertainty and virtual interaction and look forward to next year's events.

You can contact the committee via our Group email (phmg@icon.org.uk), Twitter (@ICONPhMG) or Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/ICONPhMG/>).

Stained Glass Group

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic and resulting social restrictions, the SGG committee were forced to cancel prearranged events for 2020. However, many of these events have been rescheduled for next year and some have moved online.

Next year, we will be joining forces with the Ceramics and Glass Group to hold a joint conference event in October and we also hope to support the celebrations of both the British Society of Master Glass Painters 100th Centenary and the Worshipful Company of Glaziers 700th Year Celebrations.

Alongside these planned events, we are collating some

Identification of Printing Techniques

PRINTING TECHNIQUES
MANUAL PROCESSES

PRINTING TECHNIQUES
PHOTOMECHANICAL PROCESSES

PHOTOENGRAVURE
LINE IMAGE
usually with aquatint grain; lines with grain appear less sharp; regular conventional printing; plate mark usually larger than image size; dark areas are dark; image in the original colour as long as possible for original reproduction

HALFTONE IMAGE WITH AQUATINT GRAIN
grain visible as light tone; plate mark usually larger than image size

HALFTONE IMAGE WITH DAMPED SCREEN
grain pattern of screen visible; plate mark usually larger than image size; image in the original colour as long as possible for original reproduction

Posters available in English or German, rolled DIN A1 or folded in Leporello style to DIN A4 to be used on working location

Orders from: h.homburger@t-online.de
Print identification seminars
www.hildegard-homburger.de

interesting webinars on conservation techniques and projects. Please keep a close eye on the Icon Stained Glass webpage and our social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter, for current up-to-date news about forthcoming events. All events and webinars will also be advertised via Iconnect.

If you have any thoughts or suggestions about how the Stained Glass Group can further support its members, please contact us at iconstainedglass@gmail.com

The SGG is always delighted to welcome new members into our Group. If you would like to join us please remember to tick the stained glass box at your membership enrolment or renewal, or email Head Office to request Iconnect updates from this Group.

SGG Committee

Textile Group

Latest News

To be able to successfully plan events during these challenging times, the Textile Group has made the collective decision that we will, for the time being, only offer our events virtually. In person events will be postponed until a time when we feel we can safely get together. This not only allows our members to enjoy our events from the safety and comfort of their own home, studio or office, but also enables greater accessibility at much reduced costs. Please see below for details of specific events. If you have any suggestions for virtual events, please do get in touch.

During November and early December, a series of online '*Pattern Cutting to Toile Making*' workshops led by Alice & Co (Alice & Lilia) have been a huge success, each of the three workshops sold out in a matter of days. Due to their popularity and with interest from overseas, these workshops were then repeated, again selling out for a second time! The first workshop covered an introduction to pattern cutting, the second discussed the art of draping and the third showed viewers how to take patterns and make toiles from pre-existing garments— a full review of the virtual workshops will be included in the next edition of Icon News.

A big thank you, once again to **Heather Porter ACR** for supplying her handmade masks to Icon members. At the time of writing, one hundred and twenty four face coverings have been distributed to conservators far and wide. Over one hundred are still available; if you would like one please see the Icon website for details.

Forthcoming Textile Group Events

Emerging Professionals Event - due to the ongoing uncertainty and limitations that Covid has brought about, we have taken the hard decision to postpone 'Emerging Professionals: Making a Career in Conservation' until Spring 2022. This will enable full networking opportunities that, we feel, a virtual event would inhibit.

Icon Textiles Group - Spring Forum 2021 - 'Textile Conservation: Out in the Open – The challenges of Displaying

& Conserving Textiles on Open Display' – was originally planned for Brighton in collaboration with the Historic Interiors Group. This event will now be held virtually in April 2021.

Many thanks to all of those who submitted abstracts for the event. The committee has selected both papers and posters covering a wide range of topics related to the challenges posed with collections presented on open display. We shall be advertising details of how to get involved with this virtual event and announcing our speakers and their topics in the next few months.

In This Issue

This year's graduates from The Centre for Textile Conservation (CTC) at the University of Glasgow introduce themselves to the profession and explain their dissertation submissions, which no doubt countless hours, blood, sweat and tears have gone into producing. The Textile Group would like to send congratulations to all those students graduating from conservation courses this year, and best wishes for a long and happy career in the profession, graduating in a year that will undoubtedly be remembered for a long time to come!

Keeping in touch with the Textile Group

Due to publication deadlines, it is not always possible to mention all events so please check the Icon website, Facebook page, Twitter feed and Iconnect for details. If you have anything that you would like mentioned in our communications please contact the Textile Group's News Editor: Terri.Dewhurst@nationaltrust.org.uk

Writing for Icon News

If you would like to submit an article or review an event, details of how to write for Icon News can be found here: <https://icon.org.uk/what-is-conservation/writing-icon> or by contacting Terri Dewhurst on the address above.

Awards



Congratulations to **Carole Milner** for her MBE, awarded in the Queen's Birthday Honours. The recognition of Carole's specific contribution, 'for her services to heritage and crafts during Covid-19', is, however, built on a much longer journey.

An experienced paintings conservator, Carole worked for many years in Italy and then in Paris, both as a freelance conservator and at The Louvre. During that time, she was instrumental in creating the European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers' Organisations (ECCO) and, in the 1990s, served as the Head of Conservation & Collection Care at the UK government advisory body, the Museums & Galleries Commission. Whilst there, she energetically supported the body that became the National Council for Conservation-Restoration, of which she ultimately became Chair.

One of the themes of her career has been that of bringing people and organisations together for the greater good and a stronger voice. And many Icon members will know Carole as the founding Chair of Icon, working indefatigably to bring together the disparate organisations that united to become Icon in 2005. In the same year, she was awarded the Royal Warrant Holders

Association Plowden Medal for her 'outstanding contribution to the development of the conservation profession'.

In subsequent years, Carole went on to work in the international development and voluntary sectors. She has also engaged widely with charity governance and grant-giving, as both a trustee and a specialist adviser. Through her role with the Radcliffe Trust, which she joined as Heritage & Crafts Adviser in 2009, Carole was instrumental in establishing the Heritage & Crafts Funders' Network, an informal group of over twenty-five trusts and foundations which she has convened on a voluntary basis for the past nine years. The network has been particularly valued during the Covid-19 epidemic, helping funders to target their emergency support speedily to those areas where livelihoods were disproportionately at risk.

Asked about the award, Carole said 'I am as humbled as I am proud to receive this honour. Conservation and craft are for me a wonderful continuum of skills, commitment and inspiration. I am proud of everything our sector achieves – often in discreet but constant ways that deserve many, many more honours! Those that support this work in wise and thoughtful ways provide not only funds but also sector intelligence, encouragement and relationships. They are equal partners in our heritage ecology and this award is also for them.'

Welcome to these new members

We would like to extend a very warm welcome to all those who joined us in August and September 2020. We hope to see you at an Icon event soon!

Marianne Barrow

John Corley Stained Glass Studio
Pathway

Rebecca Bayram

Nordnorsk Kunstmuseum
Pathway

Shannon Cherry

Associate

Henrietta Rose Cook

Cheng Shiu University
Associate

Louise Davison

City and Guilds of London Art School
Student

Anne Desplanches

Associate

Haddon Dine

Associate

Louise Dowbakin

Supporter

Meredith Duncan

Student

Lisa Edwards

Pathway

Joshua Hill

Student

Megan Johnston

Supporter

Jenni Krchak

Student

Sara Luduena

Associate

Emily Makinson

Associate

Reyhane Mirabootalebi

University of Delaware
Art Conservation Department
Student

Aki Mizobuchi

Pathway

Jurjen Munk

Student

Katherine Murphy

Student

Elena Nepoti

Imperial War Museums
Pathway

Emma Pattinson
Student

Anna Presland
Student

Emma Schmitt
United States Holocaust
Memorial Museum
Associate

Sarah Soltis
Student

Priyanka Vaid
Glenbow Museum
Associate

Zoe Voice
Northumbria University
Student

Helen Whittaker
Barley Studio
Pathway

Olha Yarema-Wynar
Associate

QEST AT THIRTY

The Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust celebrated its thirtieth anniversary this year. Over that time a good number of conservators have benefited from its generosity, their scholarships covering a broad range of disciplines from bronze sculpture to wall paintings. This salute to QEST's work in supporting British cultural heritage highlights the experience of some of our members

Emma Nichols, book and paper conservator

I applied to QEST in 2012 to fund the 2nd year tuition fees of my MA in Book and Archival Conservation at Camberwell College of Arts in London. QEST also enabled me to take up a two-week intensive voluntary conservation internship during my studies by funding the accommodation and travel. As a result of this I graduated with a wealth of knowledge and practical experience and a top grade distinction.

Thanks to my grades and experience I was offered my dream job of Book and Paper Conservator at Cambridge University Library before I had even graduated and I've been there ever since! I have the privilege of working on globally significant items and in a large supportive team of conservators and professionals. I have featured in National Geographic and New Scientist magazines and in 2016 I was the first conservator to be awarded a Research Bursary by the Wellcome Trust to conduct analysis and design a bespoke conservation treatment for moisture sensitive paper.

I'm passionate about outreach, the advocacy of our profession, and the support and training of new conservators. I regularly speak at conferences and I sit on the ARA Conservation Training Scheme committee.

Emma Nichols applying isinglass adhesive with an aerosol generator to the moisture-damaged paper of a World War II Nominal Roll



Photo courtesy of National Museum of Ireland

Lucie Mascord installing a hyena mount for the National Museum of Ireland's new Wonder Cabinet installation

Lucie Mascord ACR, natural history conservator

I undertook an Icon internship in the care and conservation of natural history collections in 2011 with placements at the Natural History Museum, and the Lancashire Conservation Studio with James Dickinson - the only specialist natural history conservator in the North of England. Following my placement, the conservation studio wanted to further support the preservation and continuance of James's knowledge for the future. QEST was uniquely placed to appreciate the importance of supporting a declining and specialised skill set, and in 2013 I was awarded a scholarship for a one-year placement training alongside him.

