

icon NEWS

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Conservation in the news: the Fitzwilliam vases

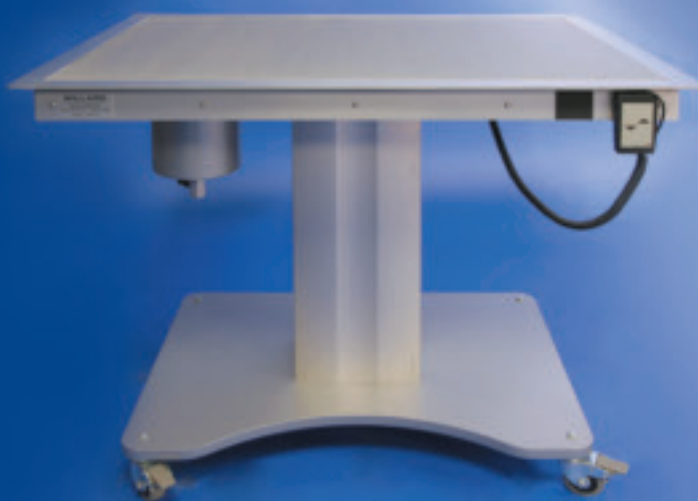
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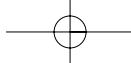
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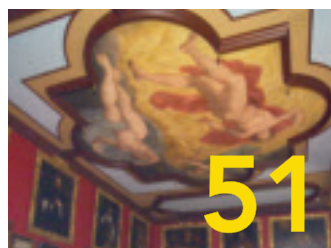
Issue 4

There is a practical and down-to-earth theme running through this issue; a sense of rolling-up-your-sleeves and getting on with those unsensational but useful projects which need to be done but keep getting put off. Like getting rid of that unsightly and damaging blu-tack on your objects and sorting out the storage of those little Indian paintings gradually deteriorating in their unsuitable boxes. And conservators being who they are, ingenious approaches to challenges are never far from hand – be it home-made beanbags for bed domes or the more sophisticated versions borrowed from the world of medicine to support that ancient mummy.

And nothing could be more practical than getting the Heritage Lottery funded trainee scheme underway; kicking off the management route to accreditation and, of course, actually getting down to the business of getting yourself accredited. So plenty to read here about the hands-on element of our work, but all of it actually invaluable investment in the future, whether your own, the object's or the profession's.

Finally, we couldn't leave out the biggest conservation story around at the moment, so here's something to make you wince and think 'there but for the grace of God': a first-hand account of the Fitzwilliam vases affair.

Lynette Gill, Editor



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Cover picture:
Following the smashing of three porcelain vases at The Fitzwilliam Museum, a disaster plan was put into operation. The cover shows some of the plastazote lined trays of sherds, as collected. Copyright of The Fitzwilliam Museum

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Deadlines:
for July 2006 issue

Editorial: Tuesday 29 May
Adverts: Thursday 15 June

around & about

Collections Link

A new advisory and support service for anyone who works with collections is currently being piloted and is due to go live later in the summer. Collections Link is a partnership of various national, professional organisations; it is coordinated by MDA, the National Preservation Office and Icon itself, with funding from *Renaissance in the Regions*. Peter Winsor, currently with the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), has been appointed Project Director and takes up his new post at the beginning of June. Peter is an Icon member and served on Icon's Interim Board.

The aim of Collections Link is to provide a single, direct point of access to standards, guidelines, direct advice and training resources across the areas of professional practice represented by the partner organisations. The service will cover both Collections Management issues, such as conservation, preservation, environment and emergency planning, along with more general management issues such as project management, fundraising and procurement. It will welcome enquiries from all types of organisation including local history societies, churches, company archives, even individuals with their own collections. At the heart of the scheme is a telephone advisory service, which anyone with a collections-related query can access using an 0845 (local rate) telephone number. Alongside the telephone helpline will be a online 24-hour library of free factsheets, guidelines, articles and standards. Look out for more news of this exciting new development over the next few months.

Free access to online reference sources

Oxford University Press has signed a breakthrough deal with public libraries across England. The agreement was brokered with the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council as part of their Reference Online initiative. 142 public library authorities in England have joined together for the first time to share the cost of a 2-year national licence for a range of OUP's online resources:

- Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (www.oxforddnb.com)
- Oxford English Dictionary Online (www.oed.com)
- Oxford Reference Online (www.oxfordreference.com)
- Grove Music Online (www.grovemusic.com)
- Grove Art Online (www.groveart.com)

Access will be available until 31 March 2008. Members of subscribing libraries will be able to access the resources

from any computer at any time – not just from within the library! Indeed, anyone will be able to get full, free access to the databases at home using their library card number.

These resources can in fact already be consulted by visitors to Icon's Chantry Library in Oxford, but this is great news for conservators wanting remote access from wherever they are.

These resources will prove useful to members seeking to quickly check facts and definitions or as introductory starting points to other areas of conservation. The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Art Terms is one of many reference works available as part of Oxford Reference Online, for instance, and Grove Art Online has some useful bibliographies for conservation subjects such as lighting or relative humidity.

Check with your local public library for details.

Catherine Scutt, Chantry Library

Library and archives preservation

Knowing the need: a report on the emerging picture of preservation need in libraries and archives in the UK is a new publication from the National Preservation Office, which presents the results of preservation assessments carried out in a large number of libraries and archives over the past five years. A great deal of data has been collected and analysed, providing a statistical basis for prioritising preservation activity both within institutions, and collaboratively.

The headline findings show that:

- significant amounts of unique or nationally important material are at risk because of poor preservation practice
- there is a lack of environmental monitoring and control especially in libraries
- 13% of material surveyed is actively deteriorating or will be damaged if used
- 50% of material is stored in inadequate accommodation.

The report is being widely distributed in the hope that individual libraries and archives will be able to apply the generic findings to their own preservation planning and use the report to raise awareness of the need to support collections for the benefit of current and future users. The findings are commended to strategic consortia, regional and national organisations and the NPO will be working with representatives of key institutions and organisations to develop strategies to meet the collection needs which have been identified.

The full text can be found on www.bl.uk/services/npo. A limited number of paper copies is available and can be requested from npo@bl.uk

Still a prize contender

Down from the long list of ten to the shortlist of four, the ss Great Britain is still in the running for the prestigious Gulbenkian prize. The winning project will be announced on 25 May.

Inspired to save churches

On 1 March English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund announced £17.5m in grants for repairs to 147 Grade I and II* listed churches and chapels across England. Since 2002, £62 million has been awarded to more than 700 historic places of worship through this joint scheme, which is the largest single source of funds for repair works of this kind.

But for every building helped, there are many more where congregations are struggling to meet the repair bills. To tackle this problem, English Heritage will be launching a campaign in May called **Inspired!** to quantify the scale of the problem and propose solutions, and to promote a greater recognition of the work done by volunteers to keep these buildings alive. 41% of England's grade 1 listed buildings are churches and as part of Inspired!, English Heritage is working on research to establish where the need for outside support is most urgent so that practical help can be directed to the many congregations who do not have the man-power or expertise to run a repair project or even to apply for grants. It is hoped that having accurate figures and a clear picture of the problems will help to make a compelling case for greater public funding of this area of the national heritage.

For more information on the 'Inspired! Campaign' visit the English Heritage website www.english-heritage.org.uk/inspired

Paradise lost?

Still on the subject of churches, to redress the neglect of the history of Catholic churches in England, English Heritage and the Patrimony Committee of the Bishops Conference of England and Wales have joined up with two Catholic dioceses, Lancaster and Arundel & Brighton, in a project to help guide them in decisions concerning historic buildings in their care. It is hoped that the project will provide a template for all Christian dioceses to follow.

The project began in 2004 and culminated in the



copyright Alex Ramsay

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production of a detailed report for each diocese. These reports :

- provide an objective 'snap-shot' of the architecture and history of the churches in the two dioceses;
- clarify their relative merits for better decision-making about their future use;
- advise on the listed status of the buildings, recognising that Roman Catholic churches are often under-represented in the lists or inappropriately listed;
- provide a useful tool to help take a more strategic approach to the management of the historic building stock; and
- unearth new historical information that will encourage greater public interest in the architectural heritage of the Roman Catholic church in England, and thereby enable those responsible for churches to make a case for a greater level of support (for example in the form of grant aid).

Simon Thurley, Chief Executive of English Heritage, said: "English Heritage, through the Inspired! campaign which will be launched this month, is committed to encouraging and supporting all denominations to adopt a more strategic approach to the management of their historic places of worship. We hope that the principles behind this project with the Catholic Church will be adopted by all those entrusted with the upkeep of these precious buildings."

more around & about

In parallel, *A Glimpse of Heaven* is a new book on the architecture of Catholic churches is to be published by English Heritage in July.

For more information see the Inspired website noted above or contact Anya Matthews anya.matthews@english-heritage.org.uk 020 7973 3372 or Maggie Doherty, Catholic Communications Network, Maggie.Doherty@cbcew.org.uk 020 7901 4802.

War memorial grants

English Heritage, in partnership with the Wolfson Foundation, has also announced nearly £100,000 in grants for war memorials across the country. This year's batch of awards is the largest in the history of the six year scheme which is run by the War Memorials Trust and funds repairs to memorials all over England.

War memorials are such familiar elements of the environment that it is easy not to 'see' them as they quietly decay from neglect and vandalism. Grants from the scheme can be used to fund specialist repairs or go towards the re-carving and repainting of lettering to make sure that the names of those commemorated remain legible. This year over 40 memorials will benefit from grants to fund projects such as stonework repair, stabilisation, cleaning and specialist metal conservation.

War memorials at risk can be brought to the Trust's attention at <http://www.warmemorials.org/>

New cleaning course

Comparative technologies and analysis in conservation cleaning is a new course from the City and Guilds London Art School. The course is intended as part of a career development programme alongside existing employment either as a one year part-time certificate or a two year part-time graduate diploma. It will cover practical training in a variety of cleaning methods on a wide range of materials and object types. The course will be run in conjunction with Imperial College London's Material Science Laboratories. Further information is available from Kiffy Stainer-Hutchins, Head of Conservation, 44 (0) 20 7735 2306 or info@cityandguildsartschool.ac.uk

A cushion for conservation

Made of cotton ticking, corset boned for a bit of structure, and bulked up with 160 cubic feet of polyester beans, Historic Royal Palace conservators have created what might very well be the biggest-known bean bag in the profession. The notion was to put a mahogany panelled and silk lined 18thC tester dome – part of Queen Charlotte's royal state bed – upside-down on a big cushion – or bean bag – fully supported and easy to reach to conserve the sumptuous embroidered silk interior. The question was: how bean-filled should such a bean bag be?



Tester Dome 'beanbag' - not enough beans!



The next test – perfect bean dispersal!



The bed's tester dome comfortably cradled.

Getting the right balance of sinking (no deeper than the dome's brim) and support (full back and sides) was crucial. To determine this, HRP conservator, Helen Slade, being of dome-like weight and height, was gently tossed into and retrieved from the bag as it was filled with beans – fourteen bags in total! At the point Helen became comfortable and stayed visible, we knew we had the right bean ratio to bag size. Soon after, the dome underwent conservation treatment on its bean bag support, safely and successfully, and Helen returned to working on various conservation projects, in an upright position.

The work on this tester from Queen Charlotte's royal state bed is part of the palaces' long term project to conserve the entire collection of seven royal state beds housed at Hampton Court and Kensington Places and owned by the Royal Collection.

Kate Frame, Head of Conservation and Collection Care,
Historic Royal Palaces

Errata:

The picture on p 2 of Icon News 3 showing HSCB Building Conservation Fellow Joy Bunclark should have had Crown Copyright attributed to it.

VAT scheme extended

Not the main budget headline, but nonetheless welcome for all that was the news that the Listed Places of Worship Scheme, which refunds VAT paid on repairs to churches which are listed buildings and memorials, is to continue to 2011. Previously it was to end in 2008. The Scheme is being extended to include fees to architects and other building consultants which are at present excluded. It will also include fixtures and fittings for listed places of worship, such as bells, pews, clocks and organs.

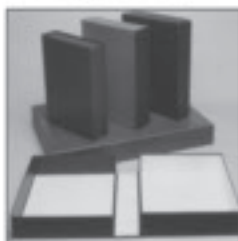
SLAVERY 2007

'What do you think about the Transatlantic Slave Trade? Use the database of objects to look at the historical evidence.' 2007 is the bicentennial of the abolition of the slave trade, and the opening words of the Freedom website clearly place objects in collections at the centre of the picture. The website has been created by Understanding Slavery Initiative, a partnership of UK museums whose collections shed a unique light on our understanding of slavery (<http://www.nmm.ac.uk/freedom>).

The 2007 anniversary gives conservators in museums, galleries and archives an excellent opportunity to communicate the value of their work to black and minority ethnic communities, to engage with them more widely in conservation volunteering, and to encourage young black people to think of careers in conservation. The conservation community needs to think about how to take advantage of this opportunity. There is a Slavery 2007 discussion thread on the Icon web discussion forum and everyone is invited to contribute suggestions, ideas and examples of what they are doing so we can learn from each other and make best use of this historic occasion.

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professional matters

NEW LOOK FOR CONSERVATION REGISTER WEBSITE

Several changes have been made to the Conservation Register website, www.conservationregister.com. A new section has been added to accommodate a greater range of information on the 'care and conservation' of different types of objects and materials. The information helps individual owners and custodians to recognise what they can do to protect the items in their care and to spot the types of problems that are best referred to a conservator; it also illustrates the variety of advice and services that conservators can provide in addition to remedial conservation. Alongside this, the content of the 'Guidance' section has been revised to include information on conservation reports, accreditation, sources of advice for those commissioning conservation on churches, choosing and working with a conservator and more general information on why things deteriorate, storage, handling and moving, and the mounting and framing of works of art on paper.

The menu system has also been updated. The new structure is easier to navigate and the 'login' facility has been moved to the search and members pages so that more people are encouraged to use the website whilst losing none of the additional functionality available to businesses included in the Register. The new Icon website has also been good for the Conservation Register, with an impressive amount of traffic flowing between the two sites in the first few months of its operation.

Caroline Saye

TRADE FAIRS AND CONFERENCES

Spring and autumn are the busiest times for trade fairs and conferences, and 2006 is no exception. March saw Icon exhibiting at the Natural Stone Show & Conference, and the following week at The Original Print Fair at the Royal Academy. Although very different events, both proved valuable opportunities to raise the profile of conservation, and that of Icon itself. I am very grateful to the members of the Stone & Wall Paintings Group, and the Camberwell students and members of the Book & Paper Group who helped me 'man the stands' at these events. It is always good to have an extra pair of hands, and the events themselves are an enjoyable opportunity to talk directly to people who work with conservators, or to introduce people to the work we do. By the time you read this, the Scotland Group will have attended the Glasgow Art Fair in April and we will have had a stand at Murex – the museum resources exhibition in Birmingham (26–27 April). Following that Icon will be at the AIM conference in Bristol (5 May) and the Museums & Heritage Show at Earls Court (10–11 May). In the autumn we hope to attend some of the fairs

focussed at the antiques market. If you are interested in helping out at these events, please get in touch with me at csaye@icon.org.uk – it would be good to hear from volunteers from across the UK.

Caroline Saye

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT ROUTE

11 July workshop for prospective candidates

On 11 July there will be an accreditation workshop at London Bridge for Icon members interested in applying for accreditation under the new conservation management route. The plan is to run a pilot for the new route in January 2006 and we want to make sure that any candidates applying for the pilot are prepared in good time to get their applications together. The purpose of this meeting will be to explain to prospective candidates the principles of the PACR scheme and to set out in broad terms what the new route will involve. It will not be possible to give specific detail at the July meeting about the new route since it will still be under consultation at this stage. For those who attend the July meeting and decide they wish to proceed, there will be a second meeting in September to review the specific requirements of the new route which they will be required to meet. After this candidates will have to decide whether to formally register their intention to apply for the January 2006 pilot.

Meanwhile work is proceeding on the new accreditation route. Sandra Smith ACR, Head of Conservation at the Victoria and Albert Museum, is chairing the working group. Others undertaking the work on this are Helen Hughes ACR, Head of Historic Interiors Research and Conservation at English Heritage; Chris Woods ACR, Head of Conservation & Collection Care at Oxford University Library Services; and David Odgers ACR, of Odgers Conservation. They are working together with Stan Lester, the expert who originally developed the PACR scheme, and representatives from the Institute of Historic Buildings Conservation, who are taking part with a view to potentially becoming a participating body in the PACR scheme. The group met once in February and once in March. Following a third meeting scheduled for May we expect to have proposals at a stage where they can be put out to consultation.

If you would like to attend the meeting on 11 July please contact Susan Bradshaw on susan.bradshaw@pacr.org.uk before 3 July.

LEADING ARCHIVES AND MUSEUMS

In August 2005 Icon was asked to nominate conservators to take up a place on a pilot programme in leadership development. We had previously joined the steering group

for this initiative, run by MLA and intended to encourage people working in museums and archives to move into leadership positions. Of the names we put forward, Sally Ann Yates of National Museums Liverpool was offered a place.

The aim of the scheme is to encourage people to break through 'glass ceilings' in their workplaces and to ensure that management positions are filled with people bringing a diverse range of skills and perspectives to their institutions' work. This represents a good opportunity for conservators to prepare themselves for leadership roles within their institutions. The need for conservators to make that kind of breakthrough was well demonstrated when one of the other participants on Sally Ann's course remarked to her how surprised they were to find a conservator on a leadership programme!

Icon wants to encourage conservators in other institutions to apply for this MLA-backed programme using their training budgets. Hopefully Sally Ann's experiences will encourage many others to follow in her footsteps.

Sally Ann Yates writes about the course:

For six days from November 2005 to January 2006, I was fortunate to attend the pilot programme for Leading Archives and Museums: Heads of Service, based at the University of Warwick. It comprised three modules, spaced to provide time for preparation and reading.

The programme was provided by FPM, an independent leadership and management consultancy experienced in working with managers of public services in all sectors. Eighteen candidates from local and central government funded archives and museums services attended the programme. It was an exceptional opportunity to meet colleagues and share knowledge through a wide section of the heritage industry.

The programme aims to develop capability through a learning cycle approach. This sees learning as a circular process of experience, reflection, developing ideas to make sense of the experience and then experimenting with these ideas. The programme's greatest strength lies in locating this learning within our working context, content and process. Throughout, presentations and discussions were interspaced by smaller group sessions where a wealth of management models and frameworks were discussed and applied. This made for a stimulating, varied programme which was both fascinating and rewarding.

The **first module** focussed on the challenges of leadership, exploring leadership styles and how performance is judged. Complexities of problems and approaches to problem solving were presented, followed

by domain mapping, a revealing way of exploring your personal working environment. The first day ended with a talk by Dr Alf Hatton, Deputy Director, Graduate School of Business, Strathclyde University. He emphasised the need for sound strategic thinking within the heritage sector in today's turbulent environment, and encouraged museums and archives to work more closely together. He argued for developing adaptive responses to deal with the many changes which affect us all, naming amongst others, rising costs, growth in museum numbers and changes in the nature of competition. The second day centred on the nature and sources of power and influence. Self-awareness and feedback were discussed, with some useful models, such as Daniel Goleman's Emotional Intelligence and Peter Drucker's features of effective leaders.

Module two considered the wider museum environment and how positioning with stakeholders can be improved. We first looked at the context of leadership, and excellent sessions on organisational culture reminded us of the strong messages carried by values, symbols and rituals, all defining 'the way we do things around here'. A valuable session then drew forth many insights on increasing diversity, highlighting the proactive stance we must all take to foster and sustain diversity in our workplaces.

Corporate governance relationships and expectations led us into day two, taking up the thread of module one's power and influence concepts in relation to this key stakeholder group. Strategic and tactical planning associated with community, internal and partner stakeholders then followed, usefully building on the earlier domain mapping exercise. A final session focussed on networking domains and building relationships with stakeholders.

Module three encompassed ideas of organisational purpose and sharing experiences of change programmes. The concept of systems thinking was explored. Here, organisations are pictured as complex adaptive systems, mirroring the natural world in the ways which individuals and groups interact. The final day provided coaching skill sessions and a talk on basic principles of NLP (neuro-linguistic programming), about logical thought processes, subjective experience and using new techniques to aid communication. A final discussion session was included in the programme, but candidates felt that this might be further extended and hope to schedule a final follow up discussion day now that we have all had the chance to reflect, evaluate, apply learning and make sure that the cycle continues!

The programme was rich in information and opportunities for group discussion ensured that sessions were meaningful and fruitful for all present. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to attend. I certainly hope that the

more professional matters

pilot which I attended becomes established and widely available. Its relevance to conservators working in private and public sectors ranges from improved understanding of business environments to building customer relationships. The concepts relate to developing ability to establish where you and your organisation (large or small) are now, deciding future goals and identifying and selecting routes to get there.

These skills are useful to us all, whatever our context or career stage. As public sector managers are required to be more innovative and business oriented, skills commonly attributed to small company entrepreneurs appear to be increasingly pertinent. There is much to learn from each other, particularly within the sort of challenging learning environment which the programme provides.

For information about FPM programmes, contact
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PROFESSIONAL INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

Ethnographic objects and collections

Icon's Ethnography Group has been approached by the ICOM-CC Working Group on Ethnographic Collections which is interested in developing a wider network of information exchange and collaboration beyond their own organisation. The aim is to develop an international listserv where conservators could post messages and initiate discussion (see also 'ethnomuseums' site: <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/archives/ethnomuseums.html>). The article below introduces them and their activities and an article about Icon's Ethnography Group will be published in the next ICOM-CC Ethnographic Conservation Newsletter. The Ethnography Group would like to hear your comments and suggestions about this proposal (see News from the Groups for Group contact details).

ICOM-CC Working Group on Ethnographic Collections

The Working Group on Ethnographic Collections, one of 23 Working Groups of the International Council of Museums Committee for Conservation (ICOM-CC), currently consists of an international network of approximately 120 conservators specializing in ethnographic conservation. The Group's objective is to promote the discussion and dissemination of information on ethical and technical issues concerning the conservation of ethnographic objects and collections. The challenges in conserving ethnographic objects are multi-faceted: from a technical point of view, an object can be made of a large variety of organic and/or inorganic materials, which often are found exclusively in their place

of origin; and most importantly, from an ethical point of view, an object's links to a history of use and to a community of origin impacts on conservation decisions.

The Working Group publishes the Ethnographic Conservation Newsletter in electronic format on an annual or semi-annual basis; issue no. 26 was recently published in December 2005. Members of the Ethno Working Group also communicate to each other using the ICOM-CC-Ethno listserv, which is an unmoderated discussion forum chaired by the Working Group Coordinator. The next ICOM-CC Triennial Meeting is planned to take place in Delhi, India, in September 2008, with a Call for Papers coming out in 2007. In preparation for this Meeting, the Group has set out the following Program:

The Ethnographic Working Group membership shall investigate, research and report on the following areas of interest:

A Ethnographic collections on exhibit

- 1 Decision-making for long term needs and maintenance
- 2 Interpretation and presentation of collections on display.