My training focused around learning about historical and modern methods of preserving animal remains. I worked on some big projects for local museums, including a gallery redevelopment for Warrington Museum. I also developed two research projects that resulted in one publication and one poster, both of which I presented at the ICOM-CC 17th Triennial Conference in Melbourne.

In addition to learning practical techniques, I developed my skills working with professionals in multi-disciplined teams, managing external projects and working on the preventive conservation of Lancashire Museums collections. After a period of work in London, it became important to me to support the



Felix Thornton-Jones at work

retention and development of skills in regional museums, particularly in my home county of Lancashire which is especially impacted by cuts to culture. The broad range of skills I gained during my scholarship were pivotal in my successful application to take over from James in his role after his retirement in 2014. I have worked at the studios since, serving museums nationwide, and I opened my own conservation business in 2016.

The most important professional highlight for me was gaining my Icon professional accreditation in 2016. I don't have a conservation degree, and despite my experience this drew criticism from some of my peers. I felt that gaining accreditation was essential to prove my credentials. Since then, I have mentored others through their accreditation.

I am a Trustee of Icon, and the Natural Sciences Collections Association (NatSCA), both provide opportunities for me to do advocacy work which I am passionate about.

I founded the NatSCA natural science conservation working group in 2017, and one of my most recent highlights has been organising the NatSCA Caring for Natural Science conference in 2018.

Felix Thornton-Jones, sculpture conservator

I applied to QEST in 2007 to fund my Masters in Conservation of Archaeological Materials. The exciting and unique part was that this course was being taught in China in a collaboration between the University of Bologna (Italy) and the Xi'an Jiatong University (China). The course reflected the varied materials I had already been working on in my career in conservation up to that point and it was a chance to have an adventure at the same time.

Xi'an is the ancient capital of China and stood at the Eastern end of the fabled Silk Road for a millennia. It was contemporary with Ancient Rome and is famous these days for the Terracotta Army archaeological site nearby. It was a very interesting and immersive place to study the conservation of artefacts. We were lucky to have professors and conservation experts from both China and Italy teach us and I learned theoretical and practical approaches that were to be relevant to my future work. Spending the time abroad also allowed me the time and space to think more clearly about the path I wished to take upon returning to the UK. I was able to write a blog (new fangled idea

back in 2007!) about my experiences and meanwhile research how to set up in business back in London.

I opened my own conservation and restoration studio in London in 2008. Since then the studio has worked on a wide range of sculpture from antiquity through to early 20th century works and many of the artworks are now to be found in the major museums and private collections all over the world, from the V&A in London to the Getty in LA. I personally most enjoy working on late 18th century French sculpture and Modern British abstract sculpture. Since 2017 I have been working with my assistant from my studio in a converted Victorian carriage house in Surrey. Artworks come to the studio from all over the world and I am very much linked to the international cycle of art fairs and auction 'seasons'.

Tristram Bainbridge ACR, furniture conservator

I applied for a QEST scholarship in 2009 in order to complete the final year of training in furniture conservation at West Dean College. The funding covered the cost of tuition for that whole year, which was the foundation of my career in conservation. I learnt a range of practical techniques, undertook my Masters research into synthetic resins, and went on work placements at the British Museum and V&A. I subsequently went on to work as a furniture conservator at the V&A, where I have been part-time for the past eight years. During this time I became interested in the conservation of Asian lacquer, and it is something I specialise in today.

As I enjoy the practical work of conservation as well as aspects of managing a company, I set up a practice with my wife, Abigail Bainbridge ACR, a book and paper conservator. Along the way I became an Icon Accredited Conservator, which opened the door to new projects and institutions. I have been very lucky to work with some fantastic people on wide-ranging projects.

Tristram Bainbridge ACR working on a cabinet



Highlights have included artefacts for the new Queen's Diamond Jubilee Galleries at Westminster Abbey and William Kent furniture for the refurbishment of Marble Hill House. The availability of QEST funding at the early stages of my training had a big impact on choosing conservation as a career, which continues to be immensely rewarding.

Rachel Sawicki, book and paper conservator

I first dreamed of pursuing a career in book conservation whilst working as an Assistant Conservation Technician at the Bodleian Library. The inspiring team of Conservators and Bookbinders introduced me to the field that combined my love of history, cultural heritage, hand crafts, science, and art. I was motivated to apply for a QEST scholarship so that I could become a qualified Book Conservator. Thanks to the generosity and support of QEST, I was able to undertake MA studies in the Conservation of Books and Library Materials at West Dean College in 2008. I still remember opening my envelope with utter shock and delight, becoming a QEST scholar was an absolute life changer for me.

As well as meeting lifelong friends and my husband, I gained vital treatment and research experience at West Dean and was awarded my MA degree with Distinction, receiving the University of Sussex prize for best MA project. My scholarship experience was immensely positive and enabled me to enter the field of book conservation with motivation and enthusiasm.

Following graduation, I spent over three years at the Chester Beatty Library in Ireland, undertaking conservation treatments on beautiful Islamic and Indian manuscripts and pigments. Another career highlight was working with the Paper Conservation team at the National Library of Australia, where I gained experience conserving Indigenous collection material and works of art on paper.

One of Rachel Sawicki's favourite objects: a 3.4 metre long barkcloth (kapa) sample from Hawaii, acquired by a master's mate aboard Cook's HMS Resolution voyage



Of many projects since her scholarship, Elizabeth Cheadle ACR notes that the conservation of the early 16th century reredos at St.Cadoc's church LLancarfan was significant for its complex challenges and interdisciplinary decision-making

I currently work as a Conservator within Cambridge University Library's wonderful Conservation and Collection Care team, where my learning and love for book conservation continues. QEST helped me start a wonderful career and I feel lucky every day.

Elizabeth Cheadle ACR, polychrome and gilded timber conservator

I had trained at the City and Guilds of London art school during the seventies and then spent several years working in studios in London and assisting with church conservation projects. In 1991 I established my own practice in Somerset. In 2004, as a freelance conservator of polychromed timber, I was looking for mid-career development. I recognised the importance of keeping abreast of changing approaches and being open to both innovative and traditional methods of treatment. Most of my work involved projects on site in churches and historic houses, giving little time or funds to cover the cost of courses with travel and accommodation. It was with this in mind that I applied for and was awarded a Queen Elizabeth Scholarship in 2004.

Looking back, I am hugely grateful for the Scholarship, which allowed me to attend conferences and undertake several courses, including the laser cleaning course at the National Museums of Liverpool and Wolbers' New Methods of Cleaning with gel formulations. Above all, I gained insight from working alongside conservators with different specialisms and expertise. I spent time with the National Trust conservators at Knightshayes Court, learning the importance of preventative conservation and assisted at Snowhill Manor with the preparations to put the collection of objects into store before the house was closed for maintenance. One highpoint was my study visit to the Museum of Antiquities in Stockholm.

All these experiences added to my professional and personal development as a conservator and gave me the confidence to lecture at the Weald and Downland Museum on the Timber building MSc course. In 2006 I applied for and gained my accreditation. I continue to undertake conservation, surveys and consultancy projects. And leading up to retirement, I hope to use my experience to do new projects closer to home.



A treasure from the Fitzwilliam Museum's printed book collection recently treated by Edward Cheese ACR: Apianus's *Astronomicum Caesarium* of 1540



Flake fixing at Hampton Court Palace: the project was literally a highlight for Elizabeth Woolley ACR in headtorch and on a cherry-picker

Edward Cheese ACR, book & paper conservator

My QEST scholarship paid for the tuition fees of the second, postgraduate diploma year on the Conservation of Books and Library Materials course at West Dean. Having used all my savings to fund my first year of study, I was worried about how to afford the second year, which was crucial to being able to find employment as a conservator. Staff in the College suggested I get in touch with QEST, and I was extremely fortunate to be offered an interview and, following that, a scholarship.

My scholarship-funded year was an intense, all-absorbing experience, and I loved every minute of it! The Scholarship gave me a personal boost in confidence and I was determined to immerse myself in the subject of book conservation as fully as possible to live up to the confidence QEST had shown in me. That not only enabled me to consolidate and hone my skills but also to experiment with binding structures for manuscripts and early printed books.

But, quite apart from the financial support, QEST's rigorous interview process and insistence on the highest quality in craft work stays with me, and that is something I find deeply inspiring - aim for the best you possibly can, no matter what you are doing!

At the end of the course, I was invited to go and work at the Cambridge Colleges' Conservation Consortium, helping to prepare the manuscripts in the Parker Library at Corpus Christi College for digitisation. I deeply appreciate that opportunity to work alongside highly skilled and experienced colleagues still! When the project came to an end, I became a full-time member of staff at the Consortium, and took over running it in 2011. In 2015 I moved a few hundred metres along the road to take up the post of Conservator of Manuscripts and Printed Books (Assistant Keeper) at the Fitzwilliam Museum, where I work on the great manuscript, printed book and archival collections, both at the Museum and Trinity College.

It's always difficult to choose favourites, but I have been lucky enough to have been able to undertake several rebinding projects for important and very old books which were being damaged by inappropriate later bindings. In all these cases, it has been fascinating to work closely with the curators and be able to share experience with the other people, in person and online.

Elizabeth Woolley ACR, wall painting conservator

I applied for funding for the third year of my wall painting conservation Masters at The Courtauld. My ambition was always to work in practical conservation which has a strong handskill component, and I felt that QEST's support for crafts would recognise that. The scholarship allowed me to complete my studies, and also introduced me to an amazingly talented group of peers who work in many different fields.

In a very immediate way, QEST funded the qualification which granted entry to my career. More broadly, conservation is a multidisciplinary job, and sites often require a range of skills and expertise. Through QEST I have a ready network of gilders, stone carvers and woodworkers to contact depending on the needs of the project.

Opus Conservation is the company I co-founded and we offer all conservation services - technical imaging, analysis, documentation and remedial work. Although the Opus works internationally, my focus is on UK wall painting. It is a privilege to work intimately with our tangible heritage, whether in small parish churches or UNESCO sites such as the Tower of London or Palace of Westminster.

Rounding off our tribute to QEST we hear from Deborah Pocock, the Trust's CEO:

At QEST we are really proud to have supported so many conservators over the last thirty years, working on a wide range of objects - from paper and books to paintings, furniture, natural history and more. QEST supports many different craft disciplines, and with conservation the ethos of Icon aligns perfectly with that of QEST in terms of enhancing skills and enabling, through conservation, a long future for works of our cultural heritage. We hope to be able to work with many more conservators in the years to come.

Important note

If these stories from Icon members have inspired you, you might like to know that the dates for the first application round next year have been confirmed for **11 January - 15 February 2021**.

A COLLABORATIVE ENTERPRISE

Textile Conservator Julie McBain reflects on working as one of a broad-based team on an Imperial War Museum project

INTRODUCTION

I was very surprised when I heard someone say, 'What? You're a textile conservator working for Imperial War Museums? I thought they were all about aeroplanes, guns and tanks!' Well, I suppose that's partially true, but the museum tells stories about conflict and people's experiences in conflict and that can be told through uniforms, flags and civilian clothes - objects solidly in the specialism of a textile conservator.

I am employed alongside a senior objects conservator, Jenna Taylor, a paper conservator, Lucy Cokes, and an objects conservator, Rachel Howie, to work on *Transforming Imperial War Museum London Phase 2* (TIWML2). The project encompasses the building and refurbishment of two new galleries - The Second World War Gallery (SWWG) and The Holocaust Gallery (THG) - and two learning and event spaces, which are due to open in autumn 2021. (A date rescheduled from March 2021 due to the Covid 19 pandemic.)

There are many wonderful aspects about this job - the ability to be able to undertake lots of bench work; working with lots of different professionals and specialisms; and learning how a large organisation operates, from the database to the interaction between departments and outside agencies.

MOCK-UPS AND SHOWCASES

One of my first jobs was to make a number of 'toiles', a version of the original garments made in a cheap fabric, of concentration camp 'uniforms'. This was definitely throwing me in at the deep end. Not only was it working on a very sensitive subject, but I had only ever made a few items of clothing for myself in the past.

The original uniforms were still on display at IWM Lambeth Road and could not be de-installed. The idea of recreating a concentration camp uniform out of calico from a few measurements found on the museum database felt very daunting. The toiles were used to ensure that the original uniforms will fit into the new showcase, in the positions specified by the designers. This was the first mock-up I had been involved with and little did I realise that mock-ups were to become a big feature of my life at IWM.

Each showcase is being 'mocked-up' before installation. The fine detail involved in this process appears to be quite unique to IWM. A replica of each showcase is constructed, to precise design measurements, from what appears to be MDF, Plastazote and masking tape. This process involves a huge assortment of professionals: designers, mount makers, curators, project managers, project delivery and of course, conservators.



© IWM Photography: Richard Ash

The Gena Turgel wedding dress of parachute silk

When each showcase has been constructed it is the turn of the conservators to place the objects on the bespoke mounts in the correct positions in the showcase.



Image by courtesy of the family of Major Parkash Singh VC and Mrs Raminder Parkash Singh © IWM Photography: Richard Ash

Julie McBain in the lab working on the palla

Photographs and detailed measurements are taken whilst all snags relating to installation are ironed out and rectified before the big installation dates next summer.

Well - this was what was happening before Covid 19 came along. Now the museum has resorted to digital mock-ups. All the objects going into each showcase are carefully photographed in conservation. Each photograph is then annotated with as many accurate dimensions as needed, including the angles and heights of all mounts. These photographs and measurements are then sent halfway round the world to Steve in New Zealand who, I'm sure, uses magic to pop all the information into a design software that shows us whether it will all fit, look beautiful and tell the story coherently.

A VARIED PORTFOLIO

Obviously uniforms are a big part of my daily remit but there are many more delicate objects that come through conservation. A silk-and-metal-thread wedding palla (scarf) was worn by Raminder Singh and her husband Parkash Singh VC, during their wedding ceremony in April 1947. It was a beautiful but severely damaged textile that was entrusted to my care. The palla was one of the few possessions that the newly married couple saved during the mass migration of people during the partition of India in 1947.

When it arrived on my desk it was seriously torn and the metal threads were pulled in multiple places. The whole surface was crumpled and creased. There was no way that this object could be displayed in a showcase in the condition it was presented to me. As it was a loan item, I had to put a case together to get permission to humidify the palla to remove the creasing and stitch a full support to the 'back' of the wedding scarf. This has been by far the most time-consuming conservation project I have undertaken at IWM but the finished article looks stunning and will appear in the Museum book that will accompany the exhibition.

A luminous blackout flower was an object that showed a beautiful side to the war. The flower had been painted with radium paint so that it would glow in the dark. Women wore these flowers in their coat lapel so that people could see them out and about during a blackout. As radium is

The palla displayed after conservation

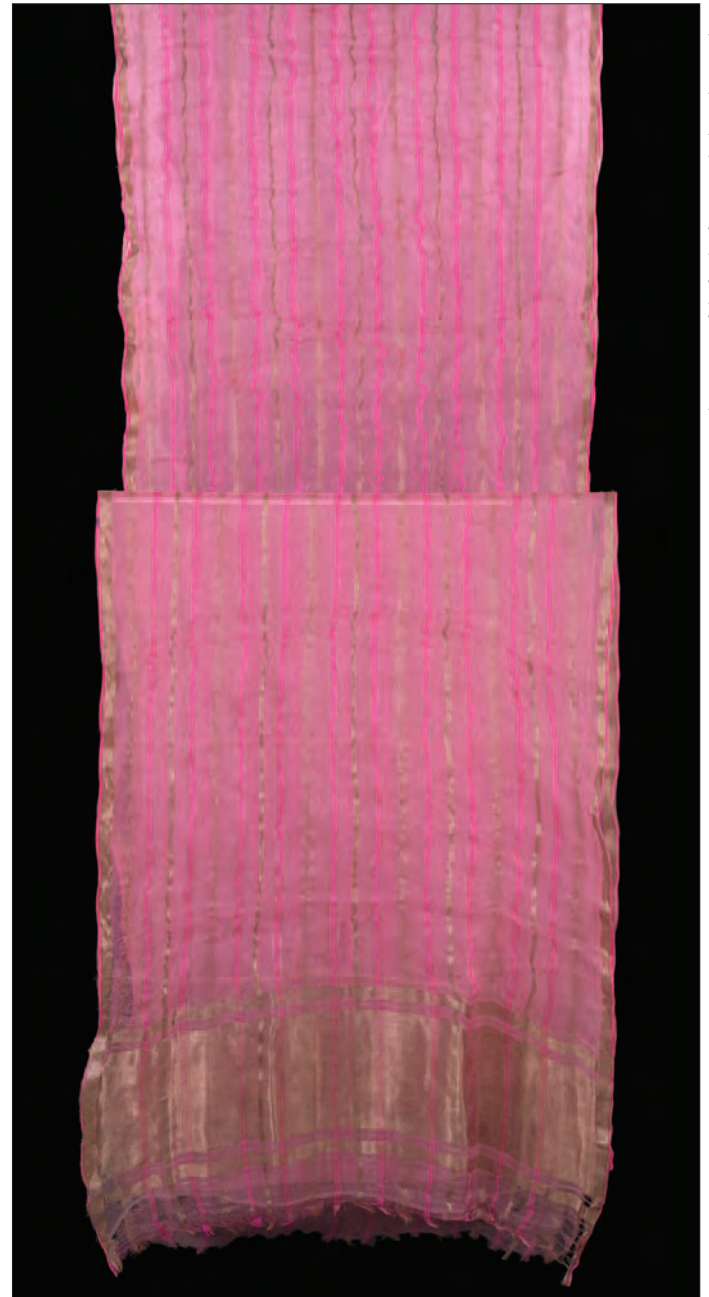


Image by courtesy of the family of Major Parkash Singh VC and Mrs Raminder Parkash Singh © IWM Photography: Richard Ash



The blackout flower designed to glow in the dark



primarily an alpha emitter, it does not penetrate through clothing - the women wearing these flowers would not have been subject to radiation. Only the unlucky women working in the factories creating the illuminous objects would have experienced harmful doses of the radioactive element. Luckily for me, all that was needed was a recommendation for the most appropriate way to mount the object for long-term display.

MANNEQUIN ISSUES

As each 'uniform' will be on long-term display at IWM London, each uniform or piece of civilian clothing needs to be supported on a bespoke mannequin. New mannequins are being cast for these galleries so I have been working closely with H+H Sculpture and Design and the staff of Richard Rogers Conservation Ltd. The selection of body parts for each mannequin is a huge job. The Second World War Gallery alone has upwards of forty-five mannequins whilst The Holocaust Gallery has only a few traditional mannequins but many bespoke 'flat form' torsos being made by Richard Rogers Conservation Ltd. It has been a huge undertaking to ensure that the correct size and shape of mannequin/torso have been selected for each 'uniform' to offer maximum support.

One of the difficult things about mannequins is deciding how a figure will be posed, and how each uniform will tell its story. Some of the poses suggested by the designers and curators would not have been appropriate for the stability of the textiles or would have exceeded the budget for that mannequin. There has been a lot of compromising. Where arms are not needed, because the figure has no pose, I construct soft arms, from calico and poly-wadding, to ensure that the uniform is properly supported, and where a dress sags because it will not fit over a larger solid torso, I add soft supports to recreate the correct body shape.

With the concentration camp 'uniforms', the brief from the curators was that they wanted the jackets to look 'broken' - to look like there was someone inside but not really someone. Maybe if they had had their way the curators would have just thrown, with respectful curatorial design, the jackets onto metal hangers. The angular forms that I, the curators and Richard Rogers Conservation have come up

with give a feel of 'brokenness' to the uniforms that hopefully tells the story of the people who witnessed the Holocaust and supports the textiles whilst on display.