B Collaborations

- 1 Community involvement in conservation and preservation decisions
- 2 Consultations and collaborations with cultural groups who are stakeholders of ethnographic objects.

C Pesticides in collections

- 1 History of pesticide use and identification
- 2 Deterioration of materials caused by pesticides
- 3 Mitigation and removal of residues

D Material science studies

- 1 Identification of materials found in ethnographic objects.
- 2 Deterioration of materials found in ethnographic objects.
- 3 Treatment studies and case histories

E Cross-Disciplinary Projects

- 1 Composite ethnographic objects
- 2 Modern materials in ethnographic objects

A major project currently underway is the Pesticide Database Project, with the aim of developing a centralized database of pesticides used in the past in museum collections. The Pesticide Database would offer a forum where pesticide related information is accumulated, organized and made available to museum and conservation professionals. Currently we are in the process of consulting the membership on these issues by means of a questionnaire.



Katerina Powell (centre) explains her conservation procedures to Penelope Plowden (left) and Kate Collieran (right) using a display board financed by the Trust

Membership in the ICOM-CC Ethnographic Working Group is primarily for paid ICOM members or institutional members, or for paid Friends of ICOM-CC; however, currently all interested in ethnographic conservation (conservators, curators, etc) are welcome as guest members for a trial period. Benefits of becoming a paid ICOM-CC member include the ICOM-CC Newsletter and reduced rates to attend the ICOM-CC Triennial Meeting. If you are interested in joining, or wish to participate in the Pesticide Database project, please contact the Coordinator (whose email address is given below). Information on the Working Group can also be found on the ICOM-CC website, at: <http://icom-cc.icom.museum/WG/EthnographicCollections/>

Carole Dignard

Coordinator, ICOM-CC Ethno Working Group, and Objects Conservator, Canadian Conservation Institute, Ottawa, Canada
carole_dignard@pch.gc.ca

AWARDS AVAILABLE

THE ANNA PLOWDEN AWARD FOR RAISING THE PROFILE OF CONSERVATION

Have you recently completed a project on an object available to the public that could benefit 'conservation' by some added publicity? If so, the Anna Plowden Trust may be able to help by giving you a grant towards the cost. As conservators, we all need to take every opportunity to bring our largely-behind-the-scenes efforts to a wider

audience. The usual way is to site display boards adjacent to the finished work, but other possibilities are take-away leaflets on the conservation or even a 'trail' in a museum of objects that have been conserved. Trails are very popular with children, but the questionnaires cost money. To assist, the Trust will give up to £1000 towards the budget for suitable projects.

The first recipient of one of these awards was Kate Collieran and the Jewish Museum in London. Here the conservation procedures carried out on a 'megillah' or scroll that tells the story of Esther and Mordecai have been explained on some display boards situated on the museum walls adjacent to the case containing the scroll. Not only are these available to all visitors, but they are particularly valuable as an education aid when parties of school children are being taken round.

Although this project was on a museum object, the awareness award is available for any conservation that is open to the public, whether in public or private ownership. Thus places of worship or country houses, or even field monuments in certain cases, are eligible. If you have been involved in a suitable case please contact Penelope Plowden at 43 Lansdowne Gardens, London SW8 2EL for more information. The Trust has a web site at www.annaplowdentrust.org.uk

THE KATHY CALLOW TRUST

Established 'to provide awards with a long-term benefit for the conservation of social history artefacts and evidence in small museums', this Trust was founded in 1994 from part of the residue of the estate of the late Kathy Callow, who

more professional matters

was Curator of the Priest's House Museum in Wimbourne. The Trust makes awards to small museums for the purposes of assisting with the costs of conservation projects. Such projects might include an exhibition, improving stored collections or running workshops for people connected with museums.

The total sum available each year is approximately £300 and aid is restricted to smaller galleries or museums with an annual gross revenue expenditure of less than £600,000. More information is available from Pamela Poynter, The Museums Association, 24 Calvin Street, London E1 6NW. She can be contacted by email (pamela@museumsassociation.org) or by telephone on 020 7426 6913.

THE DAPHNE BULLARD TRUST

Established 'to promote the conservation of dress and textiles of all periods and their display', this Trust was set up in 1973 on the initiative of the family of the late Mrs Daphne Bullard, Keeper of Worcestershire County Museum at Hartlebury Castle, to promote the work of dress and costume conservation, display and publication. The Trust considers applications from students of, or persons engaged in, the conservation and study of dress and textiles of any period and their display.

Grants of approximately £300 to £1,000 are available and preference will be given to projects aimed at conservation or display of dress or textiles where there is a long-term material benefit to a collection or project. Applications are reviewed as they are received – there is no cut-off date. Further information is available from Pamela Poynter, The Museums Association, 24 Calvin Street, London, E1 6NW, email (pamela@museumsassociation.org) or telephone on 020 7426 6914.

AWARDS MADE

EUROPA NOSTRA AWARD

One of the five top prizes in the annual European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage/Europa Nostra Awards has been given to the National Trust for the Edward Chambré Hardman Photographic Collection in Liverpool. The entire lifetime output – in excess of 142,000 images – of this renowned pictorial photographer are in the process of being catalogued, digitised, conserved and made accessible to view in his former house and studio. They offer a unique insight into Liverpool and its people during

the mid 20th century. The five top prizes each include a monetary award of €10,000 and will be presented to the winners by H.M. Queen Sofía of Spain at a ceremony in Madrid in June.

QEST AWARD

Intaglio printer Rachael Bacon has just won a £10,000 QEST Scholarship to fund a two year apprenticeship in copper and steel plate printing. Her studies will include conservation printing – specialist techniques enabling safe printing from historic plates. She will also learn how to conserve historic plates, ensuring that important prints will continue to be printed and made publicly accessible through British museums.

CHURCHILL FELLOWSHIP

Lorraine Finch is currently sorting out the details of the Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship, which was awarded to her in February at the end of a lengthy selection process. Her plan is to travel to the United States for four weeks to study the conservation and preservation of film, sound and photography. Although she will concentrate on the photography aspect, she will also cover film and sound as they share the same base material. Lorraine is a Camberwell graduate and an ACR; she is Secretary of the Book and Paper Group and Chair of the Film, Sound and Photography Group of the Society of Archivists. She works freelance from Norfolk with archives with mixed collections of film, sound and photography.

One hundred Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Travelling Fellowships are awarded annually for travel for between four to eight weeks. The awards are made under several categories, which are rotated over a three-year period. One of the categories is Conservation of Archives, Manuscripts and Books. Lorraine comments: 'I would encourage anyone to apply. The Fellowships really do give you the 'chance of a lifetime' to acquire further knowledge and experience in an area that you are interested in and to benefit you, your community and the UK'

letters

ACCESS VERSUS CONSERVATION

Neil MacGregor seems inconsistent when he said that the use and display of collections will be increasingly shaped by conservators and that collections need to be shared nationally and internationally (Icon News, January, p.10). Whatever the improved systems of transport, the primrose path of constantly shuttling works around now eagerly pursued by curators is bound to conflict with the interests of conservation and security.

Conservation concerns will be better heeded if works stay in one place and people travel to see them. Beyond that greater sharing could be promoted by more restitution of looted works.

Dr Selby Whittingham

Secretary-General DONOR WATCH
153 Cromwell Road, London SW5 OTQ

WHAT IS RESEARCH?

As a professional researcher, I read with great interest Dr Joyce Townsend's comments on 'What is research?' (Icon News, March), always keen for further insights into the research process. Dr Townsend promotes scientific research of a type that may be carried out in defined projects of a collaborative or multi-disciplinary nature. However, her claim that 'there is no such thing as unscientific research' unfairly slights the validity of other areas of research endeavour. For example, research questions that focus on human behaviour can rarely bring the same level of verifiability and control to the investigation, or to the interpretation of the evidence, that is customary in scientific research. Still less so in areas of historical research, or artistic research. The latter area, indeed, partakes somewhat of the unfocussed character, lacking in end point, that Townsend particularly criticises. However, few working in art museums would dispute the value of the output of artists. Perhaps a research project asking why artists use non-permanent materials would be a valuable undertaking for conservators, although it could not proceed wholly on scientific grounds.

The assumptions behind the idea that easy research topics are dealt with 'leaving ever harder and more complex ones' for future researchers sound more like a note of frustration than a well-analysed observation. Not only do new findings suggest that great complexity may be generated from very simple rules, but it is dangerous to presume that the most simple questions have yet been

adequately answered. The reason that 'ever more conservation research is collaborative and multi-disciplinary' may have as much to do with current administration of public funding as with any innate advantage to work of this nature.

Townsend states that 'Research always involves dissemination of its outcome. Otherwise, what was the point?' We can ignore here industrial research aimed at generating competitive advantage whose results are kept confidential, as this is understood within the context of the article. The thrust is that dissemination is the final stage of research that gives it lasting meaning. However this dissemination process does not end with putting the research findings into publication, but rather with other individuals reading and reacting to them. I suggest that when our colleagues spend an afternoon doing 'a spot of research' they may in fact be carrying out the very valuable function of updating their awareness of the current level of understanding in a subject by scanning for newly disseminated research. If this activity is undervalued or undermined, then indeed what is the point of research?

Dr. P.A. Sykas,

Research Associate, Faculty of Art and Design,
Cavendish Building, Manchester Metropolitan University
Manchester M15 6BG

WHY WE NEED A PRIVATE PRACTICE GROUP

A letter from Frances Halahan and Jennifer Dinsmore in the last edition of Icon News questioned the need for a Private Practice group to be formed. In response, I would like to set out the three reasons why I believe a private practice group will be a valuable asset to Icon.

The majority of our members are in private practice, and the continuing tendency in the public sector to downsize core staff and outsource activities means that, over time, this majority is likely to grow larger. Establishing a group for independent conservators recognises the particular issues which they have to face. Some of these may well overlap with public sector concerns but it is hard to see how the profession as a whole will lose out if questions such as tendering for work, legal and contractual matters, and business management are addressed with particular interest by a new group.

Many members in private practice are sole practitioners, and some of these have studios in fairly isolated places

outside cities and large towns. Whereas conservators working for institutions or in large cities have support and contact networks, it is much harder for small independent conservators to keep in touch with each other, share ideas and discuss problems. An Icon private practice group will help some fairly isolated people to improve their network of contacts among their professional peers.

There are a number of highly specialised fields where virtually all the practising conservators are in the private sector. Conservation is a high-risk profession from a knowledge management point of view. There are often fewer than half a dozen practitioners in a given specialist field; a proportion of these few people are close to retirement, and because they are sole practitioners there are no opportunities for them to train successors. Forming a private practice group will help us as a profession to identify high-risk areas and ensure that we capture invaluable conservation knowledge and experience for new generations of practitioners.

As Frances and Jennifer point out, the divisions between the private and public sectors are not necessarily clear-cut, but it is one thing to note the number of overlaps and quite another to say that these are a reason for preventing a new group from emerging.

We are in the process of forming an interim committee to begin the work of the group, so if you wish to take an active part in the formation of the group, please contact Charlotte Cowin on membership@icon.org.uk

Alastair McCapra
Chief Executive, Icon

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IPC www.ipc.org.uk – then click on heading “notice board”

For the Trade Exhibitors Fair contact:

Stephen Allen
Tel: 01609 777585
Fax: 01609 777078
Email: Stephen.Allen@northyorks.gov.uk

All further enquiries:

Conference Secretariat
The Institute of Conservation
PO Box 143, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 9AT, UK
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institute briefing

SEPTEMBER START FOR WORK-BASED LEARNING

The first placements on Icon's Heritage Lottery funded work-based learning scheme will start in September. The key to the scheme has been identifying suitable host organisations who can offer placements to trainees. We needed 60 hosts to run the core HLF-funded placements, and so far have secured 75 offers. But that is not the only good news. We have an excellent spread of hosts across the countries of the UK, with a good balance between major national institutions, small museums and galleries, and a number of private studios. We also have a good balance between offers to take trainees on for six months, one year and two years. Placements have been offered across our target disciplines of archives, books, stone, ethnography, metals, stained glass, textiles, natural history, ceramics and environmental/preventive.

Almost half of the firm offers are for places for this September. Not all of these can be filled, since the HLF bursary scheme will only cover 15 one-year equivalent places. The first year of placements will be advertised in May and applications invited across a range of entry points to the profession: conservation graduates, craftspeople, scientists and those with a more general heritage background or interest. More than half the hosts offering placements for September are prepared to consider trainees with no previous knowledge of conservation. If the candidates applying do not match the needs of a prospective host, the placement does not have to go ahead and we will have to try to get a better fit in the next round.

Hosts for the first year of the scheme are:

Mark Bambrough, Glasgow – Stained Glass
English Heritage, London – Preventive science
Oxford University Library – Books
Ipswich Museum – Natural History
Canterbury Cathedral Workshops – Stone
Nicolas Boyes, Edinburgh – Stone
EURA Conservation, Telford – Metals
Amgueddfa Cymru, Cardiff – Ceramics
National Museums Liverpool – Ceramics
Devon Record Office, Exeter – Archives
Marischal Museum, Aberdeen – Ethnographic
Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter – Ethnographic
Royal Armouries, Leeds – Metals
The Victoria & Albert Museum – Preventive
Wylie & Singer, Colchester – Textiles
Manchester, City Galleries – Collections Care
Bristol Museums & Art Gallery – Textiles

TRAINING MANAGER APPOINTED

Carol Brown has been appointed to the post of Training Development Manager from 1 May. Carol's three priorities (in rough order) will be (i) to run the workbased learning scheme for which Icon successfully bid for £1m from the Heritage Lottery Fund; (ii) to build additional workbased training placements onto the HLF core scheme so that we expand its scope to cover the broadest possible range of specialisms and include the greatest possible number of opportunities; and (iii) to organise mid-career training events for Icon members where there are identified areas of need. Prior to her appointment, Carol was on secondment to Icon from Historic Scotland, where she was formerly Conservation Bureau Manager and ran a very successful fellows and interns programme for a number of years. Carol was originally seconded from Historic Scotland to help prepare the bid for HLF money and our success in securing the funds to run our scheme is largely due to her work. Responding to news of her appointment, Carol said 'I've been developing internships and other work-based training in my previous post, so I'm really looking forward to expanding my sights to the wider UK. The HLF Bursaries scheme is just one of many new initiatives Icon has planned, so I am delighted to be joining Icon at this exciting time!'

BOARD MINUTES

Minutes of the Icon Board meeting of 1 February are now posted on the website. To read them, go to www.icon.org.uk, click 'About us' on the menu and click again on 'Records of Meetings'.

THE VICE CHAIRS

As noted in Icon News 3, the Board of Trustees approved the appointment of Alison Richmond and Simon Cane as vice chairs. Alison is Senior Tutor on the Royal College of Art/Victoria and Albert Museum Conservation Postgraduate Programme and Simon is Head of Collections Care at the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. Their primary role will be to assist Anna Southall and provide for close liaison with the Chief Executive if she is unavailable. The vice chairs will also help establish links with the groups, and each of them has taken on responsibility for liaison with specific groups. The division of responsibilities is:

Alison Richmond:
 Archaeology
 Care of Collections
 Ethnography
 Historic Interiors
 Conservation Science

Scotland
Stone and Wall Paintings
Textiles

Simon Cane:

Book and Paper
Ceramics and Glass
Furniture and Wood
Gilding and Decorative Surfaces
Metals
Paintings
Photographic Materials
Stained Glass

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Two new people have joined the Board of Trustees by co-option for 2006. As members may recall from the blue book on convergence, it was always intended that the Board should draw in outsiders with high-level specialist skills to assist us in the development of our new organisation. In January the Board undertook an audit of its own skills and in several areas where the skills of the existing Board members were weakest, it was felt appropriate to co-opt people with expertise to help Icon operate as effectively as possible. In joining the Board, Lynne Thomas and AnnMarie Newbigin represent a significant raising of the Board's skill levels. Although neither Lynne nor AnnMarie has any background in conservation, neither is a stranger to us. Lynne was the project manager for convergence who supported the Interim Board and AnnMarie assisted the Interim Board with recruitment. In their daytime jobs Lynne runs Thomas & Associates, a consultancy company and AnnMarie is Head of HR Projects for Barclays Wealth Management. Lynne will focus on assisting the Board in developing its strategic role for the organisation, and AnnMarie will have important contributions to make on human resources and on diversity policy.

GROUP CHAIRS' CONFERENCE

A first step in ensuring good communication between the groups and the Board was taken on 29 March when the first Group chairs' conference was held. This meeting brought together all the chairs of groups and the Icon Board to review what the organisation is doing, exchange ideas on future priorities and consider whether the strategic plan is being delivered as intended. As well as being the first time the group chairs have all assembled since Icon was formed, it was only the second occasion that the new Icon Board of Trustees has met. All groups were represented at the meeting – in a few cases by someone other than their chair – and the intention is to hold a second meeting on similar lines in November.

MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT

At the end of March Icon had 2961 members. Since 1 September 2005, a total of 273 new members have joined and more continue to do so at a rate of between 25 and 30 per month. In February the London Bridge office sent membership materials to universities and colleges offering conservation courses so that new student members can sign up, and over the coming months there will be a phased programme of contacting former members of IPC and UKIC whose membership had lapsed before Icon formed. If you would like some membership flyers for colleagues, friends or students, please contact Charlotte Cowin at membership@icon.org.uk

CONSERVATION SCIENCE CENTRE STAGE

Not for a long time, if ever, have conservation and conservation science been given such close attention by the highest echelons of our parliamentary system. The inquiry into Science and Heritage being held by the Science and Technology Committee of the House of Lords is now in full swing and conservation is at centre stage. Written evidence has been sought and published, and the committee is now in the process of interviewing witnesses at the regular Tuesday morning meetings in Westminster.

A number of conservation scientists and conservators have been called to give evidence, including Professors Peter Brimblecombe, Norman Tennent and Mark Pollard. Other witnesses called so far have included civil servants from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, senior officers of two major Research Councils, officers of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and the Institute of Historic Buildings Conservation. During these intensive two-hour sessions, the Lords have put a range of perceptive questions designed to explore the true state of conservation science in the UK, the infrastructure and the funding. The arguments and the evidence are too much to summarise here, but can be followed in the un-corrected transcripts made available on the web about a week later. They are well worth reading, not least for the entertainment value of the 'Yes Minister' responses from the civil servants when questioned on the balance between access and the collections.

Helen Shenton from the British Library and Nancy Bell from The National Archives will be providing evidence during April, as well as Sir Neil Cossons and John Fidler of English Heritage and Chris Batt of the MLA. At 11.15 am on 16 May the profession will be represented by, among others, David Saunders from the British Museum, Jim Tate from the National Museums of Scotland, Joyce Townsend from Tate, and Alastair McCapra and David Leigh from Icon. The final session on 23 May will hear the Culture Minister David

more institute briefing

Lammy and Lord Sainsbury, Minister for Science and Innovation. Thereafter we await a report which might help give conservation and conservation science a higher profile, proper recognition, a coordinated strategy and better funding.

The hearings are usually broadcast live via the internet. These, the transcripts and the written evidence can all be found via the Parliamentary website: www.parliament.uk, following the links to the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology.

David Leigh

CONSERVATION & SCIENCE AGAIN

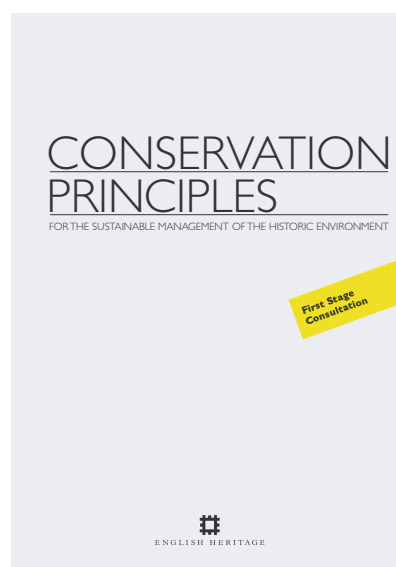
More than twenty people attended the first meeting of the newly formed Conservation Science group held at the Institute of Archaeology on the evening of 3 April. The meeting was organised with both social and serious aims.

The serious side was provided by two invited talks. David Howell (from the Bodleian Library, Oxford) explained 'How to have fun in a library': actually he started by appealing to serious scientists with examples of aliphatic nucleophilic substitution chemistry, but quickly entered into the spirit of the evening by reviewing progress in conservation science in three areas in the past twenty years: light damage and exposure; wet cleaning tapestries; and measuring the physical condition of textiles. David elegantly expounded how science has improved what we do – although not always as much as it could. Some key conclusions were: that we need to translate research so that it is understood and used by decision and policy formers; we should develop more sustainable conservation treatments given the pressures on limited conservation resources; and in doing this we should integrate better the outcome of scientific investigations into conservation practice.

Joyce Townsend (Tate), chair of the Institute of Conservation Science (ICS) then spoke about 'What ICS has planned'. The ICS was established as a professional forum for conservation scientists and has had various meetings. The intent has been to repeat the format of the Edinburgh 'Conservation Science 2002' meeting in Italy in 2007. This year a one-day meeting to the ICN in Amsterdam is planned for 22 May. The talk led to discussion of the future relationship between Icon and the ICS: the ICS will vote in June this year whether or not to amalgamate. While recognising that the Icon group will include a wider range of members than the ICS currently has, the general feeling from ICS and Icon members present was that having one robust group was the way forward and would be most likely, for example, to be able to address some of the points made by David.

Wine, beer and (rather too few) crisps sandwiched the talks, with plenty of chat between scientists and conservators overlooking a London sunset from the Institute's penthouse staff room. Thanks to Clifford Price for the venue and hospitality and to my wife for helping to carry the drink from a not-so-near off licence and staying to help pour it out. A second (or really first equal) meeting of the Icon group will be held in Edinburgh at the National Museums of Scotland on 25 April.

Jim Tate (Acting Chair)



EH CONSULTATION

Icon has been actively involved in working with English Heritage on the development of a new set of Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance. The Principles are intended primarily for use by English Heritage, in guiding both the management of its own estate and its advice to others. It is hoped, however, that they will also be used by all those concerned with managing the historic environment, such as conservation and planning officers and the councillors of local planning authorities. Icon has commented on the first draft and attended a review meeting at English Heritage where we particularly stressed the importance of collections to the value of much of our historic environment.

English Heritage will now review the comments it has received and will publish more detailed policy and guidance documents later in the year. We encourage members to review these when they come out and to advise us of any recommendations we can make so that the final product is a robust and workable set of guidelines.

of maximum benefit to the conservation community. We will alert members when this next stage of consultation begins. In the meantime it is possible to view the draft conservation principles at http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/pdf/Conservation_Principles (please note that the deadline for responses on this has already passed).

PRESERVE AS FOUND? ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATORS EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN ENGLAND

There is a lack of guidance to colleges and other tuition providers to help prepare the next generation of architectural conservators, according to a research report published by English Heritage, in partnership with Icon.

Within the next 10–15 years, a large segment of the current generation of active conservators will be retiring, raising concerns over whether there will be a sufficient number of suitably qualified and experienced conservators available to fill their place. While it seems clear that sufficient numbers of conservators are being trained each year in England, the question remains as to whether there are enough who can demonstrate the necessary skills, knowledge and relevant experience across the diverse material disciplines associated with the particular requirements of architectural conservation.

English Heritage, in partnership with Icon, commissioned the Centre for Education and Industry (CEI) at the University of Warwick to carry out the research which comprised in-depth qualitative interviews with training institutions, employers, and employed and self-employed practitioners. The report's Action Plan calls for greater collaboration and sector-wide involvement to better define and map career paths, provide more detailed careers information and raise awareness of architectural conservation within the wider built heritage sector.

A printed summary report will be circulated to Icon members of the specialist groups with the highest proportion of architectural conservators (stone and wall paintings, stained glass, gilding and decorative surfaces, historic interiors and archaeology), policy-makers and other peers and partners with a professional interest in this field. This research is seen as a starting point and a one-day meeting is being planned to discuss the findings and opportunities arising from this review. The research was funded by English Heritage and PDF versions of the summary document and full report can be downloaded shortly at: www.icon.org.uk



Dr. Anthony (Tony) Smith

FROM THE LIBRARY

The Chantry Library (see Icon News 2) recently received a second very generous donation of books from Dr. Anthony (Tony) Smith. Many people will remember Tony from his Camberwell days where he was Principal Lecturer in Science. More recently he has been the key link on the European Leonardo sponsored project of trialling 'Water in Paper: a conservation training compendium', helping to set up and teach pilot courses based on this material. He has contributed the chapter Chemistry of Deacidification to the compendium that will be published in 2007 by Elsevier.

His material swells the library's collection in many areas, such as paper science, printing, reprographics and particularly in the area of the materials and techniques used in art. We are very grateful to him. Here are just a few examples of these new additions to the library:

Conservation of traditional records, paper and allied materials by Perti, R.K. (ed)

Paper: its history and conservation by Robert Hauser

The chemistry of paper by J.C. Roberts

Science for Conservators: bk. 1. An introduction to materials — bk. 2. Cleaning — bk.3. Adhesives and coatings

The artist's craft : a history of tools, techniques, and materials by James Ayres

The complete guide to painting and drawing: techniques and materials by Colin Hayes

The practice of tempera painting: materials and methods by Daniel V. Thompson, Jr.

Methods and materials of painting of the great schools and masters (2 vols) by Sir Charles Lock Eastlake

more institute briefing

A history of engraving & etching from the 15th century to the year 1914 by Arthur M. Hind

Etching and engraving: techniques and the modern trend – line engraving, drypoint, mezzotint, aquatint, etching, woodcutting – by John Buckland-Wright

Printmaking: history and process by Donald Saff and Deli Sacilotto

Looking at prints: a guide to technical terms by Paul Goldman

We would also like to take this opportunity to extend thanks to other very kind recent donors. Lorraine Finch presented the library with the two volume Preprints of ICOM Conference (The Hague, 12–16 Sept. 2005). Martin Notcutt, on behalf of his father-in-law J.N. Balston (author of 'The Elder James Whatman: England's greatest paper maker'), gave us various pamphlets including Coleman's 'The British Paper Industry 1495–1860', three booklets on paper-making by hand at Wookey Hole Mill and some British Paper and Board Makers Association Technical Section Proceedings. Professor Gerhard Banik left souvenirs of his visit with the Stuttgart School of Conservation in the form of papers on the conservation and restoration of leather bindings and ink deteriorated materials.

While we specialise in paper conservation, there is also technical information on preservation, analytical techniques, materials research, disaster planning, pest management, environmental conditions, plus works on specific materials and techniques, such as textiles, pictures frames, pigments and dyes and many other subjects that may be of interest. Please feel free to come and use this growing collection. We also supply photocopies of articles which we can post to you.

We welcome all donations from members' personal collections of professional literature. Please contact the librarian who would be happy to hear from you.

Contact details

Librarian	Catherine Scutt
Email	library@ipc.org.uk
Telephone	+ 44 (0) 1865 251 303
Address	The Chantry Library, Grove Cottage, St. Cross Road, Oxford, OX1 3TX, United Kingdom
Website	http://www.lib.ox.ac.uk/ipc-chantry/

DO YOU GET ICONNECT?

If you are receiving Icon's electronic communication Iconnect and Iconnect Jobs, then we have your correct email address. But we are still getting around 200 'bounce-backs' after every mailing. This is fewer than reported in the last issue of Icon News but still too many, as it means that around 200 people or organisations are not receiving this important briefing. Iconnect is an integral part of the communications with members, complementing though not replacing this printed magazine. As well as monthly mailings, bringing up-to-date news and reminders of forthcoming events, Iconnect Jobs provides updates on new appointments.

Iconnect is easy to spot in your Inbox, and can be readily deleted if there is nothing you want to read in it. So if you are not receiving it and would like to, then please let us know your correct, current email address. The easiest way is to send an email to Charlotte Cowin at membership@icon.org.uk or you can phone her on 020 7785 3807.

If we have your correct email address and you are still not receiving Icon emailings, this might be for one of the following reasons:

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- you need to speak with your IT department about the problem as it might be your institution which is rejecting the Icon mailings

people

ON THE MOVE

The Courtauld Institute of Art has just announced the appointment of Dr Aviva Burnstock as the Head of Conservation and Technology. Dr Burnstock joined the teaching staff of the Department in 1992 and, since October 2004, has been Acting Head of Conservation & Technology.



But her association with the Courtauld goes back over twenty years, since she took her Postgraduate Diploma in the Conservation of Easel Paintings there in 1984. After a year working in Australia she then returned to the Courtauld as a Technical Assistant and subsequently worked at the National Gallery for six years. During this latter period she also worked on her PhD which she took at the Courtauld in 1991.

The Courtauld's collection of paintings includes many well-known treasures ranging from Cranach's Adam and Eve to Manet's Bar at the Folies Bergère. Aviva Burnstock said: "It is a great privilege to work with these wonderful paintings that have been part of my life for so many years and to play my part in safeguarding their future".

HELEN COX MOVES ON...

Icon members may have noticed that I have been conspicuous by my absence from the conservation scene for some time now – so, rather belatedly, I would like to offer this note of explanation.

I have finally completed a rather protracted retirement from my former business as 'Helen Cox, Environment & Conservation Consultant', in order to pursue exciting new directions. Realising my most cherished ambition, I am taking a long sabbatical from paid work to immerse myself in a range of research and creative projects.

In the 'real world', I'm establishing myself as a writer and speaker on medieval history, specifically on the 15th century and the lives of the later Plantagenet kings. In the unreal world, I'm beaver away on a historical fantasy novel (a kind of feminist 'Lord of the Rings') which I hope one day might get into print!

I've been greatly aided in all this by joining the Company of Palm Sunday 1461, Towton Battlefield Society's affiliated re-enactment group. Working with COPS is like an ongoing exercise in experimental archaeology, which as a former archaeological conservator I find both moving and utterly fascinating. There really is no substitute for the

direct, hands-on experience; learning to shoot a longbow, pitch (and live in!) a 15th century campaign tent, and cook in a pipkin over a cast-iron fire range has enriched my understanding of the period, and its material culture, immeasurably.

Best of all, it means I can continue applying all the things I learned in my heritage career but in a different way: after a quarter-century of working with inanimate objects, through historical re-enactment I'm now able to share and communicate my passions to a wider living audience. So I do still crop up in the museum world now and again, albeit in very different guise

To close, I'd like to say a very big 'thank you' to all my friends and colleagues in the conservation profession. I have found working with Britain's fantastically rich and diverse museums, galleries and collections a uniquely rewarding privilege; and I'm glad to leave the sector knowing that I've made some contribution towards preserving this heritage for the future. And if any of you would like to keep in touch, I'll always be happy to hear from you!

Helen Cox

helen@raecox.freemove.co.uk

Tel. 01924 253454

For more information on Towton Battlefield Society or COPS, check out our websites: www.Towton.org.uk
www.palmsunday1461.co.uk

Company of Palm Sunday 1461 in action at Huntingdon last year – Helen Cox is in the blue kirtle



Meet the new ACRs



FOLLOWING THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE RECENTLY ACCREDITED MEMBERS IN THE MARCH ISSUE, ICON NEWS CAUGHT UP WITH SOME OF THEM TO FIND OUT A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THEM AND TO LEARN AT FIRST HAND ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE OF GAINING ACCREDITATION

What do we learn in the process? Well, it obviously doesn't matter at what stage you go for it – younger or older, sooner or later in your career – and motivations also vary. Most agree that the process, especially the form-filling, is daunting in prospect but rewarding in retrospect. Indeed, the very rigour of the accreditation scheme is seen as a re-assuring feature, because, in a wider context, it earns recognition for the profession and, at the personal level, it is proof that the professional recognition for the individual really means something. There is also warm acclaim for all the help and support available to get through the process. As for the consequences, yes, there may be some downsides, but these are outweighed by the benefits, both intangible and practical.

So here they are in their own words. Rejoice with them in their pleasure in their achievement and, who knows, perhaps one of these examples will inspire you to take that step.....



CAROLINE HARRISON (paper)

From an early age I was interested in conservation as a career. My love of paper, creating it and working with it in art, gave me the impetus to begin studying paper conservation in 1998 at the University of Northumbria at Newcastle. After graduating I undertook two internships, first at the paper conservation department of Tate Britain and then in the Chinese paintings department at The Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC. Since then I have been working in a private studio based in Bristol with Sophia Fairclough.

After a period of five years in my present workplace, which involved a great number of interesting and challenging projects, I felt I had reached a point where I wanted to attempt accreditation. It is a rigorous and demanding process with what I feel to be a high level of examination in order to achieve excellence in the field. As a private conservator, all the projects that I documented for accreditation had been returned to their respective clients. Therefore I undertook to document each one in a detailed report as evidence for the assessors. This was an undertaking of many months' work outside my studio hours. These reports have been subsequently of great help with preparing for conference papers and also further research that has been undertaken.

Obviously I am very pleased at having become accredited with the level of recognition this now gives within the profession and beyond, to clients and those in affiliated disciplines. Of greatest pleasure, accreditation has also given partial impetus to my becoming a part of the business within the private studio in which I work.

email: caroline@summerhayes14.fsnet.co.uk



JULIA NAGLE (paintings)

I have been a freelance paintings conservator since 1992 and share premises in Shoreditch, London. While running my practice, from 1993 to 2003 I also worked as a contract conservator at The Hamilton Kerr Institute in Cambridge. In 2003 I covered maternity leave at Tate Modern and now regularly work freelance at Tate.

My decision to go for accreditation was largely financially driven. For ages I had neither the funds nor the time; there was always a piece of equipment I would rather buy (or even the odd holiday!); however, having 2,000,000 GBP professional indemnity insurance to fund this year, the 10% saving on my premiums became significant. I also wanted to join the revamped Conservation Register.

I freely admit competitive instincts played a part too as paintings conservators became accredited all around me!

Although a lot of work, the accreditation process really helped me focus on the direction I want my career to take, and to appreciate my achievements so far. The CPD section is excellent for this and having it formalised encourages us freelancers to allow ourselves time to develop new skills.

I was very nervous before the studio visit but needn't have been. My assessors put me at my ease and were totally fair in their appraisal. I never would have believed it but the day actually went very quickly!

email: paintingsconservation@mac.com and
website www.painting-restoration.co.uk



EMMA FRASER (books)

I have been working at the Book and Paper Conservation Studio in Dundee for the past six years. By the time I was applying for accreditation the rest of the conservators working in the studio had been through the process already. I had seen how much work was involved, which had put me off slightly but their experiences were highly beneficial when I started the process. Although I had been working in conservation for the last eight years, I had just finished supervising two interns in the Studio and had seen how they had grown under my tutelage and how much knowledge I was able to pass on and I felt confident that I was ready to apply for accreditation.

The most daunting aspect of the process for me was preparing the form; having to select a few projects out of a large spectrum of work was hard but once this was done I felt I had broken the back of it and found it rewarding to look back over the work. Being in a private studio meant that I had to recall the objects I chose for the assessment day, but our clients were very cooperative and the assessors appreciated being able to see the books.

I thoroughly enjoyed the day itself and found it self affirming and positive, everyone likes talking about themselves and I had a good rapport with my assessors. Maybe that was due to the Tunnocks Tea Cakes provided at tea! Getting the final confirmation of the accreditation has given me the confidence to represent my field through presentations and discussions that I would not have got involved in previously.

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Book & Paper Conservation Studio
University of Dundee Library
Small's Wynd
Dundee DD1 4HN
www.dundee.ac.uk/library/conservation



JO WINSON (easel paintings)

After studying History of Art in Glasgow, then training as a painting conservator at the Hamilton Kerr Institute followed by internships abroad, I have been working freelance in London for six years now – most recently combining part-time work at RMS Shepherd Associates with independent projects carried out either on-site or in rented studio space. As it is over ten years since completing my training, I felt that it was now or never as far as accreditation was concerned. Happily, a year since first seriously looking into it, I finally took the plunge (given boot by work colleagues might be another way of looking at it) and handed in my application during the last round.

Having been previously very cynical about the accreditation process, I was really surprised by how much I have benefited from (and dare I say it, actually enjoyed!) it. The process of professional self-examination can only be positive – both from the point of view of the individual and the profession.

The longer you leave accreditation after training, the scarier it becomes to voluntarily submit to being examined on every aspect of your work and professional life. In this respect I would encourage others not to leave it so long as I did. If you are not lucky enough to work with someone who will act as a mentor through the process, then I thoroughly recommend actively finding one. The forms are not as daunting as they first appear, the examples on the internet are useful, and the assessors could not have been more encouraging. Icon really wants you to become accredited!

My previous cynicism was partly based on reports about the lack of thoroughness of the fast-track process. I also still feel that the costs involved (in application fees, self-employed time, increased membership charges, indemnity costs required to be included on the conservation register etc) are punishing to those willing to try and raise the profession's standards. They are out of balance with the average income in the profession, especially given the large percentage of women in the field, who only work part-time if they have a family. It is of great concern that there are fewer and fewer jobs with less and less remuneration or stability, for an increasing number of highly trained painting restorers. Despite being enthusiastic about the formalization of the profession, it feels somewhat like the profession is stabbing itself in the back. To end on a positive note – at least the accreditation process will make you more aware of your transferable skills!

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0207 503 1739



SUZANNE KITTO (arms and armour)

After graduating in Archaeological Conservation, I spent six years at the National Museums, Liverpool, as a metals conservator. Since 2001, I have been at the Royal Armouries, Leeds where I have been able to specialise in the conservation of arms and armour. Recent areas of interest include Japanese materials and plastics.

I went for accreditation with the support of the Royal Armouries to account for the experience in practice that I had gained since graduation. At first I had been rather sceptical about the whole thing and waited a number of year to see whether I felt it was worth the investment, especially as there would be no financial gain from achieving it and Icon membership would increase. I came to realise however that there are certain people who see conservators as glorified cleaners, others who say they have been conservators when they have only tinkered with restoration and as such I wanted to show that being a conservator is more than that, it is a profession with a high level of ethics and standards.

Initially I attended a PACR clinic which was invaluable for information on what sort of projects were suitable, how to fill in the form and what to expect. I filled in the form pretty much over a weekend. The advantage of having waited so long to take the accreditation was that I had done such a range of conservation work that I could select the most suitable ones with relative ease rather than having to complete a project in order to tick the boxes. I feel that accreditation is not a qualification to be worked at but a way of saying 'yes, I work at this level and here are some examples'.

The actual assessment day was nerve-racking and rather exhausting. We went through each project and discussed various aspects of conservation work. On reflection however it was most enjoyable and extremely satisfying to indulge in your own work to this level. It has made me reassess how I do certain things and I think refreshed my love for my work. I am glad I waited so long because the extra experiences I had gained increased my confidence of work in practice, about compromises, and about not being afraid to reflect and if necessary criticise past work.

Conservation Department
Royal Armouries, Armouries Drive, Leeds LS10 1LT
Tel. 0044 (0) 113 220 1936/1807



REBECCA KENCH (paintings)

I completed my training at the Hamilton Kerr Institute in 1999. Following that I spent one year as a paintings intern in the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (FAMSF), and one year as an intern at the National Museums Liverpool (NML). I am currently employed as a Paintings Conservator at National Museums Liverpool where I have held the post for four years

A year ago I found myself considering accreditation. I wanted to apply for accreditation because I felt that if all conservators were encouraged to become accredited then it would hopefully raise our status and help the profession to achieve better recognition. Whilst being accredited is not yet required if you work in a museum environment, I could see a time when this qualification might be desirable and now seemed like a good time to apply.

I attended a workshop to find out more about the process and very nearly didn't apply after the discussion about how onerous some people had found filling out the form! The form was quite daunting, but considering what to include took longer than writing the final application itself.

The accreditation day was an incredibly intense day, and I was left in no doubt that if the process was this stringent, becoming accredited is quite an achievement!

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JANE EAGAN (books and paper)

I have been working in Oxford college library and archive collections for the past thirteen years and in 2004 became Head Conservator of the Oxford Conservation Consortium. I was interested in accreditation from the start for its potential to benefit the profession and raise the profile of conservators. I knew that I would eventually apply and looked forward (with some trepidation) to undergoing the process. Now that this has been done, I look back on it with satisfaction and admiration for those who have put together such a considered and well organised scheme. I was impressed by the assessors, board, and trainers who clearly put a great deal of thought and care into their work. From the start of the process, I felt supported and well informed and knew more or less what to expect, which helped when the assessment visit came round. Since then, I've been pleasantly surprised by the interest shown by librarian and archivist colleagues who were clearly impressed by the rigour of the process. I found it a very stimulating exercise and encourage others to apply. I feel that accreditation will help also in my work as editor of The Paper Conservator.

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SHARON OLDALE (archives)

I have been a conservator for six years, and have been in my current post at the Cheshire and Chester Archives for five years. My enthusiasm for my specialism stems from my love and appreciation of different paper types and book structures.

Once I felt I had gained enough experience to warrant an application, applying for accreditation seemed a natural next step. I had a huge amount of respect for the process and for those conservators who were already accredited, and ultimately I too wanted to be recognized and appreciated as a professional in my field.

I found the process of accreditation to be a very positive experience, even despite being five months pregnant by the time of my assessment! I recall wondering if I would be able, in my sleepy pregnant state, to represent myself effectively on the day. But I found that my assessors were sensitive to my 'condition', and the work I had put into my application provided a strong foundation for the day's proceedings. The nature of the accreditation process forces self examination, and this gave me a positive affirmation of how I had developed as a conservator. My application took a lot of work and effort, but I didn't feel as though I was alone and struggling. I received so much guidance and encouragement, and happily made new acquaintances as a result.

email: sa.old@btinternet.com



HEATHER TETLEY (textiles/carpets)

I have been in the conservation world for thirty years. Working with me at our Devon workshop, housed in a large industrial unit, are two other senior conservators, Liz Flintoff, ACR, and Anne Amos-Ford, plus a recent intern and several short-term conservators and trainees as the demand arises.

It all started with my becoming interested in oriental carpets, their symbolism and history. I then wanted to develop treatments to care for them, which lead me into conservation, a fascination with the 18th and 19th centuries, as well as the problems of conservation in historic house interiors. So due to the rather unusual circumstances of the development of our carpet conservation business, I had no formal conservation training and despite our scrupulous adherence to the ethics of conservation and the depth of research and development in a very narrow specialism (albeit for very large objects!) I always felt under-qualified.

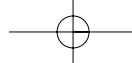
I had not considered applying for accreditation until friendly conservators pointed out that, without it, I would soon be taken off the Conservation Register and unable to work for some of my main clients. Carpets being a pretty small niche, this would present difficulties for my clients as well as for me.

After I had unravelled how the scheme worked with the help of Susan Bradshaw and the PACR workshops, it was a very interesting self-assessment process. I had a lot of help and encouragement from my sponsors and mentor as well as other members of the workshop, and I thoroughly enjoyed my assessment visit. We undertook this, with the kind help and permission of the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle. I found the assessors' interaction very informative and useful.

I am now extending my learning into tapestries, where we are undertaking commissions, since both Liz and Anne have this specialisation. We are especially interested in the new workshop experience scheme and hope that we can offer a good place for training in carpets and tapestries.

email: tetleyworkshop@hotmail.com
01364 649 020

The Tetley Workshop, 11 Brent Mill Business Park
South Brent, Devon TQ10 9YT



In the News.... the Fitzwilliam smashed porcelain vases

**IN WHAT WILL SURELY
BECOME A CLASSIC CASE
STUDY IN DISASTER AND
RECOVERY, JO DILLON,
APPLIED ARTS
CONSERVATOR AT THE
FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM,
TAKES US THROUGH THE
STORY SO FAR.**

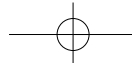
Most people are by now familiar with the story of the unfortunate incident at The Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge when, on January 25, a visitor collided with three large Chinese porcelain vases, part of a matching set of five. The three had been displayed on the recessed windowsill of a grand staircase, without incident, for over forty years.

In relation to object recovery, the museum's disaster plan swung into immediate operation. While museum first aiders attended to the visitor, other staff sealed off the area to prevent more fragments being crushed underfoot (white porcelain is very difficult to see on pale stone stairs) and conservators were called to assess the damage. The extent of the smash was unprecedented: the pieces were all jumbled together and spread across the landing and three adjacent flights of stairs to the floor below. Luckily the museum had a good digital camera, and photos were taken and processed immediately, allowing us to track where pieces had fallen and conduct a systematic recovery. The pieces were placed in 25



The landing (main smash site) overlaid with the improvised grid, as used for disaster recovery

Photographs copyright of The Fitzwilliam Museum





Museum staff collecting the pieces



Penny Bendall sorting the pieces

Photographs copyright of The Fitzwilliam Museum

large padded trays, carefully labelled and cross-referenced with the location from which they were retrieved. Staff spent two and a half days on their hands and knees collecting fragments and sweeping the stairs. We discovered that stone stairs are very hard on the knees: foam kneelers should be an essential in every museum disaster cache!