The thousands of objects that are going into the two new galleries have to come through conservation and photography. Each textile is photographed by me, as a reference for the conservation studio, and again by the museum photographers for IWM Collections Online, a resource for research and commercial services. In addition to days spent selecting body parts and dressing mannequins with H+H Sculpture and Design, I have spent days with IWM's Visual Resources Department dressing mannequins to be photographed. All of this dressing has certainly trained my eye to what is required from a mannequin.

A particularly moving experience I was involved with was the display of a wedding dress made from a parachute silk. The dress had been made for a Holocaust survivor, Gena Turgel. As a well-known Jewish Polish author and survivor of Belsen, Gena's life was being remembered at a memorial service in North London and her family had asked for the dress, which is now a part of the IWM collection, to be privately displayed for the occasion. The interest that the dress and its conservation received was overwhelming.

TWO FINAL POINTS

And finally, to raise the profile of conservation and explain what it is that we do within the museum environment, the team was asked to present an object or objects that we had conserved to the larger transforming team and Senior Leadership Team. This proved to be an extremely worthwhile event that raised a huge amount of interest. People genuinely enjoy listening to what we do as conservators.

It can be difficult at times working with very sensitive issues relating to the Holocaust and Second World War. I have been very lucky in that the whole of the Transforming IWM London 2 team really has worked as a team, supporting each other on a rollercoaster of emotions. I have made some wonderful friends in my time at the museum and learnt a thing or two along the way.

BACK TO THE BENCH

Arantza Dobbels, Project Conservator at The National Archives, reflects on the experience of being back at her workbench after four months away

INTRODUCTION

Starting in mid-July and after four months of working from home, the Collection Care Department has been making its way back into The National Archives. The return to the benches has been phased and carefully planned, allowing for the required health and safety preparations to be carried out as well as the necessary risk assessments - a return to a working environment that is slightly different to the one we knew back in March.

PREPARATIONS

Allowing the return of only a very limited number of staff led to a prioritisation of teams with a high degree of inter-departmental dependencies. Therefore the commercial aspect of the Digitisation Team's work played an important part in kick-starting the preparations for the return to work of

a reduced number of conservators. Risk assessments across the organisation and for the use of the conservation studios, and of specific conservation processes in particular, were carried out early on in the process.

The studio's risk assessment allowed for the identification of the key issues that needed to be resolved in order to comply with Covid-19 health and safety regulations. Some of the main concerns included the appropriate spacing of the benches for the two-metre rule to be satisfied, the number of conservators allowed in the studio at the same time, one-way systems, and how to work with shared material and equipment.

This initial assessment of the main working environment resulted in a studio map that showed where each conservator would sit, as well as the one-way routes that would be in place. It also produced a set of guidelines that

Signs at the entrance are hard to miss





Main entrance at The National Archives is now a one-way walking system

provided advice and information to the conservators; for example regarding the disinfecting of surfaces or devices (such as telephones and trollies) after their use.

The importance of staff feeling safe and comfortable to return to the workplace was evident, both from The National Archives in general and from the departmental and team managers. We were encouraged to raise our concerns and point out any ideas for improvements or changes that would benefit everyone. A phased return was set in place, allowing staff to ease into the new reality while still working to complete projects on time. Projects and expectations were also adapted to fit the new style of working with a continuous review of the risk assessments based on government advice, ensuring safety for all.

BACK ON SITE

General measures

In accordance with government guidance, The National Archives has put in place a number of health and safety procedures to welcome back staff and visitors, some of which have changed the way we move through the building and interact with others.

Hand sanitising stations can be found at the entrance and exit, as well as in many other locations within the building, including lifts, bathroom, desks, and eating areas. Public areas such as the restaurant or seating areas have been altered to ensure that a safe distance is kept between people when they sit down for lunch or a break, which makes it slightly awkward to have lunch with a colleague - but safety comes first! Disinfecting sprays and paper towels can be found nearby to clean your table and seat before and after use. One-way routes are in place, with arrows on the floor signalling where you should walk depending on your direction.

Department-specific measures

Additionally, the Collection Care Department has taken further steps to keep conservators and objects safe. As per the risk assessments and studio maps, there are only a few benches that conservators are allowed to use, with the rest being marked with stickers to make sure they remain vacant. Markings on the floor and signs on the walls remind staff of how many people are allowed in one particular space. Cleaning wipes have been provided for each conservator, and they are used to sanitise any material that might need to be touched by more than one person, such as the telephone, trollies, drawers or computers.

Object quarantining

PPE is provided to use if necessary, but the biggest change to the usual working routine has been the establishment of object quarantines. This new addition to our routine has taken some time to get used to, particularly within the Digitisation Team, owing to the quick turnover of objects and multiple people handling them.

Conservators have had to seek innovative solutions and methods to make the object quarantine a smooth part of the process. For example, to facilitate the quarantine of items that the scanning team need us to have a look at during the imaging process, conservator Harriet Gillespie created different sections on our 'quarantine station' each pertaining to a different day of the week. That way, it is visibly clear when an object was last handled by the scanning team, and the quarantine station is kept well organised to avoid further, unnecessary handling.

Meetings

Something that we are still trying to resolve is meetings. Having meetings in person used to be easy; then, we all managed to get comfortable with online meetings. But now



Daily encounters

that some people are on-site, and some are home, it means the two dimensions are colliding. There are people getting together in meeting rooms, sitting two metres apart, with their laptops, all connected to a video call with those that are at home. It can feel a bit 'meta' (excuse me) and the reverberating sounds and echoes of voices in the same physical room and virtual room can cause some humorous disruptions.

REFLECTIONS

For a conservator whose work has to be carried out on a bench, on documents that are held at The National Archives, there were times when I felt a bit lost, sitting at home, working on my laptop. Of course, there was work to do and

the chance to delve into professional development through online courses, lectures and research projects was a welcome and exciting opportunity. But it was also difficult staring at a computer screen all day instead of books and documents in need of some care.

There was a lot of excitement - as well as uncertainty - to return. The first day back was like a taste of a return to normal, even if this normal was a bit different from what it used to be. Through good communication with colleagues and managers, it felt safe and good to be back at my desk.

As a team, we try to keep our usual routines in place, such as having our morning break together or stopping for lunch. This has helped us ease back into work. The quarantining of objects and cleaning of shared material is something that has affected our usual fast-paced environment. It has taken some trial and error, communication and innovation from teammates to find a solution that works for everyone. But it has slowly started to settle in, and soon it will be a part of the process, just like washing our hands and maintaining a safe distance.

The archives have done a good job of making me feel safe at work; the health and safety procedures in place, regular cleaning and social distancing rules make the workplace look slightly different, but together with my fellow colleagues and staff they make it feel safe and welcoming. Perhaps my main concern - and one that I imagine will stay with me for some time - is travel. I, like many others, have tried to find the best commute to get to work with the least risk involved.

We left in March in a strange situation - on the verge of a lockdown - and we have come back into a time in which keeping an open mind and being flexible regarding work (and general life) arrangements is no longer an option, but a necessity. I have learned to go with the flow in terms of the changes - and to always have a mask on me.

Despite the redecoration - courtesy of the COVID-19 signs, hand-sanitisers and one-way systems - the atmosphere at The National Archives is starting to feel more alive lately, thanks to the return of our readers and visitors. Soon, it might even start to feel normal after all.

A socially distanced canteen



TALKS

WEBINAR TALK SERIES

Icon Care of Collections Group

Online
August – September 2020

Between 19 August 19 and 2 September, the Care of Collections Group hosted their first webinar series consisting of three evening talks. These were the first online events that the Group has produced, and we were extremely encouraged by the attendance numbers and positive feedback.

The first presentation was given by **Fran Coles ACR** entitled *Black Lives Matter: Documenting and conserving Bristol's history as it happens*. Coles focused on the practical aspects of documenting and treating objects from the BLM protest during lockdown, including how the team worked to preserve objects despite limited access to equipment and materials. An interesting discussion was then had about the challenges and opportunities that arose from working on the project. The presentation was really engaging and there were many audience questions as well as an appetite to follow up on the journey of these objects and the team working to preserve them.

The second presentation was delivered by the British Library's **Karen Bradford** and **Dr Paul Garside** entitled *Risk Assessments for*

Decision Making During Lockdown. Recently the British Library preventive conservation team has been developing and refining its method of risk assessment to benefit conservation decisions. Dr Garside shared the theory and methods behind this system while Bradford presented practical case studies. During the pandemic, changes to working habits, access to the collections and public engagement have had to be reassessed for safety. Using their risk assessment model, the conservation team were able to judge the risk to collections during and after the lockdown as well as the risk associated with the re-opening of the reading rooms post-lockdown. The theory behind the model, as well as its practical use, was extremely well received and provoked thoughtful discussion and engaging audience questions.

The final presentation took the form of a panel discussion hosted by **Sophia Oelman** and **Sadie Wilson** who brought together conservators **Claire Fry ACR**, **Jonathan Bridal ACR**, **Emily Yates** and **Terri Dendy** to discuss the impact of covid-19 on emergency planning and salvage response. The discussion focused on salvage equipment, communicating and managing salvage teams, welfare and preparing for another lockdown. The conversation was fascinating, with pre-planned questions discussed first followed by audience questions. The expertise ranged from large public

institutions to private consulting companies and brought together many new ideas, considerations, and practical experiences.

Overall, the series was a great success and the CCG Events team would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the wonderful presenters who were so engaging and accommodating. We would also like to thank the attendees for provoking thoughtful discussion and sharing their own experiences. Hosting online events has quickly become the new normal and the advantages it offers in terms of accessibility and inclusion are exciting.

As well as hosting the events online, the CCG committee have set up a YouTube channel where we have posted each of the presentations from our webinar series. The link to these videos can be found on the CCG Group pages of Icon's website. The events team are beginning to plan events for 2021 and would love the feedback of our members. A survey has been put together to collate data on what topics members would find useful to discuss and which presentation platforms people prefer. Please keep an eye on your Iconnects for the survey or find the link via the CCG twitter feed.