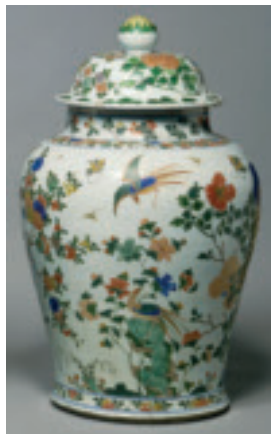
The story rapidly went global after the press published a photo taken by another visitor with his mobile phone, showing the man still sitting amidst the devastation. The picture captured the public imagination and within days the museum was dealing with an unprecedented flow of press queries from all over the world. The story went out in local, national and international newspapers, radio and TV; and has stayed there, sporadically, for months. The museum came in for criticism and praise alike from press and public. The man responsible has since been arrested on suspicion of criminal damage connected to the incident.

International press interest in the incident led to messages of support and offers of practical help from conservators all over the world, including one made through the British Embassy in China. Adhesive company reps rang wanting to know which epoxy the conservator would be using. The incident highlighted the absolute imperative of having a

key person to deal with the press. For the first two weeks, the phones never stopped and our press officer processed several hundred enquiries from the press and public, including a TV film crew from Holland. The office is still receiving emails about the incident three months later.

From the very beginning, there was intense media interest in the conservation process coupled with public incredulity, best expressed by a snorting John Humphrys on Radio 4, that any reassembly would be possible, let alone redisplay. In March, the museum arranged a press conference to announce the appointment of Penny Bendall, an experienced ceramic conservator, after she had completed initial sorting and partial reassembly of the first vases. Fortunately the vases do not appear to have sprung, so, despite the many hundreds of sherds, all mixed together, the reassembly is essentially a straightforward conservation process. The high profile of the smash and public disbelief in the possibility of successful restoration is a superb opportunity to showcase conservation. Fortuitously, **Mission Impossible?**, a Fitzwilliam exhibition outlining conservation issues and dilemmas (1 July – 24 Sept 2006) was already planned; the first restored vase and sherds from another will now take centre stage.

Vases before they were broken



Close-up of the devastation



Photographs copyright of The Fitzwilliam Museum



Penny Bendal working on the initial reassembly

The vases are Chinese, Qing Dynasty, reign of Kangxi (1662–1722) and date from the late 17th or early 18th century. They are from a set of five which entered the collections in 1948 and had been displayed for decades on the staircase window sill where they were enjoyed by 300,000 visitors a year.

Painted in enamels in the famille verte palette with traces of gilding, the vases are decorated with peonies and other flowering plants, phoenixes, pheasants, butterflies and insects. Two vases are of 'yan yan' shape (height 71 and 72.5 cm) and one is a heavy baluster jar with cover (height 80 cm). The two smaller flanking vases had been secured to blocks which, in turn, were securely fixed to the window sill. The larger central jar – which weighed about 100 lbs and could not be lifted single-handed by a curator – was displayed on a plastazote non-slip mat.

Penny Bendall, of Bendall Ceramic Conservation based in Suffolk, trained at West Dean College and holds a Royal Warrant. For the past 18 years she has worked on major oriental ceramic collections around the world. She commented 'This is a fantastic opportunity to demonstrate how ceramic conservation techniques have improved in recent years due to the introduction of modern materials'.

The access v. conservation dichotomy in a nutshell

The vast majority of the Museum's correspondents have expressed their appreciation of the Museum's distinctive house style and the way objects are made as accessible as possible. Duncan Robinson, Director of The Fitzwilliam Museum, said 'Whilst the method of displaying objects is always under review, it is important not to over-react and make the Museum's collections less accessible to the visiting public'

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Launch of new Summer School in July 2006:

- Mackintosh and the Glasgow Style
- Whistler and his Circle

For further information contact the Postgraduate
Administrator, Department of History of Art,
University of Glasgow, Glasgow G12 8QQ,
Email: pgenquiries@arthist.arts.gla.ac.uk
Tel: 0141 330 4097, Fax: 0141 330 3513
www.arthist.arts.gla.ac.uk



www.gla.ac.uk

Rehousing Indian Paintings on Mica

Nicola Fleming, Assistant Iconographic Curator and Conservator at The Wellcome Trust, describes a project to re-house a large collection of these interesting and historically important paintings in The Wellcome Library Collection

The Iconographic Collection in The Wellcome Library holds Henry Solomon Wellcome's collection of over one hundred thousand prints, drawings, watercolours, photographs, paintings and textiles.

In 2002 the Wellcome Trust's conservators and curators from the Iconographic Collection and external contractors began working on the re-housing and preservation of this collection, in preparation for its migration to a new store in 2006. This immense task was approached initially with a survey to highlight areas of the collection in need of conservation and the level of work necessary.

The Iconographic Collection contains over fifteen hundred Indian paintings on mica which are mainly un-catalogued and have been stored for many years in old Kodak photo paper boxes. (Fig 1) The paintings had been separated into folders within the boxes grouped by subject matter, with each folder containing anything from one to one hundred paintings.

Mica is a 'transparent mineral composed of complex mixtures of potassium silicates'¹ used as a painting substrate in India during the British Colonial period. At the time, it was seen as a cheap and easily accessible material and is still occasionally used in Indian art today. The paintings are usually gouache applied to the recto and, occasionally, to both the recto and verso for a more three-dimensional effect. They are generally described as 'Company Paintings', produced during the early seventeenth to eighteenth century and painted in India by Indian artists, yet are in a style formed to suit the tastes of a Western tourist. During the British Colonial period in India many of these paintings were produced: they document the Indian people, trades and animals. However, production dwindled with the invention and success of the camera.

The Wellcome collection of paintings on mica consists of albums, mounted sheets and loose individual paintings. The albums are fragile and difficult to view without causing damage to both the mica and the painting. However,



Fig 1

although acidic and fragmentary, the albums and their mounts contained valuable information relating to the historical content of the mica and therefore had to be preserved. The loose paintings were badly damaged as a result of constant contact between each piece of mica: the thin layers tend to delaminate especially along the edges and in the corners causing disruption and losses to the paint layers.

The minority of the collection, which were catalogued, were stored in individual M-Tissue folders and could be ordered by library readers to be viewed in the Special Collections reading room at any time; this caused concern

¹ Mike Wheeler, 'Conservation of Indian Mica Paintings', *'Conservation Journal'*, Victoria and Albert Museum (Summer 2000), pp.8-11.



Fig 2



Fig 3

as the folders were flimsy and the mica was so delicate that damage could easily occur as a result of handling.

The project began with a complete survey of the paintings on mica, which allowed us to see how many there were in the collection, their size and whether they were mounted or loose. With this information we began to research possible housing solutions. Many paintings were suffering from paint loss and were in need of consolidation, however time and budget would not allow for remedial work on individual items. Therefore, it was decided that it was essential to develop a new housing solution, which would prevent any further damage. We were cautious of encapsulation as it would mean the mica would be in direct contact with polyester, which was likely to cause further damage to the friable paint layer if each painting was not consolidated before re-housing.

Mike Wheeler, conservator from the V&A, discussed how they approached the housing of their collection of paintings on mica by storing single sheets in mounts after first encapsulating in polyester and then placing them into 'Solander' boxes, with the aim of allowing easy and safe access, particularly for exhibition. However, this solution

was not viable for our collection, as the cost of mounting fifteen hundred paintings and the expansion of storage necessary was beyond our resources. We were concerned that each individual painting should be accessible whilst causing minimal disruption to the other paintings. The idea of storing each piece in plan-chest drawers inlaid into Plastazote® was considered, however this still seemed to cause difficulties with access. The idea of individual boxes was considered to be the best solution but they would need to be cost effective and easily accessible.

We researched the availability of an acid free clear plastic storage system which would house the material into individual packages. After searching the internet, we found 'Acid Free Photo Safe Boxes' produced by an American company which specialised in clear plastic. The boxes came flat packed, thus need to be folded and assembled. They are very similar to those used for display and packaging. Samples of the boxes were ordered to check for clarity and rigidity of the plastic. Experiments were carried out to ascertain the best way in which the paintings could be fixed in place within the box. A sheet of polyester was cut to the exact size of each box, the mica was placed on top and two diagonal corners were marked out using a scalpel to pierce

Fig 4

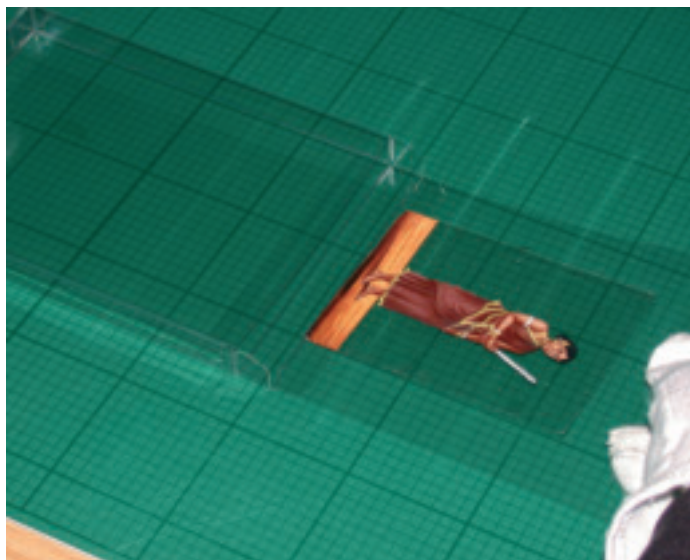


Fig 5





Fig. 6

the polyester. (Fig 2) Small slits were then cut in the polyester in a similar manner to photo-corners and the mica was then inserted (Fig 3) With the mica secured onto the polyester it was carefully slipped into the clear plastic box. (Fig 4) When the box was closed the painting could be viewed from both recto and verso without causing any damage or movement to the mica. (Fig 5)

The boxes were rigid enough to allow them to be stacked on top of each other (maximum of three to four) within a larger A2 dye cut archival board box from Conservation by Design. (Fig 6) The expansion rate was thought to be only four times the current housing space, which was acceptable to both the curator and conservators. Each box was given a catalogue number written on a clear sticker (to allow for future changes) with an archival permanent marker pen and placed in a uniformed area.

The Acid Free Photo Safe boxes are available in four sizes; the smallest being 3½" x 5½" x ¾" and the largest 8½" x 10½" x ¾". The largest size is larger than any of the sheets of mica in the collection. Whilst the above re-housing solution was suitable for the single items, the mounted paintings on mica were treated in a different manner. These were placed into folded sheets of Heritage paper, then placed into easily accessible catalogued bundles which were finally placed into an A2 archival dye cut box and stored alongside the rest of the mica.

The project took approximately ten working days full-time for one conservator. It proved to be successful in its aim to safely re-house and store a challenging part of our Iconographic Collection. And in the process it has enabled the previously inaccessible material to be handled and easily accessed without causing further damage.

For anyone interested in learning more about the subject:

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Mike Wheeler., *Conservation of Indian Mica Paintings*, 'Conservation Journal', V&A Museum (Summer 2000).

Mike Wheeler, Pauline Webber, Anna Hillcoat-Imanishi, and Clair Battisson., 'Indian Paintings on Paper, Textile, Mica: Conservation, Storage, and Display', *The Broad Spectrum*, Archetype, 2002. Harriet K. Stratis and Britt Salvesen, pp 222–228.

Archer, M. *Company Paintings. Indian Paintings of the British Period*. V&A Museum, 1992, pp 193–201.

Websites

<http://www.chennaionline.com/artscene/history/companyschool.asp>

<http://www.radcliffe.edu/fellowships/profiles/visweswaran/gallery/g-text1.html>

<http://www.tanjore.net/tanjorepainting.html>

Supplies

The Acid-Free Photo Safe Boxes came from:

Impact Images <http://www.clearbags.com>

Phone: 916-933-4700

All other materials (Archival Dye Cut boxes, anti-static grade polyester, Heritage Woodfree paper and Manilla board) came from: Conservation By Design
Phone: 01234 853555 info@conservation-by-design.co.uk

news from the groups

BOOK AND PAPER GROUP

The first annual meeting of the B&PG on 30 March was a resounding success with over 60 members attending. A pack of information, including the Icon strategic plan and a new Book and Paper Group Action Plan 2006–08 (soon to be available on the website), was made available to all attendees. The new committee members: Lorraine Finch (secretary), Penny Jenkins, Christine McNair (treasurer), Tony Bish, Liz Bowerman and Jim Bloxam were welcomed on board, and thanks expressed to two outgoing members: Caroline Scharfenburg and Catherine Atkinson. We are grateful to Ann-Marie Miller who will be staying on for an additional six months and to Kate Colleran who is continuing to support the work of the Chantry Library.

The committee reported on its activities, describing the new role of sub-editor* (for B&PG items to go into Icon news), forthcoming events, the website, graduate liaison and the sponsored membership scheme. As part of the library report Kate was able to announce a further endowment from the Chantry estate of a substantial amount to further the work of the Library. This was followed by a lively and good humoured discussion on a range of matters including the development of the Chantry library, HLF funding for conservation internships and the value of having Icon to speak with a unified voice on conservation issues.

The committee was gratified by the level of encouragement from members attending the meeting and we look forward to continuing our ambitious programme of activities with your support and assistance. The meeting was followed by two talks, described in the Review section, which were received with interest and a noisy and cheerful crowd finished the evening with the usual refreshments and chat.

Conference

The B&PG's International conference in Edinburgh promises to be an occasion not to be missed. Papers by leading speakers from around the world cover a wide variety of conservation practices ranging from up-to-date information on the treatment of iron-gall ink, modern prints, pastels, manuscripts, transparent papers, drafting film and watercolours, the identification of photographic processes, plastics and paper deterioration. An impressive poster display will include information on zeolites, fold testing for book joints, pith paper, architectural plans, starch paste, leather deterioration and Chinese ink.

The conference will also look at the impact of preservation on the work of conservators in both the private and public sectors, contribute to the dissemination of current practice and provide an important forum for discussion and

meeting colleagues. This is the first major event to be organised by the B&PG and we are sure that it will be supported by a large attendance from practising book and paper conservators.

Helen Lindsay, Chair

***Note: Jim Bloxam is the sub-editor. He can be contacted on jpb43@cam.ac.uk**

CARE OF COLLECTIONS GROUP

Are objects bad for your health? What lurks in your store room? Do you know what to do with an unexploded bomb? The Care of Collections Group is planning a two day conference on hazardous materials in collections from 21–22 November 2006. It will highlight issues of risk, solutions to storage, transport, display and disposal. The days will be split into focusing on organic and inorganic materials.

The venue will be Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, with additional site visits to see examples of dealing with hazardous materials. If you are interested in attending or would like to submit a paper, please contact me on emmaroodhouse@hotmail.com or tel: 07977 939 141

Emma Roodhouse, on behalf of the Committee

ETHNOGRAPHIC GROUP

Notes from the Chair on behalf of the Committee

The Ethnography Group meeting which was held in London on the 28 March 2006 focused on two main issues: the restructuring of the Committee and following up on the editing and publication of the material from past Ethnography Seminars. At the meeting, the committee was joined by three new members. We would like to thank Renata Peters, Amy Crossman and Charles Stable for generously volunteering their time and expertise to the Ethnography Group Committee.

Renata will be the editor for the ethnography contribution to Icon News. Amy takes over the role of Treasurer in the Group and Charles will be our website editor. Details of their careers and interests in the field of ethnographic conservation can be found on the website. With their appointment we believe that the committee now encompasses within its ranks a wide range of expertise and experience which we hope will enable us to communicate effectively with members of the Group and widen the scope of what the Group is able to achieve for members through seminars and workshops. However, for the moment the committee will continue to focus on the forthcoming publication of papers from past seminars and in the development of our website.

We can now confirm that the papers presented at the seminar 'Ethnographic Painted Surfaces' will be published this year by Archetype Books. The post-prints of the seminars 'Caught in a Compromising Situation' and 'Challenging the Boundaries of Ethnography' are due to be published in 2007. However, we have not received all the papers related to these seminars. We would be grateful if authors could send a copy of their contribution to our Secretary Róisín Miles. The precarious situation and changes occurring within the Committee in the last months have led to some problems of organisation and scheduling regarding this matter. We apologise for this inconvenience. It has been suggested that a 'copy date' and 'guidelines' be provided for authors, we believe that this would be useful and will organise this for our next seminar. We would also like to thank Margot Wright for her tremendous work. She has edited the papers from no less than four seminars and has agreed to continue!

Melangell Penrhys Jones has stepped down as the newsletter editor but remains as an ordinary committee member. We look forward to continuing to work with her and we thank her for her dedication and commitment to the Group and her dynamism in fostering partnerships at national and international levels.

While we have defined our individual roles within the Committee and filled the central positions, we are still seeking further support from members with an interest and enthusiasm for ethnography. Also, we would encourage anyone involved in ethnography, in any capacity to join us and share their experience through the Icon News.

Committee Members

Chair	Anne-Marie Deisser (adeisser@gmail.com),
Secretary	Róisín Miles (rosettadubh@yahoo.co.uk),
Newsletter Editor	Renata Peters (m.peters@ucl.ac.uk),
Treasurer	Amy Crossman (amycrossman@hotmail.com),
Website Editor	Charles Stable (c.stable@nms.ac.uk)
Ordinary Members	Anne Laila Kvitvang (a.l.kvitvang@soton.ac.uk) Anna Hodson (angelhodson@hotmail.com) Melangell Penrhys Jones melangell_pj@yahoo.co.uk)

PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIALS GROUP

Dear Icon members and Photographic Materials Group members,

In what promises to be an exiting year ahead of us with Icon firmly established as the lead body and voice for the conservation profession we hope that you will have committed yourselves to its vision and activities and will have renewed or are renewing your membership for April. We would ask everyone to consider joining us and indicate their interest in the Photographic Materials Group; the preservation of our unique photographic heritage affects us all.

The last few years have been a time of great transition for the Group. As its Chair, I have been directly involved from the outset through NCCR, the Vanguard Groups and the Interim Board of Icon in seeing that Icon becomes a reality whilst seeking to maintain a high standard of Group meetings for its members. Icon now has a fully elected committee and is already beginning to make a difference and impact the conservation and heritage communities.

The committee and I have always made it clear that for the sake of continuity we would continue in office to see the Group's commitment to Icon through, and then we would stand down. Now that the Group's finances have been transferred to and integrated within Icon, and with the development of the Group's web site in progress, it is time for the Group to elect a new Chair and Committee, which will take the Group on and continue to establish and develop the discipline of Photographic Conservation within the wider cultural heritage field. We have a unique opportunity within Icon to make a difference.

In response to this, the committee is seeking nominations for six committee officers. Please submit names of nominees by post or email, together with the names of the proposer and seconder to PhMG Chairman Ian Moor, iamoor@cpc-moor.com or Icon PhMG, 233 Stanstead Road, London SE23 1HU. Nominations will close on 24 May 2006 and the results will be announced on the group's web site <http://www.icon.org.uk> and by email and post to members. Closing date for voting will be 24 June 2006.

The results of the election will be announced at the Group's next one day meeting on 21 July at the Icon offices. In addition to a full programme of papers, to be circulated in due course, the current Committee will stand down at the end of the meeting and the newly elected Committee will take up the reins.

We look forward to receiving your nominations and seeing you at what promises to be an interesting and worthwhile meeting.

Ian L. Moor, Chair

more news from the groups

SCOTLAND GROUP

The Committee met again in mid-March and the events programme for the coming year was high on the agenda. With the annual Dr. Harold Plenderleith Memorial Lecture, social and professional gatherings and the proposed Icon 2006 AGM in Edinburgh to plan, there was plenty to focus the Committee's attention. The arrangements for the Group's participation in the Authenticity and Conservation conference and the Glasgow Art Fair were also finalised. In addition, the formal organisation of the Committee was discussed at length, including the individual responsibilities of those serving on the Committee, the administrator post and the ballot procedure for the election of Committee members in the Autumn.

The political role for the Icon Scotland Group was also developed at this meeting and a working group formed to produce a response to the recent Cultural Review. The possibility of an official launch to raise Icon's profile within the political community was also raised.

A mailing list for all Icon members interested in receiving information about Scotland Group activities has now been established. If you haven't received recent emails, and you would like to join this list, please contact the Icon office

Ruth Honeybone (r_honeybone@yahoo.com) is the Scotland Group contact for contributions to Icon News.

GRADUATE VOICE

Heather Marshall writes: This section of the magazine is dedicated to conservation graduates and students, their reviews, articles, opinions and news. We aim to provide an informal means of communication for newly qualified conservators, those still at college and those where no formal training exists with future employers and other established conservators.

We would like to hear from you if you would like to become involved or make a contribution. We would like to make sure that there is a network from all disciplines, so please get in touch!

All kinds of contributions are welcome including reviews of excursions, conferences and classes, educational tools, books, websites and other resources. Please send them to: Heather Marshall at heatherx.marshall@bl.uk. Heather is on the graduate liaison sub-committee and works alongside Graduate Liaison representative Ann-Marie Miller who is on the Book and Paper Group executive committee, Caroline Harrison and Erica Kotze who are also on the sub-committee to provide graduate support. If you would like to join then please contact us on the details above.

GRADUATE CONCERNS LET US HAVE YOUR VIEWS

Fran Clarke writes: I would like to add to what Julianne Gregg (Icon News 3, 'Graduate Voice') wrote with regards to seeking employment in the profession.

I also graduated last summer from the University of Lincoln. The tutors had been very upfront about the competition for work in the industry and had prepared us as much as possible, with classes dedicated to perfecting interview technique and covering a range of possible lines of questioning. My approach to finding work has been largely based on this knowledge, and thankfully, I have been in almost continual employment since graduation, completing various short term contracts as a conservator in a free-lance capacity. These contracts have largely involved undertaking condition surveys for local county council museum services, but I have also managed to secure some temporary paid conservation work.

My experience of job seeking leads me to believe that you just have to be a little cleverer than sitting around waiting for jobs to be advertised. Towards the end of my degree, I wrote to each local council within close proximity of family members (who would willingly provide a comfortable bed and one hot meal a day), including both my CV and a copy of my portfolio on disc. I achieved three paid contracts as a result of this direct mailing. In the short periods between contracts I volunteered as a conservator at a local museum with a leaning towards my preferred specialism, in order to get valuable hands-on experience. This gave rewards on various levels: the people there offered immeasurable support whilst I continued my job search, it helped bolster my CV, and was also viewed favourably by prospective employers, as evidence of my enthusiasm and willingness to progress. I have since secured my first full time position and am due to commence my post as conservator for the National Coal Mining Museum, Wakefield.