Aimee Sims

CCG Committee

Collecting history as it happens





© Kayleigh Spring

Food for thought from the Care of Collections Group

CONFERENCE

DARK ARCHIVES 20/20: A Voyage into the Medieval Unread & Unreadable

The Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature
Online September 2020

Over three days in September 2020, the Dark Archives conference was organised into three themes: *macrocosm*, *microcosm* and *massive open online*, using a combination of pre-recorded sessions, panel discussions and robust social media participation at #DarkArchives.


Columba Stewart from Hill Museum and Manuscript Library was the first keynote


speaker who profiled his travels to agree digitisation of entire collections in Ethiopia, Syria and many locations that are now experiencing unrest. Capturing all items meant that many manuscripts are digitally available that are now missing.

Stewart Brookes in his talk 'The Book, The Whole Book and Nothing But the... Digital Surrogate' compares and contrasts the vocabulary we use within digitisation. He highlights new interpretation opportunities for conservation and preservation, illustrated by Christina Duffy's microscopic digitisation of the British Library's Lindisfarne Gospels. Brookes also shows that re-digitising can produce benefits through more accurate representation or object changes. He also

Stewart Brookes highlights imaging work at The British Library

'Under the microscope with the Lindisfarne Gospels' Christina Duffy (British Library)
29 July 2013





Folio 44v at 50x magnification. This letter is filled with a green pigment of either verdigris or vergaut. Crackling is visible on the green and pigment.

'amplified and specialized forms'

© Stewart Brookes and Christina Duffy

provides a primer on methods of creating archive virtual 3D surrogates.

Biocodicology and how it supports understanding and interpreting manuscripts was presented by **Sarah Fiddymnt**. She describes the difference between DNA and protein analysis and its use on manuscripts and manuscript accretions. She reviewed the information made available from this non-destructive testing, including animal source and sex used for parchment production, manuscript usage and object environment, such as how the object was stored.

The results of this type of testing can indicate how quality material was used or preferred by crafts people within a bindery like the Aldine Press or even within a single binding like the Gospel of St Luke from St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury. Further, analysis of tested dyed parchment shows that it primarily comes from sheep, which may be because of its fatter makeup 'because if you are dyeing the parchment, to have all these lipids or fats means that it is going to retain the dye in a much more efficient way'.

Lisa Fagin Davis in her keynote address about becoming a manuscript fragmentologist - The Opportunities (and Limits) of Lockdown Digital Fragmentology - includes a concise summary of how her conservation experience fed into her academic research and publications. Later in a conference panel discussion, she and colleagues confirmed their professional experience that digitisation leads to increased interest and access requests rather than the idea that digitisation means the original item is no longer consulted.

In their talk on How to Read the Unreadable, **Vincent Christlein** and **Daniel Stromer** review book and scroll imaging techniques for a variety of substrates, including parchment and bamboo using CT imaging. They demonstrate the link between virtual legibility with concentrations of metallic ingredients in historic media like iron gall ink.

For a conservator these sessions refresh and update our understanding of the professional interests and goals of our medieval historian colleagues and enable us to strengthen the relevancy of our conservation work, whether that involves conserving items for digitisation, documenting material aspects of objects for interpretation by historians or being able to participate in discussions about our heritage.

The pre-recorded sessions are available from the conference website <https://aevum.space/darkarchives> and each presentation runs for approximately twenty minutes.

Meagen Smith

Collection Care Conservator
The London Library



© Lisa Fagin Davis

Lisa Fagin Davis showing the manuscript fragment collection she conserved and catalogued

WORKSHOP

ADVANCED BID WRITING

The National Archives
Online, June 2020

Over four modules in June 2020, **Leah Selinger** ran Advanced Bid Writing workshops for The National Archives with the help of **Richard Sved**. Leah and Richard used advanced Zoom skills including polling to assess our current knowledge, whiteboard collaboration and breakout discussion rooms to support team learning, with cohorts of approximately thirty attendees at each session. Beginning with *Making a start*, we progressed through subsequent topics: *Articulating a problem*, *Standing out* and *Thinking sustainably* during the hour-long sessions.

Over the course of the sessions, Leah proactively answered questions as she lectured and ended each module with a freewheeling question and answer session where we were able to discuss possible grant bids and projects in a confidential environment. Attendees included librarians, archivists and charity workers and all were at a variety of career stages ranging from student placements through to senior roles.

Highlights of the sessions started with understanding the kind of funding to look for and then focused on funding categories such as capital, grant, contract, one-off and ongoing funding as well as resources to help find funding sources. Just as importantly, we discussed mission versus money. The group explored the temptation to 'follow the money' when funding can distract from core work and provide easy reporting.

During the second module we refined and practised how to build a compelling application. We identified techniques that appealed to the heart versus the head, blending storytelling with statistics. We discussed how different industries require

different proportions of these two aspects, for example academia tends to be more statistical than emotional in bid application writing. Leah reinforced the message to look through the beneficiary's lens and think like the funder to articulate how the funder will benefit from projects as well as the recipient. We also learned about co-productions and the key elements in their success such as managing expectations, communicating time commitments and building comfortable and safe participatory environments.

The third module - *Standing out – explaining and having impact!* - covered the tricky concepts of impact versus outcomes. Knowing her archive audience well, Leah articulated the difference through a baking example where cake ingredients are an input, baking the cake is an activity, the resultant cake is the output and the

outcome is the happiness of the cake eaters. Throughout the modules we were also pointed towards the theories underpinning the topics, such as theories of change that we could explore on our own between sessions. The third module also included how to identify and communicate added value through skills, testimonials and case studies, awards and partnerships.

The fourth module - *Thinking sustainably – planning for the future* - was the most timely given the UK's Covid experience. We learnt about direct and indirect costs and how to correctly identify and calculate them. Leah also advised us on multiple ways to address and calculate overhead costs and reminded us: 'Do not diminish overhead costs. If you don't have overhead costs the project probably couldn't proceed'.

For a conservator these sessions were highly relevant to understanding the full range of funding resources available and how conservation work can be best included in funding bids, including how to articulate conservation as a project input or apportioned as an indirect cost. While conservators were not the core audience for this training, Leah and Richard knowledgeably answered conservation-relevant questions and wove our services into their training.

Published on 1 October, the training modules are now available on The National Archives UK YouTube channel for self-guided learning.

Meagen Smith

Collection Care Conservator
The London Library

Using Zoom to deliver a multiple session course with Leah Selinger, assisted by Richard Sved



Leah Selinger, The National Archives

A PRE-COVID LOCKDOWN EXPERIENCE

Ina Hergert and Jeniffer Ponce Fernandez recall the 2019 International Course on Paper Conservation in Latin America: Meeting East

Introduction

The global pandemic of Covid-19 in 2020 has led us to limit our interactions in public places and to keep working at home; in this situation, we have found new ways of working through digital tools and platforms to communicate and acquire knowledge in a successful way. However, in conservation, one of the biggest challenges is to understand how to address the lack of practical learning and workshop training in the future.

In this article we want to share an experience from before the lockdown as participants on a course; it is a good example of the complexity involved in face-to-face training and its importance for our profession. The *International Course on Paper Conservation in Latin America: Meeting East* took place in 2019 from October 30 to November 13 at National Coordination for the Conservation of Cultural Heritage (CNCPC) of the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) in Mexico City. This institution has been working in partnership with the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties (TNRICP) and ICCROM since 2012, to develop professional training specifically for paper conservators in Latin American countries, Spain and Portugal on the basis of the renowned International Course on Conservation of Japanese Paper (JPC). (Latin America here includes Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries from South, Central and North America as well as the Caribbean. The course was organized and taught in Spanish.)

The teaching team, led by Conservator Marie Vander Meeren (of CNCPC), was formed of both Japanese and Hispanic conservators. In 2019, the Japanese contingent was Takahiro Nakamura (senior conservator), Keisuke Sugiyama (associate



Photo: Ina Hergert

Comparing different varieties of Japanese and Western paper

professor), Hiroki Yotsumoto (conservator) and Makiha Gokita (associate fellow). They work at different institutions in Japan and are directed by Masato Kato (senior researcher), from TNRICP. Saeko Yagasinawa had the challenging role of interpreter from Japanese to Spanish and vice versa.

On the other side, the Hispanic teaching group was formed by conservators Patricia de la Garza, Tania Estrada, Dalila Terrazas, Ana Rosa Toca, Ariadna Rodríguez and Jeniffer Ponce from CNCPC, as well as the experienced conservator Luis Crespo from the National Library of Spain. Nine attendees were selected for the course from eight countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Spain, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela.

Benefits of the programme

The programme has been designed for professional conservators who already have experience in the field of paper conservation, so they can rely on solid knowledge to understand, analyse, compare and apply new approaches, materials and techniques effectively. This profile also promotes an exchange of thoughts and discussion of different points of view.

For several decades interest in Japanese conservation techniques and materials has been high: museum and private conservators have been able to test and verify their qualities and advantages not only for intervention on Oriental artworks, but also for Western ones. Publications, conferences, courses and daily practice in many countries are a noticeable outcome of this trend.

As paper conservators we are familiar with certain aspects of common Japanese materials and techniques, such as the use of Japanese tissue for reinforcement or the preparation of starch paste as adhesive. However, the nuances involved in those processes, which are important to achieve suitable results, are often put to one side due to lack of information, comprehension and practical experience.

Japanese tools for paper conservation



Photo: Ina Hergert



Photo: Ina Hergert

Demonstration of traditional tools for starch paste preparation by Takahiro Nakamura

Takahiro Nakamura demonstrating traditional starch paste preparation



Photo: Ina Hergert

Thus the course in Mexico provides a platform in which conservators can gain better access to Japanese conservation practice in the Spanish language, and also find clues to the not always easy task of adapting and applying that knowledge to their own practice on Western objects. Throughout the training, direct observation, critical analysis of each procedure and discussion played an important role in the participants' learning process.