Short term work is, unfortunately, becoming harder for fresh graduates to secure, since many organisations, such as the Churches Commission, have agreed to give contracts only to accredited conservators. I have lost out on paid work which one county council would have happily employed me to undertake. But the regional MLA would not give the project funding, as it is now their criterion that the conservator be accredited. Since short term contracts are the only way for many of us to make a start in the profession, this is something that needs to be urgently addressed by Icon. If these policies are adopted by a greater number of organisations, it will be almost impossible for some new conservators ever to get the necessary experience to apply for accreditation. Although I'm sure that Icon hopes that the majority of fresh graduates will eventually go on to become accredited, the current agenda is barring the way, and making it more

difficult than ever to progress in the profession.

Survey work is, however, not subject to the same criterion. Since many museums are now in the process of attaining accredited status, there is a considerable amount of such work available, so if you are currently job-hunting, it is worth finding out if your local council has had surveys of its museum collections completed. If you have mailed them your CV and have got your name fixed in the mind of the collections manager, you are far more likely to be called, if and when work of this nature materialises.

Finally, if you can afford to volunteer as a conservator, it is a huge advantage. It will allow you to continue to gain professional experience, but more importantly still, it will open the doors to a network of regional conservators who will be more than happy to offer their support and advice.

CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION GRADUATION SHOWS 2006

University of Lincoln

Final year BA students are currently preparing for their graduation exhibition to be held in the chapel of Chad Varah House, off Steep Hill, in Lincoln. Previous students, professionals, other conservation-restoration students, the general public and the plain curious are all welcome to attend on Saturday 13 May 10.00am – 5.00pm, Monday 15 May 9.30am – 5.00pm or Tuesday 16 May 9.30 – 5.00pm.

The exhibition will showcase the undergraduates' work and also highlight the role played by conservators and restorers in the preservation of our heritage. In order to reach a wider audience the students aim to produce a catalogue providing information about themselves and the work they have carried out during their three years of study.

For further information contact
lincoln_exhibit2006@hotmail.com

Camberwell College of Arts

The shows will be held at Camberwell College of Arts, Wilson Road, London SE5 8LU and will be open on the following dates.

BA Conservation: Tuesday 27 June to Saturday July 1 (9am – 8pm except Saturday, which is 11am – 4pm).

BA students are taught conservation in the area of organic materials: paper artefacts, textiles and three dimensional material culture artefacts. Projects in this year's show include an architect's model, a Maori textile and a collection of French 19th century maps

MA Conservation. Wednesday 12 July – Saturday 15 July (9am – 8pm, except Saturday, which is 11am – 4pm).

MA students specialise in the conservation of paper artefacts including books and art on paper. Projects in this

year's show include 18th century watercolours, early 20th century photographs, historic wallpaper fragments and 17th and 18th century books.

For further information about the shows and courses at Camberwell College of Arts contact the enquiries desk on 0207-514-6302 or e-mail: enquiries@camberwell.arts.ac.uk

West Dean College

Shows for the Conservation and Restoration MA and Diploma courses will be in July 2006, details in the next newsletter.

24th Annual Gerry Hedley Student Symposium

The 24th Annual Gerry Hedley Student Symposium, this year hosted by Northumbria University, is to be held on Friday 9 June 2006 in Newcastle.

Students from the three British painting conservation programs, Northumbria University, Courtauld Institute of Art and the Hamilton Kerr Institute, will present papers to their colleagues, tutors and the wider conservation community. Covering the work carried out by the students in their final year research project, these papers will focus on current theoretical and practical conservation issues, art historical research, scientific investigation and analysis in relation to easel paintings. The conference will also include some talks on paper conservation by students of Northumbria University.

The registration fee is £15 for students and £20 for non-students and the registration deadline is 26 May. For further information contact 0191 227 3250 or email: student-conference@hotmail.co.uk

If you would like us to publish details of future Conservation and Restoration Graduation shows please contact Heather Marshall at heatherx.marshall@bl.uk

THE BEER MEETINGS

The next Beer Meeting will be on Tuesday 23 May at The George, Borough High Street. The George is a beautiful, rambling old pub with an enormous outside area. It lies between White Heart Yard and Talbot Yard and between London Bridge and Borough stations, London Bridge being slightly closer. As ever I will be there from 5.30pm. The following link will take you to a map of where the pub is. The small yards that I've mentioned do not come up on the map (they do in an A-Z) but if you get to where the arrow is you should be able to see the pub.
<http://www.streetmap.co.uk/streetmap.dll?Postcode2Map?code=se1?nh>

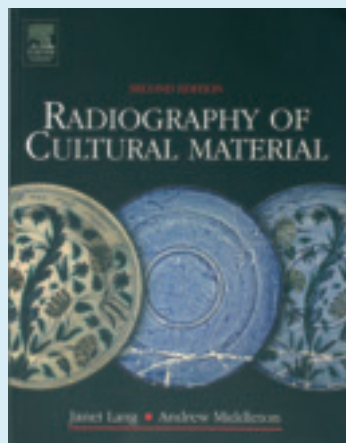
Hoping for the sun, *Imogen*.
imogen.herford@bl.uk

reviews

BOOKS

RADIOGRAPHY OF CULTURAL MATERIAL

Janet Lang & Andrew Middleton, eds.
Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann 2005;
2nd edition paperback
ISBN: 0750663472 208 pages £34.99



This is the second edition of the book originally published in 1997. That hardback edition more than satisfied the needs of most conservators and radiographers involved with archaeological, historical and fine art materials, and this new edition will delight yet more readers. Although a paperback, it is packed with beautifully presented and printed radiographic images.

The authors have struck a good balance between providing the information necessary to understand radiography and supplying references to detailed texts on theory and technique. The developing importance of digital imaging for the study and presentation of cultural material is reflected in the expanded text covering both the capture and manipulation of hard copies of X-ray images and the direct digital capture of X-rays. In the two background chapters, the authors discuss the importance of considered planning and issues including file formats, image manipulation and enhancement, archive and storage, and dissemination and publication. There are chapters written by ten specialist authors on metals, ceramics, paper, paintings, archaeo-human and animal remains, applications in conservation, and in restoration, pastiche and fakes. Throughout are examples of examinations employing a range of techniques from conventional radiography to stereo, xeroradiography, and computed tomography using different types of radiations (although X-rays predominate) and formats to record the image (on film,

paper, screen and digitally).

So what is new? Chapters have been brought up to date with recent references and further examples or case studies, some by additional specialists. There is a new section on animal remains and there are a number of highlighted boxes providing succinct sources of information on health and safety, new radiographic facilities, and running a radiographic facility.

The quality of many of the images is better than those in the first edition. Images seem to be sharper and the contrast has been improved and this is assisted by the whiter and slightly glossy paper. Some are further enhanced by inserts of details, and in others, the area of the picture or its orientation has been improved. A small proportion of the images are the products of techniques that are not commonly available (eg digital and computer tomography), or no longer available (eg xeroradiography). The latter have sometimes provided the best images available to demonstrate examples given in the text, in particular for glass, ceramics, and human remains. Nevertheless, there are some images that are reproduced darker and less sharp in this edition. A few of the black and white images would have benefited from being larger in order to reveal the detail and convey the information intended. However, as everyone who has attempted to publish X-radiographs will know, they are always extremely difficult to produce in print. Seldom, in any case, does one exposure or image yield all the evidence that the radiographer might wish.

There are 180 black and white images including line drawings and photographs of which 133 are radiographs, some being multiple images showing different exposures or digital enhancements. There are also 25 high-quality colour pictures. Many figures have been redrawn or enhanced – a great improvement on those previously scanned. The printing font is more pleasant to read and the layout of captions is easier to follow where pages have multiple images.

If you already have the first edition of this book, is it worth acquiring the new edition? The background chapters, and in particular the information on digital imaging, warrants purchasing the new edition, and the updated bibliographies and applications make this an invaluable reference book. This is essential reading for anyone with an interest in the examination of cultural property.

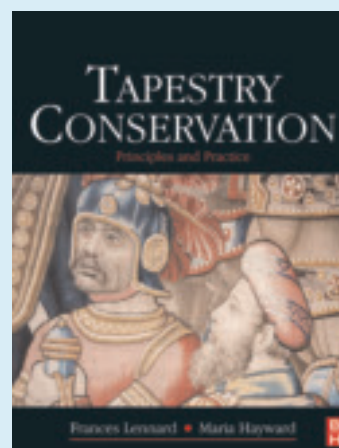
Vanessa Fell and Karla Graham

Archaeological Conservators, English Heritage

The publishers offer Icon members a 20% discount. For details of how to obtain it see the Icon website

TAPESTRY CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

Frances Lennard and Maria Hayward, eds.
Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann 2005
ISBN: 07506 61844
280 pages £ 49.99



It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a person in possession of a copy of this volume must be in want of a life. However, having now read it from cover to cover I believe that for those of us who work with tapestries in either a conservation or curatorial capacity this is a valuable and long overdue reference book. Clearly organized into six parts (Context, Documentation and analysis of materials, Cleaning, Treatment options, Maintenance and display, Current research projects), well illustrated and with a quite useful 'tapestry timeline' at the outset, this manual is, for the most part, surprisingly readable.

Each part of the book is subdivided into chapters written by different contributors, and whilst occasionally one gets a slight impression that one or two contributors were working to a different brief, on the whole the content is thorough, concise and complete. The chapters range from the highly specific and technical (e.g. Cordelia Rogerson and Paul Garside's chapter on metal thread analysis and Boris Pretzel's on environmental issues) to the much more wide ranging and general approach employed by Frances Lennard in her chapter in the 'Context' part of the book. The relevance of one or two chapters seemed a little obscure and the section on documentation and analysis I felt would have benefited from a couple more contributions as it is a little narrow (e.g. something on the dye analysis which I

believe is currently undertaken quite commonly on tapestries would have been interesting). I also have to admit to being slightly baffled by Sheila Landi's chapter 'A description and evaluation of a conservation system for tapestries' in the 'Treatment Options' part of the book. Unlike the other chapters in the book I personally found it to have a rather nebulous quality and was perplexed by the claims she was making which seemed to me to be abstruse. It would have been illuminating perhaps to have one or two diagrams to help explain the methods she was endeavouring to describe, and a bit more detail on why these methods are so much less time-consuming than others more commonly in use.

The strength of the publication in my mind is the comprehensive way in which it pulls together and presents the current methods of remedial tapestry conservation employed not just in the UK but in the rest of Europe and in the United States. Contributions from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, the Metropolitan Museum in New York, as well as a wealth of European contributions from France, Poland, Bavaria, Italy and others combine to provide an excellent overview of both the philosophy behind the approach and the techniques and methods used internationally. There are excellent and very useful inclusions on planning and conservation programmes, case histories, a wide variety of display systems, and much else and it is invaluable to have all of this information condensed and organized into this one bible.

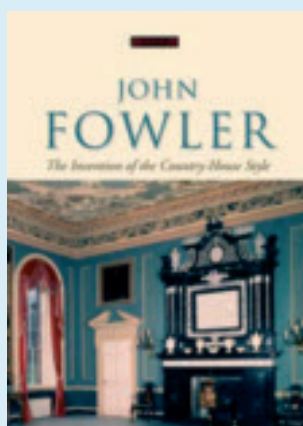
Because of the variety of content that this book encompasses I would anticipate that it will be of interest, and I would recommend it, to members of other sections of Icon as well as textiles, such as Historic Interiors, Care of Collections and Furniture. Several chapters give fascinating, if tangential, historical information bordering on the romantic which could make it an interesting read for historians in a far wider context than the narrow one addressed in these pages, and yes, there is even a sprinkling of humour. But I won't spoil it for you – read it for yourself!

Emma Telford, Freelance Conservator, with apologies to Jane Austen

The publishers offer Icon members a 20% discount. For details of how to obtain it see the Icon website

JOHN FOWLER THE INVENTION OF THE COUNTRY-HOUSE STYLE

Helen Hughes, ed.
Donhead Publishing 2005
ISBN:1873394594
96 pages £30



Ian Gow, Curator, National Trust Scotland, has written a stimulating essay in response to his reading of this book. It can be found in full on the website (www.icon.org.uk). The paragraphs below are extracted from it.

Conference Papers, so often published from a sense of duty, like Festschriften, tend to the worthy but dull so these sparkling papers come as an agreeable surprise and must be amongst the most amusing Post-Conference papers ever published. One simply longs to have been at the two Conferences of which these are the distillation, for the fun of observing the delegates as they realised that their hero, whom they had come to celebrate, in paper after paper, was shown, at least in the paint-department, to have been rather less authoritatively in touch with the world of Marie Antoinette than he thought and there is a sense that by the end of the Conferences the discarded body of poor John Fowler was left with almost as many stab wounds as David Rizzio, the favourite of another Romantic Queen.....

The fun of these papers depends, like a Feydeau farce, on a general acceptance of Fowler's standing as the authority and conduit of 18th century authenticity and, if a third conference could be contemplated, the growth of this idea seems worth teasing out. In 1976 I joined the Department of the Environment and found myself as a Research Assistant engaged in trying to help the decision making about such important historic interiors as Audley End and Osborne. John Fowler and John Cornforth's *English Decoration in the 18th Century*, had only just been published in 1974 but I think I was puzzled by the Trust's

interior decorating and very much more comfortable with the 'Authenticity Before Taste' camp in the Department of Furniture and Woodwork of the Victoria and Albert Museum. In his review of Cornforth and Fowler in the Times Literary Supplement, 17 January 1975, Peter Thornton, Keeper of that Department thundered:

'If, in spending so much money as we do as a nation on the preservation of our great houses, we are sincerely trying to preserve part of our cultural heritage and not merely providing subjects for Christmas calendars, we must present these houses coherently to the public so that it can learn to appreciate and understand what their true place was in our history'.

And he went on to oppose the genuine article of 'authenticity before taste' to Cornforth and Fowler's "loosely artistic rendering" which is exactly what this pair of Conferences some thirty years later is now exposing.....

One is reminded of another similar and very amusing work of debunking with a focus on interior decorators, though veiled in the politesse of Washington diplomacy, in James A Abbott's *Designing Camelot: The Kennedy White House restoration*, 1998. Although Mrs Kennedy was not exactly in the end doing quite what she started out to do, she had made an outstanding contribution to the thinking about how official residences might be managed. Her popular book must be one of the first attempts to publish historic photographs in sequence of the same room to show changing taste and perhaps she and Boudin were responsible for one of the first serious attempts to recreate a Victorian interior.

Similarly although paint may not have been the strongest card in their pack, it is impossible not to admire and be rather in awe of the outstanding contribution that John Fowler and Nancy Lancaster made to our understanding of the British country house. They had the curiosity to take up their three-penny pieces, they quite often, as in the White Drawing Room at Ditchley chose to leave well alone, and all the time they drew people into the cause. That we have the rather petty luxury of debating what colour the walls of many country houses should be is in part a product of the pioneering efforts of Ronald and Nancy, the two Johns and Jim who inspired a desire to save them at a time when so many more might have been demolished.

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CLEANING TECHNIQUES IN CONSERVATION PRACTICE

Published simultaneously as a special Issue of the Journal of Architectural Conservation

K C Normandin, ed.
Donhead Publishing 2005
ISBN: 1873394748
134 pages £25



The scope of this volume is wide, ranging from the cleaning techniques used for comparatively fragile surfaces, such as decorative stonework and sculpture, to waterjetting of relatively robust metal surfaces and surface treatment of concrete.

The first paper, 'An Overview of Current Practice and Techniques' by Slaton and Normandin, raises the interesting and important issues of when to clean and why. It begins with the premise that although cleaning is sometimes necessary in the repair and maintenance of historic fabric or to remove damaging deposits, it is often carried out primarily for aesthetic reasons or to reveal concealed detail, criteria which are not necessarily justifiable in terms of conservation. Discussion of national and international guidelines follows, with consideration of acceptable levels of cleanliness and of desirable patina versus undesirable and damaging soiling deposits.

Grossi and Brimblecombe further explore this theme in an account of their survey of the public perception of the blackening of the eleventh century White Tower at the Tower of London. In summary, most visitors accepted the soiled or darkened condition of surfaces as an integral part of the age and history of the monument. There is some discussion of the way the name influenced perceptions, but there is no mention of the important matter of the original finish of the external masonry, which might have had some bearing on the way visitors responded to survey questions. The external elevations are mainly of Kentish rag, generally a green to grey coloured stone. The name- the White Tower- suggests that the building was

originally painted and recent study has revealed that Anglo-Norman buildings were generally painted, both internally and externally (see, for example, E Fernie, *The Architecture of Norman England*, 2002).

'Analysis and Cleaning of the Concrete of the Sydney Opera House' by Akhurst, Macdonald and Waters sets out investigation, analysis and treatment of exposed 'architectural' concrete surfaces. The use of calcium bicarbonate to lighten and even out the stained surfaces is a novel approach and one that accords with policies set out in the Conservation Plan and the architect's design principles. 'St John the Divine: Techniques to Assess Fire Soil' (Kavenagh and Gembinski) focuses on the investigation and characterisation of soiling deposits, essential for the substantiation of an insurance claim for costs of cleaning the interior, rather than on the cleaning, which employed the Arte Mundit liquid latex poultice.

The account of cleaning the interior of St Paul's Cathedral by Stancliffe, De Witte and De Witte is of considerable interest. It sets out the steps leading to selection of the Arte Mundit poultice, including early investigation of surfaces and past surface coatings and cleaning trials. The practical advantages of this method for internal work are clear: minimal use of water, efficiency and speed of work, and what might be described as the 'self limiting' nature of the system (once the film is dry the EDTA is no longer active). Cleaning has considerably enhanced the appearance of the Portland stone, restoring the visual unity of the interior and the quality of light, a great achievement for this recently developed cleaning product. However, the statement that the 'only technique to clean interiors on large scale and at a reasonable price until recently consisted of EDTA packs' needs some qualification. First it must be presumed that this refers to interiors of limestone; EDTA based products will generally be ineffective for other types of non-calcareous substrate, such as terracotta or sandstone. The most effective system will depend on a number of factors, including the nature of soiling; EDTA based products are not necessarily always appropriate for all conditions, even for limestone. Other methods (ranging from water and steam to Wishab sponges) have been used to clean limestone interiors successfully and at reasonable cost.

Martin Cooper's account of laser cleaning is a very good summary of its current use. Of particular interest is his account of how laser cleaning is moving slowly from the conservation studio to buildings and of the remaining challenges in developing the technique so that it can be used at a rate

(surface area per unit of time) comparable with other building cleaning methods. There is useful discussion of other technical issues in the application of laser cleaning to buildings, including the susceptibility of equipment to dusty and dirty sites and to extremes of temperature. It will be interesting to see whether the technique develops along the lines the author anticipates, with a combination of high powered lasers and robotic technology, to increase the rate of cleaning substantially.

Sembrat et al on waterjetting techniques for cleaning historic metal surfaces will be of interest to conservators of industrial and other very large metal artefacts. This paper focuses on the equipment and cleaning parameters, such as pressures, nozzles and working distance (between the object and the nozzle). Two case studies, of a section of the Titanic and treatment of the Saturn V Rocket, illustrate the application of the technique and its effective removal of surface coatings, corrosion products and salt.

There is certainly a need for ongoing review of cleaning techniques and evaluation of the effects of historic building cleaning in the UK context. Cleaning can dramatically alter the appearance and nature of building surfaces, as well as the way re-soiling occurs after cleaning. There is considerable scope for further investigation of phenomena such as 'gun-shading', the mottled effect that often results from abrasive cleaning (wet or dry), and 'brown staining', the dark, typically gingery brown stains that often appear after prolonged water cleaning of pale coloured limestone.

Catherine Woolfitt

Director, Ingram Consultancy

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MEETINGS

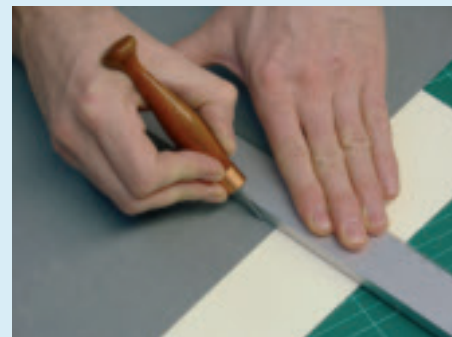
SIMPLE PROTECTIVE FOLDER AND BOX CONSTRUCTION

Paul Cook at The October Gallery,
31 January 2006

In this very practical talk, Paul Cook described a number of simple storage solutions which are made by hand at the National Maritime Museum to protect items after conservation or for exhibition loan. Although a wide range of commercial products is now available, there are frequently occasions when a one-off container or enclosure is required to house an unusual-sized object or to solve a particular packaging problem. Recognising that many conservators do not have access to expensive mount cutting and specialised box-making equipment, Paul demonstrated some of the basic procedures, construction methods and little craft tricks he has devised for making simple made-to-measure containers in his studio. Four types of enclosure were explained during the evening including a simple four-flap folder, book box, corrugated plan box and core roll, and a number of variations.

Paul began by showing us a selection of his tools. These included a metal creasing tool made from a polished kebab skewer with a smooth rounded end which he prefers to use instead of a bone folder. All measuring is done using dividers or by marking off on strips of paper as this tends to be more accurate for repeated measurements than a ruler.

The first type of enclosure described was a simple flat four-flap folder made of one piece of archival manilla. The item is measured with a strip of paper in several places along its height and width as it may not be exactly square. An extra margin of 4-5mm larger than the object is allowed for the overall dimensions of the folder and the manilla card is creased over soft mount board using the rounded creasing tool. The four flaps are undercut at a slightly tapered angle, with a tongue cut from half the width of the right-hand flap and a corresponding slot on the left hand flap to make the closure. All corners are gently rounded for clearance. The grain direction of the card should be parallel to the flap creases wherever possible, particularly for heavier-weight card or board. Another version of the four-flap enclosure was also described using two separate flaps attached under a central cross-piece with EVA. (This option is less wasteful of materials and when making



Creasing the fold



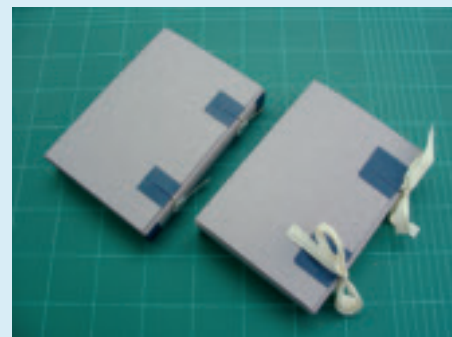
Fold against a straight edge



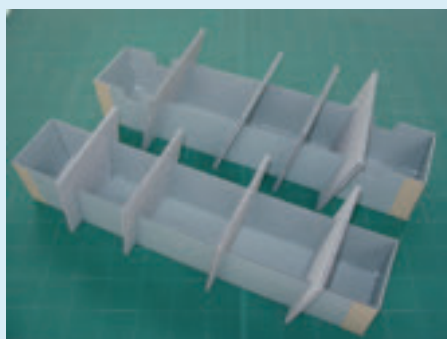
Four flap folder



Folding book boxes



Book boxes



Box base and lid with spacers



Globe box with foam padding

multiples to the same dimensions is more efficient if creasing templates are made first to avoid repeated measuring).