The Japanese input

The course was divided into two parts: Japanese and Hispanic. During the first stage, Japanese conservators presented traditional mounting techniques - *Sōkō*-, tools and materials; those are the key aspects for understanding the historical production of works of art, as well as contemporary conservation practice in Japan. Special attention was given to tool use and maintenance, since they are the product of highly specialized Japanese traditional artisans: each kind of brush is made for a specific purpose and requires different care to ensure its long and useful life and to get a high-quality outcome in the conservation process.

Karibari is a traditional panel used for drying paper artworks under tension; this panel is made of a complex wooden structure and several layers of Japanese paper, each one of which has a specific purpose. During the course, we experienced its function and properties, comparing it with other drying methods commonly used by conservators. The Karibari used was constructed by the Mexican team with local wood and Japanese paper available at the CNCPC Conservation Laboratory, which was a good example of adapting to particular conditions outside Japan and focusing on achieving a specific result.

The participants had a chance to observe and analyse their own paper samples and compare them with different kinds of Japanese tissue or *Washi*, as it is generally called. When choosing paper, conservators often pay immediate attention to thickness and colour but also discuss other features, such as type of fibre, production process and the addition of fillers, which are important for understanding its properties and behaviour. Paper sellers in Latin America do not always provide enough or reliable information about these aspects; for this reason, visual inspection and acknowledgment of key features are useful to assess the suitability of certain paper in a particular case.

Using wheat starch adhesives in Japan is no minor issue; *Shinnori* and *Furunori* are traditional pastes widely applied in most conservation techniques, as they have proven to be a flexible, durable substance, compatible with paper-supported Japanese artworks. In order to get a high quality paste, there are several requirements involved in the processes of hydration, cooking and storing, so that several informative and practical lessons were given on the course.

Different kinds of lamination using wheat starch paste were demonstrated by the Japanese instructors; the first time of practising them was not as simple as it seemed in their experienced hands. It became clear that empirical knowledge and experience is necessary to properly execute the steps, handling tools and making decisions about aspects such as

paper humidification and adhesive dilution; even finding the right position for the hands and body became an unexpected challenge for all the participants.

The Latin American input

The second stage of the course was carried out by the team from Mexico and Spain; the main general topic was inquiring into and understanding how to adapt Japanese practice to the conservation requirements of paper heritage objects in the West, particularly, Latin America. Some simple concrete examples are: replacing sophisticated expensive Japanese tools for others more easily available, using the principle of Karibari tension drying on other kind of surfaces and obtaining wheat starch from regular flour. Participants carried out several experiments to find out and discuss the potential advantages and disadvantages of Japanese traditional techniques applied in different scenarios for Western paper objects.

We prepared cellulose-based adhesives, such as methylcellulose and hydroxypropyl cellulose, commonly used in Western conservation workshops, and compared their efficiency and features to those of traditional Japanese wheat starch. The final part of the program involved practising techniques such as solvent reactivation adhesive paper, pulp paper infilling in support losses, paper capillary cleaning and others. The course, despite its length and intensity, was marked by impeccable organization, availability of space, materials and tools, providing participants a unique and valuable approach to conservation practice.

Because paper is a hygroscopic, porous and laminar material, it demands from conservators the meticulous preparation of workspaces, cleanliness and precision in execution. Throughout the course, this requirement was emphasized from start to finish, based on the Japanese approach which involves personal discipline, active teamwork and a remarkable attention to detail. It is relevant for Western conservators not only to reproduce Japanese techniques but to understand the logic of their processes, in order to carry out an effective adaptation to their specific local conditions. This process involves finding creative solutions based on a solid knowledge of Japanese practices.

Although Japanese instructors do teach in other parts of the world, the course in Mexico is unique; being designed specifically for conservators from Latin America, Spain and Portugal, it allows participants to achieve more efficient training and results. In addition, it offers an opportunity to forge closer ties with professionals of similar expertise, challenges and contexts. We hope that such a unique course will survive these critical times of the pandemic and that the valuable experience of face-to-face training with Japanese and Latin American Instructors can continue in future years.

Ina Hergert is a member of Icon and attended Icon's 2019 Belfast Conference thanks to the Icon/Getty CPD programme

Jeniffer Ponce Fernandez is a member of the Mexican team, responsible for organizing and teaching at the International Course on Paper Conservation in Latin America: Meeting East.



Photo: Ina Hergert

Demonstrating the lamination process by Hiroki Yotsumoto

A course member carries out lamination guided by Keisuke Sugiyama



Photo: Ina Hergert

Drying laminated papers on a Karibari made in Mexico



Photo: Ina Hergert

LOCKDOWN, LEARNING & GIVING BACK

Charlotte Lester on a mentoring scheme developed to wring some benefit from the pandemic lockdown

So, do you remember 2008? I do. I was recently qualified, working a day job processing farming subsidy applications and an evening job waiting tables whilst looking frantically for my first job in the heritage sector. My generation of heritage professionals had graduated into the worst employment market since the depression, disrupting an already insecure and highly competitive profession. Those who graduated this summer face an even bigger challenge.

Why mentoring?

In Spring 2020, during lockdown, a call out from Cardiff University's Professor Jane Henderson gave me an idea. Jane was looking for opportunities for her students to support alumni remotely, but with many people now furloughed, options for students to diversify their experience and build their networks were limited. This opened up possibilities. A large number of experienced professionals had free time which, day to day, would not normally be the case. They were unable to offer the normal opportunities but their wealth of experience and expertise remained. And so Cardiff University Lockdown Conservation Mentoring was born.

The mentoring scheme ran across the summer and aimed to address some of the gaps that lockdown had created in the student experience: supporting participating students to develop their skills, networking, understanding, professional awareness

and next steps. It was also designed to give back to mentors by giving them opportunities to practise and develop their own skills and expand their networks into the next generation of heritage professionals, whilst providing an opportunity to be engaged with the profession during a disconnected time.

How did it work?

The scheme was informal, additional to existing provision and focussed on developing participants as professionals and individuals. It was not designed as a counselling service or as an extension of academic delivery. Boundaries and expectations were set clearly at the beginning, with mentors and mentees empowered from the start to discontinue mentoring at any time.

Matching mentors and mentees well was an important first step so I gathered information about important skills, expertise and the ambitions for the mentoring from both mentors and mentees. This allowed me to make successful matches, with the majority of participants feeding back that they felt well matched.

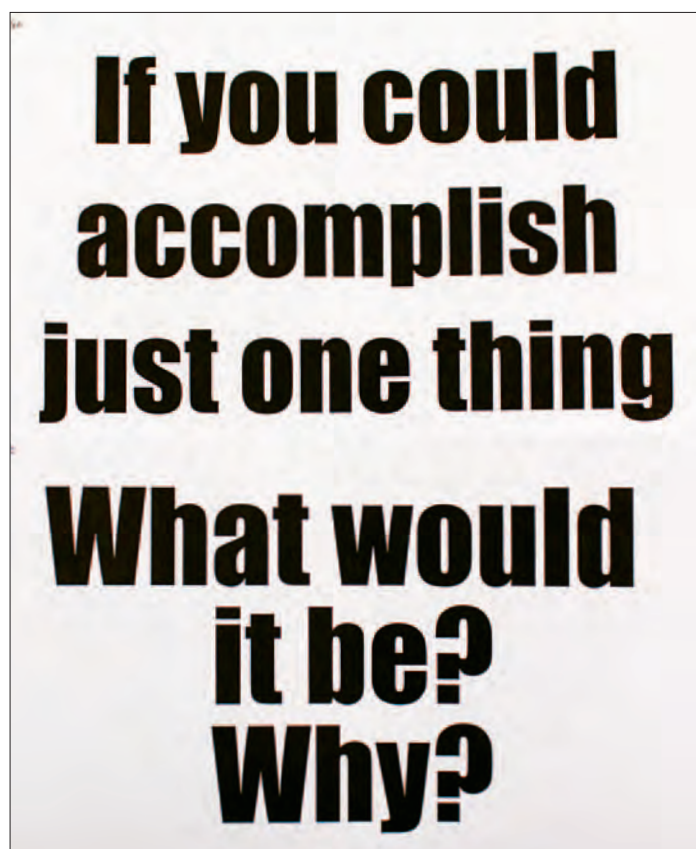
Mentees were asked to complete an outline and discuss their goals for mentoring with their mentor at an introductory call. Both parties then independently shaped how they would use the three remaining mentoring sessions to best benefit. Not everyone who expressed an interest in participating went ahead with mentoring, deciding before or after the introductory call that it was not for them. Mentoring must be driven by the mentee for it to be successful, it must be voluntary and they must be committed to following through. However, it must be remembered that for some students engaging in mentoring may be more difficult. This was a responsive programme which meant there was little opportunity to provide more substantial guidance to students before engaging with the programme. Such guidance could help them make the most of the opportunity and identify practical and personal barriers that they may need help with for mentoring to be a success. A less responsive programme could be designed to better take this into account.

What were the benefits?

In the spirit of giving back to the profession, academic robustness and understanding what works, evaluation was built in to the programme with the aim of considering the impact on skills, networking, understanding, professional awareness and next steps.

The feedback in these areas showed that:-

- **Skills development** was effectively supported by the programme with both mentees and mentors consistently reporting significant positive impacts.
- **Networking** and connection building is the area where the programme had least impact from the perspective of the mentees. This resonates with wider evidence from the move to 'online' provision across sectors. It is a gap that needs to be bridged in a different way. With organisations having greater success with online workshops using digital collaboration, there is real scope to think differently in this space.
- Developing further **understanding** was effectively supported by the programme, with both mentees and mentors consistently reporting significant positive impacts.
- **Professional awareness** was effectively supported by the programme with both mentees and mentors consistently



reporting significant positive impacts including in areas of higher ability such as self-awareness.

- **Next steps** was reported as effectively supported by the programme with both mentees and mentors consistently reporting significant positive impacts. However a free text response highlighted this as an area for further development.

'It is a great scheme, having a one-to-one virtual mentor scheme has helped me gain confidence to apply for job roles, some of which I may not have applied for before.' Mentee

Some mentees reported areas where they might have benefited from greater structure and pre-mentoring coaching to help them drive the mentoring experience to best effect.

'I wish I had a more structured "next steps" plan or some lead to further engagement through the mentor relationship, but I think in my case that felt superfluous to the more immediate need to focus on producing a dissertation for the MSc' Mentee

Benefits were felt beyond the core measures with mentees valuing academic and pastoral support, including the insider view on the transition to employment. This highlights that mentoring takes different shapes for different people and the informal nature of the arrangement allows this, as mentors and mentees develop.

The benefits to mentors were also significant, including connecting to the community, exposure to the energy and enthusiasm of an emerging professional and the satisfaction associated with supporting others to develop and grown in confidence.

'I think this was a very successful programme for me and my mentee and would love to see it continue.' Mentor

'Really enjoyed having a chance to feel more connected to the students, and seeing where I can be useful in the future to them. Was a highlight of lockdown for me!' Mentor

Some mentors highlighted a desire for more precise matching. *'While we had some productive discussions, I don't know that my experience was valued in the same way that a conservator working in another field would have been.'* Mentor

So what about 2020-21?

Challenges are set to continue for those in training and those in the workforce. We cannot control the economy, we have limited influence on the decisions of politicians but where we can make change, have impact is our day-to-day actions, our engagement with our community and what we choose to give to others.

Mentoring was able to provide support in a time when we were all feeling disconnected and uncertain. It can fill some of the gaps for those in training that lockdown and distance learning create and it can equally give back to mentors.

This was an informal programme established by an alumnus with some time on her hands. It is something anybody with some understanding and a bit of time can deliver. Linking your programme to an existing course, understanding your participants and giving them some initial structure to get started all increase the likelihood of success.

Interested in mentoring? We are currently looking at what next year could look like- if you would be interested in mentoring a

Cardiff University student you can register your interest at <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/JN8YDP/> . Or you can scan the QR code.

If you feel inspired to start your own programme and would like to know more about what we did at Cardiff get in touch: charlotte-lester@hotmail.com.

Charlotte Lester is a lapsed preventive conservator and Cardiff University alumni, who spends her time wrestling with national research policy including investment, culture, economic policy and workforce

Cal Poly CENG Mustang Mentoring 2011



the emerging conservator

PANDEMIC CHALLENGES

Textile conservation students at the University of Glasgow present their research, overcoming the challenges of finishing a masters degree whilst in the midst of a pandemic

Introduction

March 2020 marked a dramatic challenge for every student as a result of lockdown, with classes suddenly stopping and all lectures going online. For the 2018-2020 MPhil Textile Conservation students at the Centre for Textile Conservation (CTC), University of Glasgow, it was no different, especially as conservation is very much based on practical work. However, as we had nearly finished our practical work at that point, we had slightly more time to concentrate on our dissertations and finish our training.

Because of the impossibility of accessing the CTC facilities, some of the MPhil students had to adapt their dissertation subject to a more theoretical one. The coronavirus outbreak and its consequences certainly did not help us in trying to keep going and finish our research. However, we rose to the challenge and kept the goal in sight to further develop our knowledge in areas within textile conservation and to contribute to deepening the body of knowledge in the profession.

We are now proud to present the abstracts for the research carried out by the 2018-2020 MPhil Textile Conservation students. We would also like to acknowledge our supervisors Sarah Foskett ACR, Frances Lennard ACR, Anita Quye, Margaret Smith and Karen Thompson ACR for their unwavering support.

Anaka Asokan

An investigation into the deterioration of the black dye used on kalamkari textiles

Kalamkari is a well documented and popular Indian textile tradition. The one common condition issue in these textiles is the embrittlement, hardening and loss of the cellulose substrate in the black and dark dyed areas. This research was aimed at understanding how the black dye on kalamkari textiles leads to the deterioration of the cotton substrate and what would be the resultant implications for conservation and collection care.

The study identified the black dye as being an iron tannate dye complex and investigated this deterioration by referring to literature from paper conservation and about Maori textiles, alongside interviews with textile conservators from India and the UK. Along with the quality of the cotton substrate, metal-induced iron oxidation, acid hydrolysis and pH, other factors such as saturation, concentration and the application processes of the mordant and dye were also investigated.

Working at the Centre for Textile Conservation facilities





Nicole Giacomantonio working on an early 20th-century pin cushion

Danica Auld **Stretched Too Thin**

With rubber objects increasingly incorporated into museum collections, collection issues with little precedent are being encountered by conservators. It is a complex material, often including dozens of chemical compounds, and conservators have only begun to understand the causes of degradation. This research uses a Vivienne Westwood natural rubber dress case study to examine the causes and effects of rubber biodegradation, an issue currently underexplored in the field.

The case study and an interdisciplinary review of the rubber conservation, rubber industry and rubber waste biodegradation literature, has been used to understand the relationship between rubber composition, degradation and treatment. The research project has found that the biodegradation of rubber has the potential to cause serious, irreversible damage, with awareness amongst custodians central to conservation strategies. Improving the care of rubber objects requires continued investigation into degradation processes, consideration of how treatments influence the risk of biodegradation and standards for monitoring biological particulate matter.

Caterina Celada **Saponins: a review of natural plant-based surfactants and their potential for use in textile conservation**

Saponins are natural plant-based surfactants traditionally used by many cultures in the cleaning of textiles. Research around the stability and detergency performance of saponins as used in textile conservation and the understanding of these compounds is limited. This research aimed to inform conservators' decision-making around the use of saponins as a potential sustainable alternative for synthetic surfactants.

Saponins were found to have the potential to be efficient and effective non-ionic cleaning agents with a high surface active action contributing to good wetting properties, a low CMC and foaming and emulsifying abilities. Several accessible

saponin sources were identified. Additionally, the potential health and environmental implications of their use were discussed. It was concluded that these compounds could provide sustainable improvements to existing practices; however, further research on their stability is needed.

Nicole Maria Giacomantonio **An investigation into the sustainable incorporation of textile conservation knowledge into the framework of a textile art education**

Art students are rarely taught to think about the longevity of their work within their university art training. This dissertation outlines the development of a pilot presentation that aims to introduce textile art students to textile conservation as a resource that may empower them in their decision-making and allow them to ensure the safety and longevity of their work.

A literature review highlighted a lack of contact between conservators and art students, and noted material properties, storage, packing, handling and display, and documentation, as conservation concepts that may be useful to artists. The pilot was presented and evaluated online by early-career textile artists. Participants confirmed that elements of textile conservation are relevant and useful. The presentation feedback may guide project development and its sustainable implementation into art school curricula.

Echo Godfrey **An Investigation into in-situ pH measurement for textile conservation**

In-situ pH measurement is a non-destructive method. A literature review shows that there is not a standard operating procedure for in-situ pH measurement in textile conservation. The lack of consistency in recording the details can leave readers guessing at how a pH value was arrived at, and whether it is reliable or reproducible.

Informed by this literature review and an analysis of textile-specific concerns, a low-tech experiment was performed, which provided hands-on experience of in-situ pH measurement, proved the usefulness of pH indicator strips in this application, and showed that while time variations can play a role in results, other variables may have a more significant impact. This research informed two outcomes: resources to assist textile conservators with decision-making regarding in-situ pH measurement and guidelines for undertaking and recording the procedure.

Marina Herriges

Challenges in textile conservation: sustainability as key for the profession to move forward

The climate is changing. As a result, we are experiencing more floods affecting collections and heritage buildings, as well as temperature rises disturbing insect cycles and increasing infestations. Recently, the Covid-19 outbreak has drawn increased attention to environmental sustainability in conservation practices, engaging the field in self-reflection.

In this context, sustainability is a commitment to change as well as a conscious choice and recognizing where the profession could implement change is essential. This also provides an opportunity to review our ethical position within the practice. The research aims to understand how environmental sustainability has been addressed in textile conservation. It intends to raise awareness of the importance of moving the field towards a greener future. It also gives

Marina Herriges spot cleaning an 18th-century waistcoat



practical information on useful resources, and suggestions on changes in our daily routines as well as the educational context.

Isabella Rossi

Review of shrinkproof wool treatments and their effects on textile conservation

This dissertation covers how shrinkproofing treatments can affect the degradation and conservation of woollen objects. Trends and gaps in the literature of shrinkproofing wool and conservation are reviewed. There is an introduction to wool morphology and the mechanisms behind felting. The history of shrinkproofing and common anti-felting treatments are discussed. The production of shrinkproof wool is explained with a particular focus on the popular Chlorine-Hercosett® process.

The information on shrinkproof wool production is used to understand the degradation and condition issues of these fibres. The effects on conservation treatments, in particular wet cleaning, are also discussed. Attention is also paid to preventive conservation concerns such as the risk of dissociation, dye fading, and unknown ageing properties. The identification of these fibres is also briefly addressed. The dissertation concludes with extensive suggestions for future research.

Viviane Wei-An Chen

Evaluation of mounting methods: towards a three-dimensional embodiment of the Imperial Manchu Robe of the Qing Dynasty (1644 –1911)

The dissertation asks if a three-dimensional mounting technique can be used to display Qing Imperial robes while adhering to conservation standards. The research outcomes reveal a tendency in current Chinese costume mounting methods to display these garments flat. This emphasises the intricate embroidery but such practices remove the robes' socio-historical context. Asian garments suffer from what has been referred to as an 'appropriated Orient', where they symbolise the 'other', rather than being presented on their own terms.

Currently, there is no equivalent mounting method for Manchu robes in line with the display of Western clothes on mannequins. Specialists are mainly trained in the West and may misinterpret untailored rectangular Asian garments. Therefore, the study provides mounting guidance for museum professionals focussed on reintroducing the garment as worn while still being adequately supported, in order to preserve the garment's emotional connection.