The construction of a simple folding book box (or phase box) with side walls was shown next. Archival folding boxboard is normally used, either being cut from a single sheet or as two long cross-pieces with the creases parallel with the grain direction being adhered together in the centre with EVA. The depth of the book edges are measured with dividers in several places taking into account any wedge shape, and the walls of the box are creased accordingly. The box incorporates small square flaps or 'ears' at the corners of the cross, or applied book cross corners, which are creased and

turned in to keep out dust when the box is closed. All the corners are reinforced with strips of book cloth on the outside for added strength and two tape ties or button rivets and strings are attached to one of the flaps to secure the box.

At the National Maritime Museum corrugated plan boxes to store rolled material such as charts, plans, flags and banners are constructed out of blue archival single or double-wall corrugated board. The double board is cut half the way through and creased with a bone folder so that the two angles fold up well. The base tray of the box is made from one long piece of board and creased into three equal parts for the side walls and base, leaving the central

panel long enough to crease up and form the walls for the ends. Corners are adhered with EVA and reinforced with strips of card or book cloth, and the long walls of the box are held rigid with a couple of temporary slotted spacers whilst the adhesive is drying. The lid is made in exactly the same way to fit snugly over the base but with cut-out finger holes near the ends of the side walls to help lift the lid off smoothly.

Making a core roll was also demonstrated. This needs to be slightly larger than the diameter of a cardboard tube former and is made from a sheet of archival manilla or thin mount board. The circumference of the core is marked off on the manilla together with an allowance for a small increase, and the closing edge cut on the bevel for a neat finish. The sheet of manilla is dampened out and EVA applied in short sections with a wide brush and then rolled up over the cardboard tube in stages until the whole sheet is completed. The roll should be made oversize and the ends trimmed later for an exact fit. Seating pieces are usually incorporated in the corrugated box to hold the roll in place and for this Paul fashioned two 'U'-shaped pieces from a block of Plastazote foam, using the sharpened edge of a tin-can as an efficient, if somewhat lethal, circular cutter! Holes for a central dowel can also be recessed into the end walls of the box if required.

To round off his presentation, Paul described a number of ingenious solutions for making more complex containers such as padded boxes for unusual-shaped objects like clocks and globes. When items are sent on exhibition loan, each stage of the unpacking and repacking process is photographed to aid the receiver and the set of photographs included with full written instructions in the top of the transit container.

Apart from the excellent Library of Congress publication* little new information has appeared on this subject in recent years, so Paul's lecture was particularly timely and was much appreciated by the large audience packed into the hall.

After the meeting we enjoyed a reception generously sponsored by Rob Shepherd of Shepherds, Sangorski & Sutcliffe and Zaehnsdorf.

Clare Prince, ACR

*The most comprehensive manual on the subject is: *Boxes for the Protection of Rare Books: Their Design and Construction*, compiled by Margaret R Brown (Washington: Library of Congress, 1982)

CONSERVATION – WHO CARES?

The provocative title of a recent conference held earlier this year aimed to encourage a political and controversial debate on the subject and implies a state of despondency and anxiety in the field. To stimulate a more open debate the proceedings were held under the Chatham House Rules:

When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed; nor may it be mentioned that the information was received at a meeting of the Institute.

An impressive line-up of speakers included significant players in building conservation, many with direct access to Government and actively involved in developing policy. 'They told it like it is'. We are all aware that for the last six years English Heritage (EH) has been engaged in a frank exchange of ideas with the Government about the need for reform in the management of our built cultural heritage. *Power of Place* written by EH at the behest of the Government in 2000 was a major stepping stone in the early stages of the process which outlined the benefits of a conservation approach. Discussion continues. It is agreed that the existing legislation is unwieldy and offers no protection to certain aspects of the built environment due to its complexity and rather piecemeal nature – and in some areas its sheer lack of comprehensibility. The current aim is to produce coherent legislation in which the whole cultural environment – landscape, buildings, contents – hangs together. Improvements have certainly been made in the protection of the marine environment and ecclesiastical exceptions. New policies look to develop partnerships between legislators and owners/developers. The opening up of the listing and scheduling process is a major part of the reform and there is less secrecy about what often seemed a high-handed and furtive process. Owners are now notified of the intention to list their buildings and, although this does invite the risk of 'overnight demolition', this is outweighed by benefits of owner co-operation.

But there are underlying conflicts. Do conservation aims synchronise with the agenda of a 'modern' government? After all, conservation can be perceived as elitist, and working against the freedom of the individual and democracy – it is hardly a vote winner. How highly does this Government rank conservation – does it even feature in the Labour Manifesto? We now await the White Paper to see the extent

of Government commitment to conservation..... but with the 2012 Olympics on the horizon.

It was argued that heritage protection depends on local delivery to build on the strength of the existing system. But the relationship between central and local government is poor. Locally, support for conservation varies and conservation is not a priority – many local authorities do not employ a conservation officer. Policy is dependent on the elected officers. Whilst the monitoring of archaeological sites is good due to the robustness of PPG16, buildings do not enjoy the same level of protection. The competence of practising architects to work in old buildings (our major building stock) with no conservation training and the problem of then accrediting 'conservation' architects was the subject of lengthy debate. We are facing an 'age bulge' with many experienced conservators about to retire.

The role of national amenity groups (bottom-up support) was considered. These are often dismissed as collections of eccentrics but are they ordinary people with an independent voice? Cases were cited where various groups have fought and won cases more effectively than official bodies. These articulate and passionate groups have a vital role, especially banded together within Heritage Link, in applying pressure to both central and local government to demonstrate that conservation is not elitist but of great concern to the electorate. This was a ray of hope at the end of an otherwise despondent day and something Icon members should note – we should ensure that we use our independent status to lobby for conservation and make it an issue which Government is forced to address.

TWO TALKS AT THE BOOK AND PAPER GROUP ANNUAL MEETING

30 March 2006, Art Workers Guild

'Conservation Research at The National Archives and British Library: an update'

Nancy Bell, The National Archives, and Barry Knight, British Library

The establishment of conservation research posts at the National Archives and British Library in 2003 have resulted in an upsurge of research activity in the UK over the last few years. The influential 2004 Mellon funded meeting, co-ordinated by the BL and attended by representatives from major institutions from the UK, Ireland, North America and Europe which debated the themes and priorities for conservation research, also contributed to a revitalised interest in conservation research. The report resulting from that meeting *'Future Life of*

Collections' outlines a strategy for applied conservation research for UK libraries and archives.

This co-ordinated approach has ensured that current work complements existing projects in the USA and Europe, building on strengths and developing research projects that are formulated close to the needs of practising conservators.

Both speakers stressed the need for conservation scientists to have a role in translating technical information so that the outcomes are understandable and useful to a non scientific audience. Both the BL and TNA have initiated projects that will consider issues relating to practical conservation including: looking at where the water goes to in parchment during humidification, conservation materials testing, comparing identical books stored in different settings and an analysis of the volatile compounds given off when books degrade. We look forward to hearing the next stage in the implementation of these projects and deliberating their results in the future.

'Towards an assessment system for bookbinding leather deterioration: with an emphasis on red rot deterioration in 19th century leathers'

Karen Vidler, PhD student, Institute of Archaeology, UCL

Karen began her talk by welcoming the opportunity to introduce her work to a wider audience. The assessment system she is developing aims to identify and categorise the stages of leather decay and assist in widening the range of conservation treatments for this type of material. The research project revolves around four key themes.

- 1 What is acid decay, the primary stages of deterioration and how are they distinguished from other types of decay?
- 2 How can acid deterioration be described and measured?
- 3 Can an assessment scheme, consisting of sample datasheets available via the internet and simple bench tests, be applied?
- 4 How suitable are current conservation treatments, what are they and how well do they stabilise the decay?

The project will include a visual survey of collections, and testing of historic samples. Anyone interested in taking part in the survey or assisting with group trials should contact: karen_vidler@hotmail.com.



Photograph: Claire Fry

COURSES

SAFEGUARDING HISTORIC COLLECTIONS

Two recent participants on two of these courses, which form part of a programme of short courses offered by UCL Centre for Sustainable Heritage and English Heritage, write of their experiences both on the course and applying the lessons learned to the workplace.

Last January I approached Audley End House in Essex feeling slightly nervous – would this course (Conservation Housekeeping, 24–26 January 2006: 'Handling collections in an historic setting') be above my capabilities, would I enjoy it and would I really learn things to help me at work? We started off with the theory of what causes deterioration of objects in the first place and the different approaches to conservation. A brief introduction to the aims of the practical sessions and we were off, the course was very 'hands-on' – practice-based learning they called it – with talks from experts followed by practical experience in caring for a range of collection items. We started off being shown different types of cloths, brushes, gloves and vacuum cleaners. At this point we learned a valuable lesson – each person will have their own preferences and the important factor is the end result.

Having been split into two teams for the first stage we then swapped and found ourselves identifying types of materials and

the way they could deteriorate. We ended the day with explanations on how objects get damaged and methods which could be used to improve if not fully restore them.

Day two: this was to be full-on practical sessions with us all getting involved, tired and fairly dirty but with a good deal of fun and enjoyment thrown in as well. During the day we rotated in teams of six to handle furniture, textiles, pictures, carpets, books and metalwork – with carpets, heavy and dirty, being the most difficult. Within minutes we were off moving furniture, learning both the correct way of handling the furniture and the levels of trust and communication within the teams required if we were to get it right. The most important lesson learned was not to be afraid of saying if we weren't comfortable with either the weight of the object or the method being used.

My personal favourite was the section on books; all those years of looking at libraries in historic houses and now I finally managed to take one off the shelf! Not only that but I was shown the correct way of doing so, how to look after the book and how to clean it at the same time.

Day three was time to put it all into practice on our own. We divided into three teams and were each given a room to prepare a housekeeping schedule which would follow time and staff constraints as well as keep the room and objects in a good state. Our folders, full of all the theory behind our practical sessions were much used; we discussed all aspects and then reduced the scope of our ambition after the looks of

horror on staff faces at the amount we seemed to think they were capable of doing! The final presentations went well and we all felt we had earned our guided tour of the building to round off the three days.

I came away not only with a feeling of achievement but of confidence which I am now able to apply at work. All in all a great three days, well worth those nervous feelings at the beginning.

Clair Corbey, Front of House Warder, Historic Royal Palaces

As part of a small team caring for extremely diverse collections, I have often wished that I had more specialist knowledge of one class of object or another, but in practice it's more realistic to acknowledge that at best, one can only hope to end up as a well-informed 'generalist'. Over the past year I have attended two courses (Integrated Pest Management course, May 2005: 'Controlling hidden insect pests' and Conservation Housekeeping course, 24-26 January 2006: 'Handling collections in an historic setting') which have helped me to feel much more adequately informed and more able to prioritise and co-ordinate the myriad of tasks that we all know we should be doing, but which often slip behind.

During both courses, I found myself feverishly plotting my actions on my return to work, and prominent in both cases was the creation of a documentation system based on floor plans of the relevant buildings. In my case having attended two courses, it has been possible to incorporate both (pest management and housekeeping), so I now keep an eye on what should be happening where, and whether or not it has been done. I found that both courses prompted me to think about the buildings we care for in a different way – observing that certain pests may mean that there's a damp problem, or that most dust is deposited by the feet of visitors, or that the environment outside can be as important as what's happening inside.

It has been helpful to obtain a snapshot of the techniques and views which currently form best practice – it can be a bit of a shock to learn that you're no longer using what is deemed to be the best choice of furniture wax, and that it's not necessarily beneficial to use it as often as you think. Once you know, at least you can spend the time saved doing something more pressing. I have also made good use of techniques for checking whether cleaning is necessary, along with the tips for reducing the suction of a vacuum cleaner for use on fragile objects.

Both courses have been of great help in my recent preparations for projects with

volunteers in the store. Again, it is in the planning and organisation of tasks, not just in their execution – where the information learned has proved most useful. In particular, I have used detailed floor plans and careful documentation – which is essential for us as we work with different groups, and keeping track of exactly what has been done, where, and by whom is critical. I have been able to create guidelines for the cleaning of certain types of objects and materials, where previously I would have felt unable to do so without first seeking specialist advice. In particular, it's a relief to feel relatively confident that any instructions I give are in line with current conservation best practice.

Leonie Sedman, Assistant Curator (Heritage), Art & Heritage Collections, The University of Liverpool

Contact Ms Skye Dillon, Short Course Co-ordinator, for information about these UCL/EH courses. skye.dillon@ucl.ac.uk or 0207 679 5903

CONFERENCES

METALS IN PAPER THEMATIC NETWORK. 2ND IRON GALL INK MEETING

Newcastle upon Tyne 24–27 January 2006

Two participants in this conference give their different perspectives on the event

The University of Northumbria was the host for the final Iron Gall Ink Meeting of the EU funded Metals In Paper (MIP) thematic network. Set up in 2003 and comprising 21 members in Europe, the network has been collaborating on research into the degradation, preservation and conservation of objects affected by metal tannin ink corrosion.

The conference was opened by John Havermans of TNO who has been the coordinator of MIP and joint organiser of the conference – with Jean Brown, senior lecturer at the University of Northumbria Conservation of Fine Art course. John outlined some of the projects that have been made possible by EU funding for MIP. Details of these projects were given during the conference by Jana Kolar and Matija Strlič from the University Library of Slovenia and the University of Ljubljana. The Papyrus project has looked into developing an instrument to assess the mechanical and chemical degradation of paper in situ, based on chemiluminescence. This has great potential for surveying large collections and it was particularly interesting to see that the results showed the important role RH plays in the rate of paper degradation. The detailed results are due for publication imminently (<http://papyrus.uni-lj.si>). A further project: SurveNIR, due to finish in 2007, aims to produce a near-infrared spectroscopic instrument to use for condition assessment in collection surveys (<http://www.science4heritage.org/survenir/>). The InkCor project has focused on producing a prototype non-aqueous antioxidant treatment for corroding inks. Results will be published this year (<http://www.science4heritage.org/InkCor/>). Another project to be completed in 2007 is PaperTreat which aims to evaluate the advantages of mass deacidification treatments against stabilisation in cold storage conditions. (www.science4heritage.org/PaperTreat).

The treatment of iron gall ink with calcium phytate solution was developed in the early 1990s by Hans Neevel at ICN. This conference was an opportunity to see how this treatment was viewed by practising

conservators. The treatment has drawbacks for conservators of drawings – it is an aqueous treatment with the risk of colour changes in inks – but there were several lectures detailing treatments and research using phytate in archive conservation studios. A lecture from a group of scientists and conservators from The Netherlands assessed some of their less successful treatments using calcium phytate with the aim of optimising the treatment procedure. It was clear from this – and the results of other case studies during the conference – that the practical workshops run by Hans Neevel and Birgit Reissland over the last ten years have honed a strict treatment protocol which, if adhered to, ensures the best results for the treatment of archival documents.

A very balanced view of the future of iron gall ink conservation was given by Hans Neevel early in the conference. The change in research focus, from single object treatments using phytate to a move towards condition assessment of whole collections and environmental control, became more apparent as the conference progressed and is a positive step. Highlights which confirmed this included papers on analysing volatile compounds using GC/MS-SPME (gas chromatography/mass spectrometry-solid phase microextraction) from scientists at the University of Ljubljana; the role of macro and micro environments in archives and libraries from researchers in the Slovak Republic and details of the Sepia 70 Hyperspectral Imager for identifying inks and monitoring colour changes in paper, developed in The Netherlands (www.art-innovation.nl).

Of the lecturers who focused on media examination, one of the highlights was Birgit Reissland's discovery of the variety of blotting sand used on ink and its potential as a source for historical information. Another was the investigation into crystal formations on iron gall ink by Deborah La Camera from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

On the last day, delegates had the opportunity to take part in workshops that demonstrated how to obtain false colour infrared images with a digital camera and another that gave an overview of analytical techniques for inks on paper from Hans Neevel, including the use of the recently-developed test paper for copper (II) ions.

The conference offered a wealth of information around this single issue of iron gall ink corrosion with complementary research into paper degradation and media identification that has relevance outside the subject. It was encouraging to see both the value of collaboration between scientists and conservators (many papers had multiple

authors from different disciplines and institutions) and how much the research was aimed at practical application. This is testament to the success of the MIP network and hopefully further applications for funding will be successful, allowing research to continue.

Caroline Barry, Conservation,
Documentation & Science Department
British Museum



A common ink used for centuries in many countries, iron gall ink is made by combining gallo-tannic acid (usually derived from oak galls), ferrous sulphate and gum arabic. It may also contain other additives such as sugar or copper. Historic recipes often contained an excess of ferrous (II) sulphate, which accelerates the degradation of paper. Badly corroded documents can have holes 'burnt' through the paper where the ink has been applied and the paper itself can become brittle and fragile. The 'problem' of iron gall ink is particularly relevant to the care of both bound volumes and flat works in archives or galleries, where the treatment of these records are more likely than in libraries.

The conference itself was very full. Many of the speakers approached the topic from a conservation science perspective, looking into the physical and chemical causes of iron gall ink and substrate degradation as well as new analysis methods such as false colour infrared imaging and the use of non-bleeding copper test strips. Of particular interest were the presentations detailing the recent EU funded co-operative research. One such project, InkCor, focused on the development of non-aqueous antioxidant

treatments for iron gall ink – which would allow for local application, use with water sensitive inks and for the treatment of bound books. As part of the project, prototype polar (Andoxol) and non-polar (Lidoxam) solutions were developed based on halides and pseudo-halides or derivatives of piperidyl. Early results indicated a 10-fold improvement in life span over non-treated materials. An upcoming publication will detail the results of this project (Iron Gall Inks: On the Manufacture, Characterisation, Degradation and Stabilisation, edited by J. Kolar and M. Strlić, National and University Library: Slovenia, 2006).

Not many case studies were presented at the conference, although there were a few exceptions, including the conservation approach to letters by Hans Christian Andersen and the optimization of a phytate treatment procedure for 18th century American manuscripts in Philadelphia. It would have been useful to hear more presentations which applied the scientific research discussed at the conference and talked about current techniques being used by conservators at the bench.

There were occasions when technical terms were mis-translated into English, which made some of the presentations more difficult to understand. As well, a few presentations seemed to bear little relevance to the topic at hand, as they explored separate issues such as mass deacidification, micro-environments and the creation of European descriptive standards without mentioning iron gall ink. Some of these were interesting, but they seemed out of place without any connecting thread to the main theme of the conference.

Generally, the presentations sought to bring together the most current research into the problem of transitional metals in paper. This goal was achieved although the presentations tended to be geared more towards the conservation scientist. Overall, the research seemed to suggest that the best results, which include a delay in ink corrosion and the deposit of an alkaline reserve were achieved with a combined calcium phytate/calcium bicarbonate treatment. On the last half day of the conference, participants either went to a hands-on workshop in order to learn two methods of false colour infrared imaging and the use of non-bleeding strips/in-situ analysis or visited local tourist attractions.

Christine McNair, London Metropolitan Archives

in practice

MEDICAL VACUUM CUSHIONS ~ PROVIDING TOTAL SUPPORT FOR LARGE OBJECTS

by Julie Dawson, Senior Assistant Keeper (Conservation)
Department of Antiquities, Fitzwilliam Museum,
University of Cambridge

In October 2004 the Egyptian galleries of the Fitzwilliam Museum closed for complete refurbishment. They will re-open in late May this year. During disassembly of the galleries, the safe removal of a Roman Period red-shroud mummy from its display case presented a particular challenge. The wrapped body is covered by a painted shroud with a wooden panel portrait inserted into the wrappings over the face. For forty years the mummy had stood, leaning back against the wall of the case. In the new display the body will be supported in a lying position. There is considerable cracking of the paint on the shroud and splitting of the linen but, despite teetering with his full weight on his shoulders and toes for so long, comparison with photographs taken at excavation in 1903 do not reveal significant slumping or other alteration in the

external condition of the mummy. Even so, there was concern that placing this dense, but soft and internally complex package in a different orientation after so many years standing in the display case, might alter the internal stresses causing additional fracture of the structure and flaking of the paint. A method was sought to create an exact profile of the back of the mummy whilst still standing, so that full support would be offered as the body was removed from the case and laid down.

Small vacuum cushions (of the type sold by photographic suppliers) have sometimes been used by conservators to support objects undergoing treatment. 'Man-sized' versions of such cushions, capable of much finer conformity to a shape and able to hold a vacuum for much longer periods, are available from suppliers of medical equipment. They are used to immobilize patients during treatments such as radiotherapy. Made from a smooth, nylon-reinforced urethane skin, the cushions are partially filled with tiny polystyrene beads. At one corner is a valve to which a vacuum pump can be attached. An electric pump would normally be used with patients, but for slow evacuation around a fragile object a hand pump offers

Fig 1



Fig 2



Fig 3



The photos are reproduced with permission of the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum.



Fig 4



Fig 5

better control. As the air is pumped out the cushion can be gently manipulated to ensure that the contours of the object are given full support. In the case of the mummy, the cushion was first laid flat then semi-deflated so that it was rigid enough to be placed behind the upright body (Fig 1), but still soft enough to be moulded easily to its shape as further air was evacuated, without exerting pressure on the structure (Fig 2). Once the cushion was hard, the package of body and cushion was tipped backwards and laid down (Figs 3 and 4). The vacuum holds for several weeks and can easily be topped up with the hand pump, so in this instance the shaped cushion has been used to support the mummy temporarily in storage prior to conservation and during a trip to the local hospital to be CT scanned.

Cushions are made in a variety of geometric and 'body-part' shapes and sizes. In this project we have found innumerable uses for them in the protection and manipulation of objects during transport and conservation treatment. Illustrated here (Fig 5) is part of a friable, delaminating coffin lid made of low-fired pottery, that was held together by a mass of deteriorating old joins and was too fragile to be moved. After securing the front surface, a cushion was laid and shaped over the front and sides. Thus encased, the lid could be safely turned over without any disruption to the structure and orientation of the pieces, so that support work could be carried out from the back.

Vac-Lok™ cushions are made in the USA by Med-Tec and are available in the UK from Oncology Systems Ltd (www.osl.uk.com).

A STICKY PROBLEM RESOLVED ~ THE REMOVAL OF BLU-TACK AND OTHER PUTTY ADHESIVES FROM OBJECTS AT THE PETRIE MUSEUM OF EGYPTIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

by Steven Miller and Susanna Pancaldo, freelance Object Conservators specialising in archaeological materials

Introduction

We have just completed an exercise to remove all the Blu-Tack and other putty adhesives which had been adhered to objects on display at the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, University College London, many years ago. The project has been made possible by an ALM London Support Grant for Collections Care and was carried out part-time over a four-month period by two objects conservators (working on contract) and five student volunteers from the Institute of Archaeology's MA course in Principles of Conservation.

We were pleased to discover that, despite the age of the putty adhesives, they were readily soluble in petroleum solvents and could be easily removed from all of the objects to which they were adhered, although stains remained on some objects. These stains proved more difficult and time consuming to remove, but also yielded in the end.

Background

Blu-Tack is a light blue, synthetic adhesive putty, composed of hydrocarbon polymers, mineral oil, mineral fillers and pigment. This and other, unidentified, yellow and pink putty adhesives were applied to the surfaces of

Fig 1 Blu-Tack holding objects to mount



Copyright: Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, University College London



Fig 2 Object obscured by label



Fig 3 Removing adhesive with swab



Fig 5 Paper pulp in situ

archaeological objects at the Petrie Museum in the past, either to attach labels to objects, or to attach objects to glass mounts (Fig 1). It is unclear when the adhesives were applied to all of these objects, although in many cases it may have been during refurbishment of the museum's galleries in the late 1980s.

Labels attached to objects obscured proper viewing (Fig 2), and, more worryingly, the adhesive and labels caused damage over time to object surfaces. The mineral oil in Blu-Tack can stain porous materials, and the strength of the adhesive combined with the weight of the labels threatened to pull off surface material, particularly on low-fire Egyptian ceramics, many of which have fragile slip-painted layers and/or are already vulnerable due to soluble salt damage. In addition, the objects adhered to glass mounts with putty adhesives were in danger of falling off the mounts. All of the objects were particularly at risk during handling.

To address these concerns, a survey of displayed objects was undertaken in July 2005 to determine how many objects had putty adhesive attached, what materials the objects were made from, and what types of damages could be seen. The survey indicated that 351 objects were affected. In instances where the adhesive had come off, objects had suffered surface loss and staining. In the majority of cases, adhesives were still adhered to the objects like bubble gum and could not be simply removed mechanically without risking further damage.

The project

The scale of the problem revealed by the survey meant that funds would be needed to hire a conservator to undertake the project, as the Petrie Museum does not

have a staff conservator. The ALM grant enabled the Museum to hire two conservators to work part-time to remove the putty adhesives and treat the objects as necessary to stabilise their surfaces. Work began in early December 2005 and, with the assistance of the five conservation student volunteers, was completed in the equivalent of 35 full working days. Further objects with adhesive were discovered during the project, and in the end, 430 objects were treated: 217 ceramic, 89 glass/faience, 105 stone, 6 shell, 2 bone and 11 modern plaster.

Fortunately, all of the putty adhesives dissolved readily in either petroleum spirit or white spirit (Fig 3); the pink putty adhesive also dissolved readily in acetone. Card labels were first released from the adhesives using cotton wool swabs to wet the card surface with solvent. The lump of adhesive was then reduced in layers by first softening the surface with solvent and then removing the dissolved adhesive with a scalpel. This process was repeated until a thin layer of putty remained on the surface. This final layer was then removed with fresh solvent-saturated cotton swabs.

Objects attached to glass mounts were similarly removed by slicing through the adhesive with a scalpel and then removing remaining adhesive with solvent-saturated cotton swabs.

These methods proved effective and safe for removing the adhesives and labels from all object materials treated. However, after the removal, 94 ceramic and 7 stone objects had remaining stains. These fell into two categories: dark, saturated spots and light, bluish-white residues.

Dark stains

We suspected that the dark stains, which remained on 15



Fig 4 Dark stain



Fig 6 White stain

ceramic and 1 stone object, resulted from mineral oil in the adhesives, as these stains were generally found to conform to the points of contact of the adhesive with the surface of the object (Fig 4). Swabbing was ineffective in removing the stain, but we thought that if the petroleum solvents could be left in position long enough, they could dissolve the oil, and an absorbent material used to wick the oil away.

For the absorbent material, we tested cotton wool, paper pulp (made from 100% cotton blotting paper) and Laponite RD (a synthetic inorganic clay) on ceramic objects. In all cases, the surfaces of the object in the area of the stain were well wetted with solvent before the absorbent material was applied. Cotton wool and paper pulp were applied directly to the stains. Laponite was applied directly to a stain on two well-preserved ceramic surface, but otherwise placed over a barrier layer made of either non-woven polyester sheet, lens tissue, filter paper or Japanese tissue. This was to ensure that the Laponite could be easily removed from the ceramic objects' porous surfaces. The absorbent materials and barrier layers were saturated with solvent, applied to the stains, and then covered with polyethylene sheeting (clingfilm) to slow evaporation of the solvent (Fig 5). After about 5–7 hours, the polyethylene sheeting was loosened and the solvent-soaked absorbent left to evaporate overnight. White spirit was used for poulticing because it evaporated more slowly than petroleum spirit.

Treatment with Laponite over a barrier layer was ineffective in removing the stains. This was at least in part because as the gel dried, it contracted, pulling the barrier layer and gel away from the stained surface. Where Laponite was

applied directly to an object's surface, it did not fully remove the stain and was difficult to remove from the ceramic's pores.

We found, however, that both paper pulp and cotton were highly effective at removing the dark stains. Paper pulp was especially useful for keeping the solvent in contact with the stained surfaces for long periods of time, and the majority of the dark stains were treated with this material as absorbent.

White stains

White stains (Fig 6) remained on 79 ceramic and 6 stone objects after the adhesive was removed. As the stains looked very similar from one object to the next, we ruled out the possibility that the residues were soluble salts or other materials leached from the objects themselves. Attempts to remove the stains with solvents and absorbents, as for the dark stains, proved ineffective. In fact, in some cases, this seemed to make the stain more distinct, suggesting the residues were particulate remains from the putty adhesive (i.e. fillers and/or pigments). We decided to try to reduce the white stains mechanically. A soft brush generally reduced the stains, but we found that a "smoke sponge" (a vulcanised rubber cleaning product with minute traces of soap) removed the stains more effectively. Groomstick (a malleable, natural rubber cleaning product) was also used sparingly to remove the most stubborn stains. These methods proved to be safe and effective for removing or reducing all of the white stains found on stone and ceramic objects.

Conclusions

Happily, despite the age of the Blu-Tack and other putty adhesives found on objects in the Petrie Museum, the adhesives had remained readily soluble in petroleum solvents and were easily removed with solvent-saturated cotton wool swabs. Removal of the stains proved more difficult and time consuming, but was also accomplished in the end. Unfortunately, nothing could be done to replace the losses to object surfaces that had previously occurred when labels with adhesive putties had fallen off objects on their own, but the removal of all of the remaining putty adhesives has made sure that similar losses will not continue to occur. Our hope, in writing about this project, is that others will be discouraged from using putty adhesives on museum objects in the future, and encouraged to remove existing putty adhesives from any vulnerable objects.

COMPARING SOLOPHENYL DYES WITH CIBACRON DYES FOR USE IN THE PRODUCTION OF COLOUR-MATCHED SUPPORT FABRICS

By Graeme Smith, Lingfield Notre Dame School, Surrey, Sia Marshall, RCA/V&A Conservation and Kathryn Hallett, Conservation and Collections Care, Historic Royal Palaces

Introduction

At the Conservation and Collections Care (CCC) section of Historic Royal Palaces (HRP), conservators use synthetic dyes to produce colour-matched support fabrics. This allows future conservators to easily determine what is historic and what is conservation work (through a simple dye analysis). It is also easier to reproduce colours with synthetic dyes than with natural dyes. The dyes should have as many of the following properties as possible:

- Wash-fastness
- Light-fastness
- Safe to use with usual health and safety provisions
- Easy and accurate colour matching
- Unaffected by slight temperature changes
- Long shelf life and easy storage
- Unreactive once used
- Reproducibility of colour
- Even dyeing
- Quick and easy dyeing process
- Inexpensive

Two families of synthetic dyes produced by Ciba-Geigy for cellulosic fabrics, Solophenyl and Cibacron, were evaluated for use on linen support fabrics. While the team currently uses Solophenyl dyes, a switch to Cibacron dyes is being considered.

Why change dye?

The primary problem identified in the use of Solophenyl dyes is the relatively low wash-fastness. Solophenyl dyes are direct dyes that take effect by dye molecules fitting in the gaps between the flax fibres and bonding to the fibres through hydrogen bonds and polar bonds. While hydrogen bonds are strong intermolecular forces, they are still much weaker than the covalent bonds that reactive dyes (such as Cibacron) can form. Therefore Solophenyl-dyed fabrics have less water resistance, meaning that they could run onto the historic fabric in case of a flood or during wet-cleaning (Farnsworth, 1995; Von Lerber, 1996; Oger, 1996).

Properties to test

The fact that Cibacron is a reactive dye should make it more wash-fast than Solophenyl. Wash-fastness tests are performed on any dyed material at HRP before it can be safely attached to a historic textile. These can involve testing the fabric in both deionised and tap water, and in acid, alkali and detergent solutions. The light-fastness of the two dyes was also compared, as this is an important factor for any textile that is on display. If the dyed materials faded noticeably, the supporting layer would need to be replaced, increasing handling of the historic textile and work for the conservators.

This project focused on two yellow dyes, Solophenyl Yellow ARLE and Cibacron Yellow FN-2R.

Health and safety

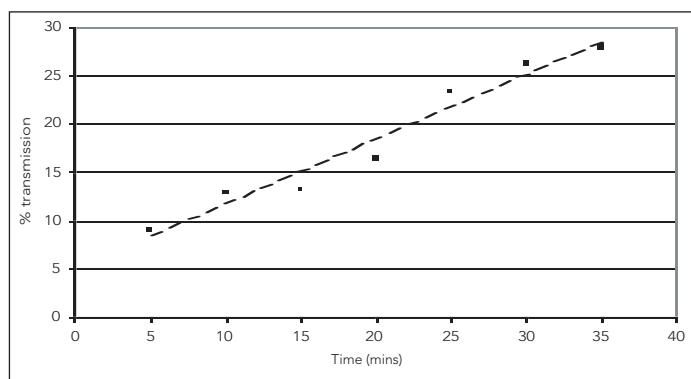
Dye solutions are made from powders which are potentially respiratory irritants. Cibacron dye solutions are also reported to produce small amounts of hydrogen fluorides; however references suggest that these should dissolve in the dye bath and therefore not be hazardous. Cibacron dyes can degrade at temperatures over 40°C in any state. It was also recommended that once opened, even the dye powder should be refrigerated, in addition to the stock solution. This is standard procedure at HRP, as is the use of proper respiratory protection.

Development of the dyeing procedure

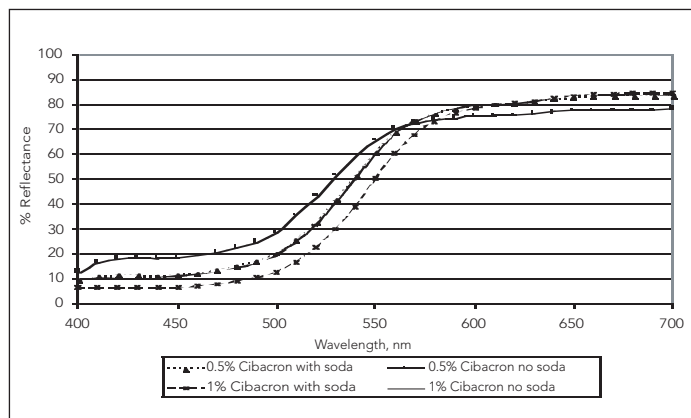
1% solutions of the two dyes were made up, then diluted to lower concentrations. The colour of each concentration was tested using a Unicam Helios γ spectrophotometer. By scanning the whole spectrum for the dyes it was possible to compare the transmission spectrum for different dilutions of the same dye. The results for the two different dyes could be compared and an appropriate wavelength selected for comparison. 420 nanometres was the chosen wavelength because there was a large gap between the different lines at this point on all spectra and the percentage error could therefore be minimised.

The change in transmission at 420nm of a dye bath solution extract could be monitored relative to the length of the dye cycle. Graph 1 shows the result for a 0.5% Solophenyl solution. The transmission of light at 420nm increases with time, indicating the decrease of dye concentration in the dye bath liquor as the dye is taken up by the fabric.

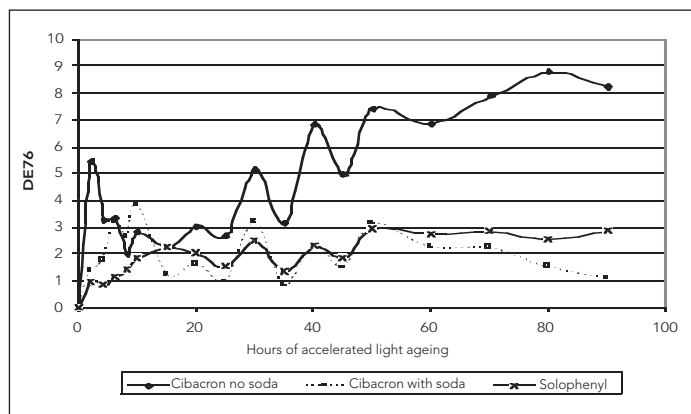
The colour of the fabric obtained from different dyes was compared using the % reflectance measured with a



Graph 1 Transmission at 420nm of 0.5% Solophenyl dye-bath extracts



Graph 2 The effect on the dyed fabric of adding sodium carbonate to Cibacron solutions



Graph 3 Light fastness tests results

Minolta CM-508i spectrophotometer. This technique determined scientifically how close the colour of a dyed fabric was to a 'target' and aided in the design of the Solophenyl dye recipe.

While the Solophenyl method has long been in use at HRP, Cibacron had not been used before. Therefore, the recipe was selected from a previous source (Von Lerber, 1995). In addition, the effect of one of the suggested additives, sodium carbonate (soda ash or soda), was also evaluated. This is used as a fixing agent to help the dye become more wash-fast.

To investigate the shelf-life of the dye solutions once prepared, two parallel dye cycles took place, one using a 6-day old dye solution and the other an identical, freshly made one. There was very little difference between the

resulting reflectance spectra of fabrics dyed with the two solutions.

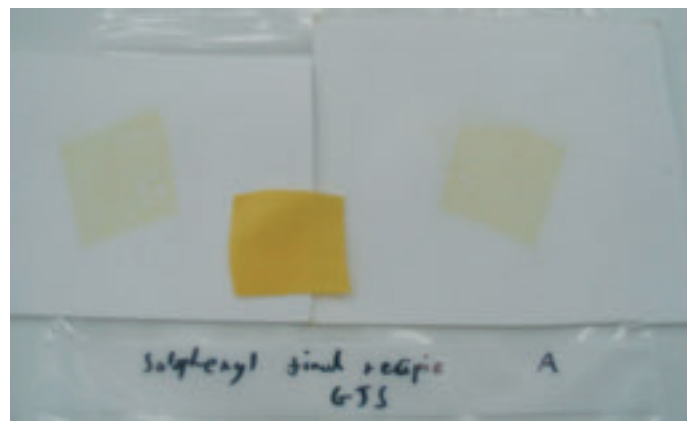
It was noted that the intensity of the samples dyed with Cibacron could be partly explained by the use of the sodium carbonate. When sodium carbonate was excluded from the dye recipe, the resulting fabric had a dull colour. To test this, half the fabric was extracted before the sodium carbonate was added. In two parallel Cibacron dye cycles, one of 1% and one of 0.5% concentration, it was found that the reflectance spectrum for the sample dyed with 1% Cibacron with no sodium carbonate was exactly the same as that for 0.5% Cibacron with sodium carbonate. The use of sodium carbonate in effect doubles the dye concentration result. However, the lack of a fixing agent should reduce the wash-fastness.

Wash-Fastness Tests

To test wash-fastness, tests were set up involving samples of 0.5% Solophenyl and 0.5% Cibacron, both with and without sodium carbonate. The dyed sample was sandwiched between blotting paper. Cotton wool soaked in deionised water was placed on top. The sample was then sealed inside a plastic bag, weighted and left overnight. The next day, the samples could be removed from the plastic bag and given another night to dry without the cotton wool. For dyes with low wash-fastness, the blotting paper would be stained with the colour that had leaked out. The more intense the staining was, the less wash-fast the dye.

Figure 1 shows a sample of Solophenyl-dyed fabric. There is obvious staining of the paper underneath the fabric, but almost no staining in other areas.

Fig 1



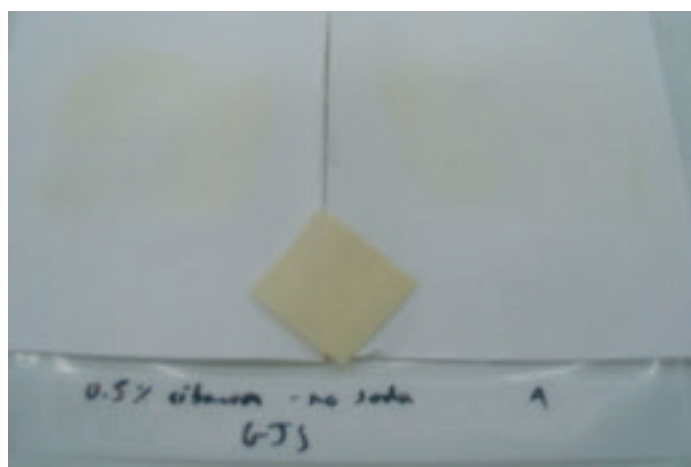


Fig 2

Figure 2 shows fabric dyed with Cibacron without sodium carbonate. Although the staining is less intense, it has spread out onto the blotting paper. Figure 3 shows a Cibacron-dyed sample where sodium carbonate has been added. There is almost no visible staining below or around the fabric.

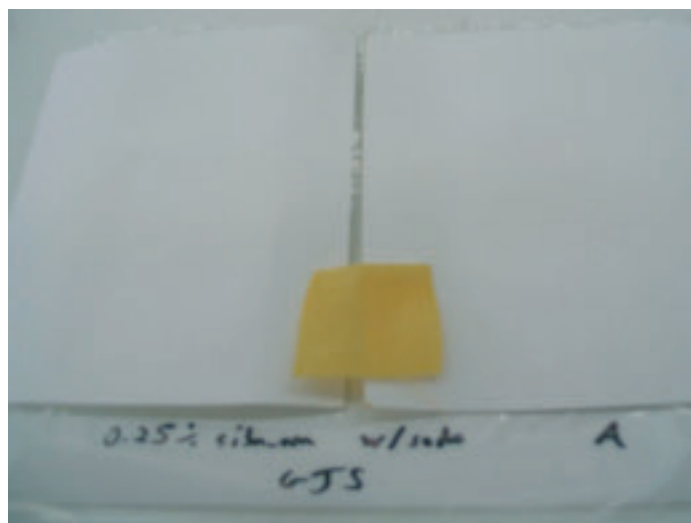
Light-fastness

To test light-fastness, a Xenotest 150S was used to artificially light-age samples of fabric. This works by shining a bright xenon arc lamp onto the fabrics as they rotate around it. The humidity inside the chamber can also be controlled.

Three different dyed samples were tested: 0.5% Solophenyl, 0.5% Cibacron without sodium carbonate and 0.5% Cibacron with sodium carbonate. Each test was replicated with another piece of fabric. Results were gained by taking an average colour measurement using the Minolta CM508i spectrophotometer, over three positions on the fabric. Templates were used to ensure the same place was always measured. Readings were taken over a variety of times and ΔE_{76} values were calculated from the CIE $L^*a^*b^*$ values.

Graph 3 shows that, while the Cibacron samples with no sodium carbonate have faded most, the Cibacron-dyed samples that have been treated with sodium carbonate outlasted the Solophenyl-dyed samples.

Fig 3



Conclusion

Based on the tests with the two yellow dyes, it can be concluded that Cibacron appears to show greater wash-fastness than Solophenyl when used with sodium carbonate. There is also no significant difference in safety procedures. Assuming recipes are correctly followed, there should be no difference in evenness and the single-colour dyes were easy to reproduce. More tests are needed on light fastness, as these tests were not conclusive. Replicability is another factor that could change with trichromy dyeing. Initial trichromy dyeing with Cibacron did produce 'dullish, historic-looking' colours. This was encouraging, given conservators' concerns that the bright dye colours could make colour-matching historic objects problematic.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Denise Balmer at Surrey SATRO, Stuart Broadfield at Ciba-Geigy and Patricia Ewer, Mika Takami, Chloe Hesketh, and Marie Curry at HRP for their invaluable advice and encouragement.

The main author of this experimental work was Graeme Smith, who was supported by the Nuffield Foundation for his work experience placement at Historic Royal Palaces. For the 2005 season Graeme's project was independently judged to be the best from across Surrey. Historic Royal Palaces is proud to participate in this annual bursary scheme for gifted A-Level pupils, with an aim of encouraging careers in the scientific and applied science professions. The Conservation and Collections Care team is proactive in providing opportunities for learning, discovery and training through established internships and work experience placements.

For further information contact Kathryn.hallett@hrp.org.uk

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Photo: Richard Pink



THE REINSTATEMENT OF THE SEPARATION OF NIGHT AND DAY BY GUIDO RENI IN THE LIBRARY AT KINGSTON LACY

by Christine Sitwell, Paintings Conservation Adviser, National Trust

Over the past year, the National Trust has undertaken a major conservation and reinstatement project. The large 17th century transferred fresco painting by Guido Reni of the Separation of Night and Day has been in storage since 1981 and in 1999 the Trust decided to undertake the necessary conservation treatment and agree on its reinstatement on the Library ceiling. It took over five years to raise the funds and decide on the presentation of the Library. Whilst the conservation treatment presented enormous challenges, its actual presentation proved to be just as problematic.

Although William John Bankes purchased the painting in 1840 for Kingston Lacy, there was scant evidence in the archives as to its intended location within the house. One reference indicated that it might have hung in the Dining Room and a subsequent note referred to its having been removed from storage in the attic by Walter Ralph Bankes in the late 19th century and hung on the Library ceiling. A 1904 Country Life photograph shows it on the Library ceiling. Sadly, the magnificent carved frame and the two toned painted decorative scheme visible in the black and

white photograph had disappeared.

After extensive discussions about the presentation, it was decided to recreate the 1904 scheme. The large frame and adjacent side frames with their hanging light bulbs were recreated using the 1904 photograph. The colour for the frame was based on paint samples from the cornice. The two toned scheme proved impossible to recreate as paint analysis revealed that only three schemes survived – the 1981 scheme introduced by the Trust, an earlier grey green scheme which was painted in 1960 when the room was redecorated and the painting conserved in situ and an earlier blue distemper scheme (only on a few samples). No evidence could be found for a two tone scheme. The blue distemper scheme was initially believed to be a scheme which predated the introduction of the painting but by chance a slide taken of the ceiling during the in situ conservation treatment in 1960 showed a painted clouded sky with a painted ochre banding around the frames. Whilst an interesting find, it could not be verified as the 1904 scheme as no trace of the ochre colour could be found. In addition, another black and white photograph dating from about 1950 failed to show the clouded ceiling but continued to show the two toned scheme. However, the Trust decided to use a light ochre and pale blue colour scheme (without the clouds) as it was felt that it might have been based on a pre-existing scheme, albeit one without the clouds. The colours also balanced the predominant colours of the painting.