If you would like to access any of the dissertations for this year's graduates and previous graduates, contact Karen Thompson ACR, MPhil Textile Conservation Programme Convenor, on karen.thompson@glasgow.ac.uk

STUDENT TRAINING DURING COVID-19

MA Student in Conservation of Fine Art at Northumbria University, Lena Tanniou and Fiona McLees ACR, Paper Conservator at Bodleian Libraries, describe an online experience with the Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford

LENA'S ACCOUNT

After completing a Master's degree in Art History in France, I arrived in September 2019 in Newcastle upon Tyne to study for the Works of Art on Paper pathway of the Conservation of Fine Art MA at Northumbria University. The first year's programme is made up of various courses including science, art history, conservation theory and practical workshops.

One or more summer placements are recommended as part of the training and over the course of the year I was admitted to two different institutions, a library and a museum in the UK. The particular focus of study for my dissertation is the topic of degradation of copper-pigment verdigris on works of art on paper and manuscripts.

Unfortunately the end of the year was disrupted by Covid-19. Everything happened very quickly and the university closed its doors a week before the lockdown decree.

Without any previous notice, we were asked on a Friday afternoon to vacate the premises the same evening, taking with us all the material resulting from our workshops. It was with a lot of uncertainty and questions that we all went home. The programme for the year could not be completely finished, although we were provided with coursework to do at home, online meetings and exam preparation.

Sadly the museum placement had to be cancelled for safety reasons. However, the Bodleian Libraries decided to still offer me a placement by trying a completely new format, a remote

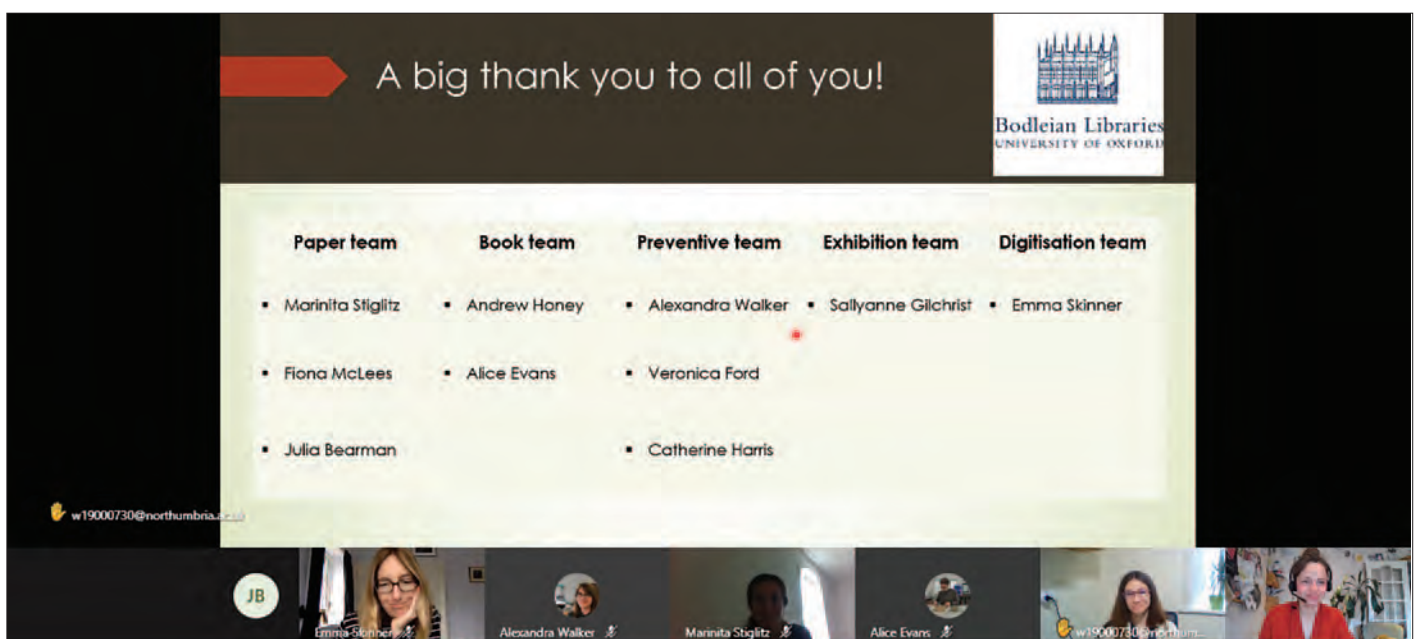
placement. This unusual internship was planned by Marinita Stiglitz ACR (Head of the Paper Conservation team) and Fiona McLees to allow me to get to know the workings of their institution and meet different members of different teams.

During the course of a month, from 30 June to 30 July this summer, an average of one or two online meetings a day, each lasting about an hour, were planned using Microsoft Teams. This situation was strange; before the start of the course I had only exchanged a few e-mails with Marinita and Fiona. I was going to meet about ten people, mainly in one-to-one meetings, from across the Conservation teams and Exhibitions team.

The topics covered were diverse and varied: from the organisation, composition and origins of the Library; to preventive conservation measures, conservation treatments for books but also for specific documents, particular examples of verdigris degradation and treatments, planning and executing exhibitions, and the measures taken for Covid-19 and the return to the workshop. In the form of free discussions, sometimes with support from photos, PowerPoint presentations or screen sharing with navigation on websites, this way of doing an internship was very interactive.

With Andrew Honey ACR (Book Conservator, Research and Teaching) and Alice Evans (Assistant Book Conservator), I have, amongst other things, seen research projects on Linked Conservation Data (a project managed by Ligatus) and fascinating techniques used at the Library. Alexandra Walker (Preventive Conservator), Veronica Ford and Catherine Harris (Assistant Preventive Conservators) discussed various subjects such as the Bodleian's online environmental monitoring system, emergency planning, volunteers' conservation projects, pest management, and studying the effects of light on dyes through the example of the Sheldon tapestry maps research project.

Lena concluding her own presentation to colleagues at the Bodleian Libraries



Sallyanne Gilchrist (Exhibitions Manager) was able to show me the display systems present in the Library's galleries, including their bespoke repositionable and reusable metallic book stands. The process and discipline of digitisation was introduced to me by Emma Skinner (Digitisation Conservation Intern).

In the Paper team, Marinita Stiglitz, Fiona McLees and Julia Bearman (Paper Conservator) shared their current work with Mughal manuscripts (including the Emperor Akbar's *Baharistan* of Jami and a fine Mughal album of calligraphy and illustrations dating from Shah Jahan's reign). They also discussed more widely paper conservation treatments within the Bodleian as well as particular interventions on specific artefacts such as scrolls and maps (for example, the unique Selden map of China), and the functioning of their assessment and conservation treatment records on their new database system.

This gave me a rather broad overview of the activity at the Bodleian Libraries even though I wasn't able to be there. I wasn't expecting so much information from so many different angles, it was really a very pleasant and surprising experience.

I was also invited to their 'Salon' a group meeting which took place every Monday morning to debate a current conservation topic (from webinar viewings, to current issues, themed articles, etc). It was interesting to have wider debates on conservation and to see what impact they could have on the practices and thinking of the Bodleian.

I would have really liked to be able to go to Oxford, get to know everyone directly and work in contact with the materials but this remote placement was very rich and lively - more than I could have imagined. I can only thank all the members of the Library very much for organising this strange placement in this equally strange situation, to say the least. These moments of encounters and exchanges were particularly lively, stimulating and instructive, I would do it again without hesitation.

FIONA'S ACCOUNT

As lockdown descended and the length for which our studio activities might be curtailed became more and more apparent, the knock-on effect for the various student placements we usually hold each year also became clear. Over half of our conservators and technicians were placed on furlough and the rest were working from home. Yet we were reluctant to cancel Lena's placement as initially there seemed to be hope that at least some of us might be back in the studio by July. but by May we knew this would not be possible.

Work placements form such a valuable part of an emerging conservator's training that we felt to cancel entirely would leave a gap in experience at a crucial time for Lena, and that perhaps we could devise something to at least part-fill that gap. Moving the placement to an online experience would not provide the usual opportunity to refine hands-on skills or to work with our collections directly, however we felt at a minimum it would allow Lena the chance to meet us all and learn a little bit about our work.

Reflecting on my own experience as a student over ten years ago undertaking a placement at the British Museum, I recalled that the development of my professional network of contacts whilst I was there had proved in the long run to be at least as important as the practical opportunities offered, and



The Radcliffe Camera during lockdown, showing the abandoned streets of central Oxford

that perhaps we could provide Lena with a chance to build her professional network in the same way.

We planned out a calendar of remote events which would allow her to meet with all non-furloughed members of staff in Conservation, as well as with staff from our Exhibitions team, giving her something for each day of the placement. Being a large organisation made this possible, as we could spread the contact time between a reasonable number of staff.

We tried to vary formats so that some were one to one meetings where individual conservators could share their own career path and specialist interests, some were team meetings with Paper, Book, or Preventive colleagues, some were discussion groups, some were presentations around a specific topic such as copper-pigment degradation or Linked Data and, once a few of us were back in the studio, some were practical remote teaching and demonstrations. Just before her placement finished I was also able to give her a remote tour of the studio and our facilities and show a few projects currently under treatment.

Lena proved to be very willing and receptive to listening to really quite a prodigious amount of talking from us all, and she participated fully in our discussions and debates in order to get the most out of what we could offer, as well as concluding the placement by bravely giving her own presentation on her training so far and her current research. We are very pleased that she feels that the placement was a success and delighted that she was able to enter into it so whole-heartedly.

As is often the case with hosting students, the outcomes for us were positive, too: frequently allowing us to consolidate our own knowledge through discussing our projects and research, whilst her insightful questions relating to our usual practices often drove us to ask questions of ourselves as to why we do things a certain way.

We hope that at some point we are able to offer her an in-person visit of the studio, and we look forward to seeing how her career develops.



Photo courtesy of National Museum of Ireland



Photo courtesy of UCL Grant Museum of Zoology



Heritage in peril:
climate change and rising
sea levels threaten Venice