The wall colour proved to be less challenging despite Walter Ralph Bankes' cryptic note that he wanted the colour to match the red of the French Zouaves uniform. Fortunately, paint analysis identified the red layer and the removal of subsequent layers of paint enabled spectrophotometric readings to be taken. Based on these readings, a red paint was prepared by Patrick Baty.

The final presentation of the Library may not be a true representation of the 1904 scheme but it does reflect the extensive research undertaken to provide both the archival and scientific information to provide an historical setting for the room and the painting. The objective was to respect the integrity of the conserved fresco whilst being sympathetic to its eventual appearance within the context of an historic country house and its furnishings.



The Balternos during a ceremony in the Kaha Wayi



Don Victor Gallardo, vice-president of the Balternos, in the Kaha Wayi after conservation

FOR USE AND STUDY: A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT TO CONSERVE PERUVIAN KHIPU

by Renata Peters, Lecturer in Conservation, Institute of Archaeology, UCL.

Throughout 2005 I co-ordinated the conservation work and consultation sessions of a multidisciplinary project carried out in San Cristobal de Rapaz in Peru. Rapaz is a highland Andean peasant community of approximately 900 members and home to one of only two known collections of khipu that are still in use and kept in their original location, a historic building called the Kaha Wayi.

Khipu are rare and sacred cultural objects made from cords of cotton and wool. Previously known to scholars primarily as archaeological examples, their function is not yet completely understood but they were apparently used for bureaucratic recording and communication in the Inca Empire. Traditionally, the khipu in Rapaz are cared for by the Balternos, local authorities in charge of communally-controlled fields. The Khipu in Rapaz have a significant role in the life of the community and are used in a range of sacred rituals through the year. The most important of them is the Raywan Entrego, a ceremony that takes place on the second night of January, when the Balternos bring offerings and invoke the mountains.

Concerned about the poor physical condition of their khipu, the community of Rapaz approved an agreement allowing scientific investigation of their collection by anthropologists and archaeologists in exchange for in situ conservation and re-housing. The collection of khipu has been previously studied only superficially, so this study represented a unique opportunity for scholars working to understand the Inca, colonial, and contemporary history of native Andeans. The khipu had been deteriorating for many years and the conservation issues encountered would be complex enough even if the khipu were not sacred objects that require a very especial protocol. These challenges were tackled by a team of professionals from several disciplines in close collaboration with the community, who as owners contributed to the understanding of the material and its use, and exercised full participation in the decision-making processes. The entire complex (consisting of the khipu, two buildings and

the surrounding area) underwent study and conservation work. The biggest challenge has been to devise a way to conserve these objects and buildings without disturbing their function in the community as tangible elements of self-knowledge and cultural continuity.

The details on how these collaborative processes happened and a discussion on the responses devised by the team will be presented at the AIC's 34th Annual Meeting June 16–19, 2006 in Providence, Rhode Island, USA. A paper is also being prepared for publication, so you will hear more details on this very exciting project soon.

Project participants:

Renata Peters – Head Conservator – Institute of Archaeology, University College London.

Rosa Choque Gonzáles and **Rosalía Choque Gonzáles** – Conservators – Centro Mallqui – Peru.

Frank Salomon – Ethnographic Director – University of Wisconsin – Madison, USA.

Víctor Falcón Huayta – Archaeological Director – National Museum of Archaeology, Anthropology, and History, Lima, Peru.

Carrie Brezine – Specialist on textile structures and computation – Harvard University, USA.

Gino de las Casas – Architect – Instituto Nacional de Cultura, Peru.

Sponsors:

Centro Mallqui; Comisión Fulbright del Perú; Comunidad Campesina de San Cristóbal de Rapaz

Fundación Telefónica del Peru; Instituto Nacional de Cultura, Peru; National Science Foundation, USA; Wenner-Gren Foundation, USA; Comisión Fulbright-Hayes del Peru.

Websites:

<http://www.khipurapaz.org/ingles.htm>

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/project/other-staff-projects/peters-khipus/index.htm>

To contact the author: m.peters@ucl.ac.uk

listings

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

Museums and Heritage Show

10–11 May, London.

Venue: Earls Court.

The Museums & Heritage Show is a long established favourite amongst industry professionals. Year after year the Show continues to go from strength to strength, attracting more and more key players within the industry each year. Further enhancing the show's presence are the Awards for Excellence, which look to reward people within the Museums & Heritage industry and highlight those who have made exceptional contributions.

ICON CARE OF COLLECTIONS GROUP

Dust Study Morning

15 May, London.

Venue: Hampton Court Palace.

A morning of talks and practical demonstrations which will look at the latest developments in dust monitoring equipment (both high and low tech).

This event follows on from the 'Dust to Dust' Seminar but would be of interest to people with all levels of knowledge. Cost: £15

Numbers are limited so to register your interest and book your place please contact Zoe Roberts at Conservation and Collection Care, Historic Royal Palaces, Hampton Court Palace, Apartment 59, East Molesey, Surrey. KT8 9AU or email zoe.roberts@hrp.org.uk

CAC 32nd Annual Conference and Workshop Workshop: Risk Management for Cultural Institutions and Collections

15–19 May, Toronto

See Icon News 1 for further details

The Getty Conservation Institute, The National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., and Tate Symposium – Modern Paints Uncovered

16–19 May, London

Venue: Tate Modern, Bankside, London.

Call for Papers and Posters.

Speakers are invited to submit proposals that address the conservation concerns and challenges of modern paint media.

See: www.icon.org.uk for more details

ICON METALS GROUP

Big Day Out – Cutty Art

17 May, London

The Big Day Out will be a visit to the tea clipper Cutty Sark which has been awarded a large HLF grant for the conservation of the ship, interpretation and the development of a sustainable heritage and commercial attraction. This will be a chance for a 'hard hat tour' of the ship and to view some of the trial works for the practical conservation of the ship.

The second half of the day will be taken up with a visit to the Canary Wharf Art Collection which includes fine art and outdoor bronzes some of which are part of water features in the complex. Lucy Branch will take the group through the problems apparent and solutions.

Lunch will not be provided but there are plenty of pubs, restaurants and cafes in the vicinity. Travel to Canary Wharf from the Cutty Sark will be via the Docklands Light Railway – a short and scenic trip (pay own fares).

A de-briefing session will take place after the visit to the Canary Wharf Art Collection – venue to be confirmed on the day.

Costs: £5 Metals Group members, £10 non-member of Metals Group

Contact George Monger, email:

georgemonger@cons.fsbusines.co.uk or Lucy Branch,

email: lucy@antiquebronze.co.uk

Independent Paper Conservators' Group Evening meeting – Tools

17 May, London

The meeting will be held at Sylvia Sumira's house in SW8. Members will describe their favourite tools and bring them along if size permits! Judith Gowland will also demonstrate the IPCG's Google Group web pages. 6pm – 9pm.

Contact Sylvia on 020 7735 6232 if you would like to attend.

For more information about the group please contact Laila Hackforth-Jones, tel: 020 8883 8809, or email: laila.hj@blueyonder.co.uk

ICON FURNITURE AND WOOD GROUP

Visit to Kew

19 May, London

Venue: Kew Palace, Kew Gardens.

A special visit to the newly restored and re-presented Royal Palace at Kew. Timings and details to be confirmed.

Contact Adrian Smith on email (preferred):

SMITH2040@aol.com <<mailto:SMITH2040@aol.com>> or tel: 01753 868286 ext 2705.

National Inventory Research Project Seminar: 'Researchers and Curators'

19 May, London

Venue: Birkbeck College, 43 Gordon Square.
Curators and project researchers will present examples of productive collaborations that have inspired new exhibitions and displays, conservation projects and re-evaluations of collections. The seminar will also include an introduction to the work of NIRP and its contexts, a demonstration of the project's database, and refreshments. Cost: free, 2–5 pm.
To reserve a place and for further details contact nirp@arthist.arts.gla.ac.uk.

ICON HISTORIC INTERIORS GROUP

Conference: 'Searching for hidden treasures': Interpreting the evidence of historic interiors

20 May, Cambridge

Venue: Corpus Christi College, Cambridge CB2 1RH
Fundamental to any successful conservation or re-presentation project is a full understanding of the significance of the subject to be treated. This conference will focus on the interpretation of evidence relating to historic interiors. Through case studies and discussion, papers will present the various archaeological, analytical and archival resources available to unravel the history and development of interiors. Techniques for the in situ assessment and recording of physical evidence, the recognition of important archive sources and the selection of relevant analytical research will be illustrated. Papers will also demonstrate how the information gathered from broad based research may be used as a basis for understanding current condition and how it may then be taken forward as an aid to conservation and accurate reconstruction programmes. Encouraging team-working and good communication between specialist disciplines is a key aim of the Historic Interiors Group. Therefore it is hoped that the conference will be of interest to a broad range of professionals actively involved with historic interiors.

For further details please contact Mette de Hamel, Events Organiser, email: mdehamel@btinternet.com or tel: 020 7622 1620.

Caring for God's Acre Cherishing Churchyards

23-24 May, Ludlow

Churchyards often contain a diversity of historic features such as churchyard crosses, lychgates and memorials as well as grassland plants and old trees. The conference will offer a series of interactive lectures covering aspects of churchyard interest such as flora and fauna, archaeology, family history, tourism, lifelong learning and churchyard management. Speakers include Dr David Bellamy.

There will be site visits to conservation churchyards in

South Shropshire and Herefordshire, a series of discussion workshops on issues around churchyard management and a chance for people to network and share experience. Cost: charitable and voluntary organisations £75, others £125

For further enquiries or to register, contact Caring for God's Acre, 6 West Street, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 8ES. tel: 01568 611154, email: info@cfga.fsnet.co.uk, see: www.icon.org.uk for more details

The National Archives Showcase Day

7 June, London

Venue: The National Archives, Kew, London
An afternoon of presentations to highlight recent developments in the work of the Collection Care Department, The National Archives.

M. Aleppo – Meeting the preservation challenges of a 21st century archive

A. Bülow – Preservation at The National Archives

K. Hirst – Collection conservation at The National Archives

A. Tuffnell – A much valued resource: supporting volunteers

J. Abbott – Case study: Board of Trade ceramics sample book, also Text and Textile – an unusual case study

N. Bell – Conservation research at The National Archives

K. Ntanos – Materials testing programme and Materials Database: a progress report

Places are also available for a tour of the reading rooms, repositories and the Collection Care Department, starting at 12.30. Please specify whether or not you wish to join the tour when you register. Cost: free, 1.30 – 5.00pm

Advance registration is essential for security reasons. To register, please contact Loretta Pamment, Collection Care Department, The National Archives, Kew, Surrey, TW9 4DU, tel: 020 8392 5218, or email:

loretta.pamment@nationalarchives.gov.uk

AHRC Research Centre for Textile Conservation and Textile Studies

3rd Annual Conference: Textiles and Text: Re-establishing the links between archival and object-based research

11-13 July, Winchester

Venue: The Winchester Campus of the University of Southampton.

Focus on the interrelationship between archival and bibliographic research and the study of extant objects. The full programme and other details will be posted on www.soton.ac.uk/~contex.

The cost is £100. To reserve a place on the conference please contact The Conference Secretariat, Textile Conservation Centre, University of Southampton, Park Avenue, Winchester, Hants SO23 8DL. email: contex@soton.ac.uk

ICON PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIALS GROUP**One Day Conference**

21 July, London

Venue: Icon Offices, 3rd Floor, Downstream Building, 1 London Bridge.

A day of papers on the conservation and preservation of photographic materials. The day will also include the introduction of the new committee.

Further details and booking information will be posted on the Icon website shortly and mailed to photographic materials group members separately.

ICON BOOK AND PAPER GROUP**IPC 5th International Conference**

26-29 July, Edinburgh

A celebration of 30 years of achievement in conservation with a programme that will include 36 illustrated talks from speakers in leading institutions and private practice worldwide. The conference is attracting a large international audience and booking is essential to guarantee a place.

Booking forms and full details on the conference, venue and recommended hotels can be found on the ICON website. All further enquiries to The Institute of Paper Conservation, Conference secretariat, PO Box 143, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 9AT. Tel: +44 (0) 1435 883659 or email: bpgconference@icon.org.uk

The Research Institute of Paper History and Carriage House Paper Expedition to China – A Papermaker's Tour of China

16 August – 2 September, China.

A special guided tour through the Guizhou and Yunnan Provinces of China, focusing on the traditional hand papermaking of those areas.

For further details visit www.icon.org.uk or contact Donna Koretsky, Research Institute of Paper, Carriage House Paper, 79 Guernsey Street, Brooklyn, NY 11222-3111, USA. Tel: 001 718 599-7857 or email: chpaper@aol.com

IIC international Congress**The Object in Context: Crossing Conservation Boundaries**

28 August – 1 September, Munich

See: www.icon.org.uk for more details

Northumbria University and AIC
Printed on Paper: The Techniques, History and Conservation of Printed Media

5-7 September, Newcastle upon Tyne

Venue: Sage Centre

Aiming to bring together a wide range of experience and expertise to expand the vocabulary on the broad subject

of printed ink on paper – imagery and text, historic and modern.

More detailed information can be found by following the links from the events listings at www.icon.org.uk

3rd Triennial Conservation Conference at Northumbria University The Alum Meeting

11-13 September, Newcastle upon Tyne

Venue: Northumbria University.

See issue 1

Contact Jean E. Brown Senior Lecturer Conservation, Burt Hall, Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8ST. Tel: 0191 227 3331, fax: 0191 227 3250, email: jean.brown@unn.ac.uk

European Heritage Association The Best in Heritage

21-23 September, Dubrovnik

Annual event dedicated to promoting every aspect of professional excellence in heritage professions "by power of example". At each annual conference a list of noteworthy cases from about twenty countries is presented to attending professionals. Visit the events listings at www.icon.org.uk for more information.

British Association of Paper Historians Annual Conference

27-29 September, France

Venue: Hotel Bretagne, Saint Omer.

Including visits to Maison du Papier, a paper museum, and Cascades Blendecques Mill, one of Europe's largest manufacturers of corrugated board and white liner.

Speakers will include:

Peter Bower – Real or Fake, the investigation of papers used for a series of cartoons after The Last Supper by Leonardo da Vinci.

Louis Michell Gohell – history and renovation of an old papermill in Normandy.

Nigel Vellam – stampers and hand papermaking in France.

Ian Hendry – papermaking in the 1950s.

Jos de Gelas – the history of Belgian stamps.

Other discussions, including conservation, will also be organised and the food promises to be rewarding.

For further details please contact Ian Hendry on tel: 01665 577988, or email: ifhendry@macunlimited.net

ICON TEXTILE GROUP**Study Trip to India**

November

There are a few places left for the trip to India.

For details, or to reserve a place, contact Janie Lightfoot, Textile Conservation Restoration Studio, 21 Park Parade, London NW10 4JG. Tel: 0208 963 1532, Fax: 0208 963 1623, email: janie@janielightfoot.co.uk

7th Indoor Air Quality 2006 Meeting (IAQ2006)

15–17 November, Germany

Venue: Fraunhofer Wilhelm-Klauditz-Institute (WKI), Braunschweig.

The conference is to set the state-of-the-art in the field of pollutants in museums and archives, especially research on pollutants, their sources and their effects both on collections and on human health. Other topics are interacting forms of indoor air pollution, deterioration mechanisms, the development of assessment methods, control strategies as well as national and international regulations.

Cost: Before 31 July – Euro 150, after 31 – Euro 200.

Call for Papers

Deadlines: Titles – 15 June. Abstracts – 31 July.

Visit the events listings at www.icon.org.uk for more information, or contact: Alexandra Schieweck, email: schieweck@wki.fhg.de

ICON CERAMICS AND GLASS GROUP

Spring Meeting: The Use and Manipulation of Materials

23-25 March 2007, Sussex

The aim of this meeting is to explore new techniques and materials in Ceramics and Glass Conservation and to widen the knowledge base within the profession.

Call for Papers:

We are seeking speakers from the museum sector, private practice, college students, graduates or conservation scientists who will give conservation lectures and also use the extensive facilities at West Dean College to set up practical demonstrations. We are especially interested in new ways of using existing materials and the experiences of conservators using experimental substances.

Please email roshodges@waitrose.com if you feel that you would be interested in participating at this meeting.

DATES AND DEADLINES

ICON CERAMICS AND GLASS GROUP

Nigel Williams Prize 2006

Deadline: 1 June

Applications are invited for this prestigious award for the best conservation/restoration of an object or of a project in ceramic, glass or a related material, which has to have been completed within four years prior to each award year. This is inclusive of research regarding materials/tools used in conservation. The scale of the project is not a deciding factor.

Students and individuals or collaborating conservator-restorers who are working in the public or independent sectors in the UK or abroad are eligible to apply.

Applicants must be paid up members of the Ceramics and Glass Group of Icon (in part formerly UKIC).

For an application form and the full description of conditions please contact either Ros Hodges, Chair of The Ceramics & Glass Group of Icon, or the current Nigel Williams Prize co-ordinator, Brett James, email brett.james@sarahpeek.co.uk or tel: 01273 243744

TRAINING

UCL and English Heritage Short Course Programme

3-5 May, Brodsworth Hall, Yorkshire – Integrated Pest Management
 30 August-1 September, Kenwood House, London – Light and Humidity
 27 September, UCL, London – You've Monitored the Environment, Now What?
 7-9 November, Walmer Castle, Kent – Surviving a Disaster
 23-25 January 2007, Audley End House, Essex – Conservation Housekeeping
 For further details tel: 020 7679 5903 or email: sustainableheritage@ucl.ac.uk

10% DISCOUNT TO ICON MEMBERS

West Dean College – Conservation Short Courses

May – July

9-12 May: The Conservation of Hinterglasmalerei (PC5607). Cost: £315
 20-23 June: The Conservation of Wax Objects (PC5608). Cost: £315
 18-21 July: The Conservation of Plastics (PC5609). Cost: £315
 For further information, please contact Liz Campbell at West Dean College, Tel: 01243 818219 or e-mail: bcm@westdean.org.uk

PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION FOR CONSERVATOR-RESTORERS (PACR) EVENTS

Introduction to CPD

May

16 May – Conference Room, Icon office, London
 Half day event. To provide participants with a basic understanding of CPD and practical help with personal development plans. Cost: Free
 For information on any of these events please contact Susan Bradshaw, PACR Training Officer on email: susan.bradshaw@pacr.org.uk or tel/fax 01626 824510. To reserve a place please complete the PACR event form available on www.pacr.org.uk or contact Diane Copley on tel. 0207 785 3805

Florence Art Gilding and Decorative Painting Courses

Classes are held in a restoration studio in the old artisan district in the centre of Florence, Italy, or at the Villa of

Maiano overlooking Florence.

Spring 2006

6-13 May: Six day Intro gilding plus intro decorative painting combination course at the Villa of Maiano, €1490 (full days including accommodation)

15-19 May: Five Day intro gilding, €550 (am in Florence)

15-19 May: Five day advanced gilding with real gold leaf, €650 (pm in Florence)

Autumn 2006

23-29 September: Six day Intro gilding plus intro decorative painting combination course at the Villa of Maiano, €1490 (full days including accommodation)

For more information see www.florenceart.net/courses or tel: +390 557 879 097 See: www.icon.org.uk for more details

Montefiascone Project

Summer School Programme 2006

Montefiascone is a medieval walled city situated on a huge lake, about half way between Rome and Siena. Each summer, conservators, librarians, archivists, art historians and others interested in the history and the structure of the book, meet to participate in classes, which are held within the city walls. There are four week-long courses with different themes:

31 July-4 August: Re-creating the medieval Palette.

7-11 August: Medieval Limp Vellum Book Structures: A North European Style.

14-17 August: Archival and Account Book Bindings: History, structure, materials and decoration.

21-25 August: Syriac Bookbinding.

Cost: £345 per week. Tuition is in English.

For further information please contact Cheryl Porter at: cheryl@caporter.co.uk or 7 Venice Lodge, 55 Maida Vale, London W9 1SD, England.

IADA

Conservation of Transparent Paper

28-29 September, Berlin

Places are available for 6 participants to attend a seminar presented by Hildegard Homburger. (German language version to be held 21-21 September). Cost: 270,00 EUR, 230,00 EUR for members of IADA.

Contact: Hildegard Homburger, Krefelder Str.17, 10555 Berlin, Germany. Tel/Fax: +49-30-3912503, email: hombu@freenet.de

intervention

As others see us

Cathy Proudlove, Collections Care Consultant and Conservation Manager for Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service

Heroes and villains

The last few years have seen conservation hit the media in many forms, to the point where it could challenge home and garden makeovers as the must-have theme for early evening viewing. We may not much care for titles like Restored to Glory, but all these programmes, even Demolition, have something to teach us and to say on our behalf. So far the focus has been on buildings, but the recent Tales from the Palaces has come close to a fair representation of the work of people who care for collections.

Concurrently, the conservation profession is attempting to establish itself in a world in which the very concept of professionalism generates suspicion in many quarters. We must avoid creating a cosy and exclusive middle-class club, dedicated to maintaining high incomes (yes, I know that's a joke) and a fiercely enforced pecking order, hiding behind a smokescreen of impenetrable jargon. Ask yourself, is that how you see lawyers, medics, media presenters? How about architects, exhibition designers, engineers? How do they see us?

Daggers drawn?

We already know quite a bit about how we are seen within the cultural and heritage world, thanks to Mark Jones (Icon News 2). We may not recognise ourselves here, and may feel that Mark showed an insensitivity to colleagues as meaningful as what he actually said. We should still listen, because justified or not, views like these are not uncommon in our world. Before we start taking it all too personally, let's ask ourselves what do we think about the curators, archivists, marketing specialists, art historians, transport companies, exhibition organisers, managers and directors that we work with every day? It's probably mutual. And they don't form a solid phalanx dedicated to frog-marching us back to our basement benches. Far from it, they are all jockeying with one another for power, money and professional status and the wobbliness that status is the harder they have to work to defend it.

Dog eats dog?

Things get even more uncomfortable when we start on each other. Joyce Townsend has already berated us for sloppy so-called research (Icon News 3) but there are other grounds for mutual suspicion. How does the public sector see the private sector and vice versa? Do museum conservators spend their time trashing the nation's treasures or are they too scared to do anything except refuse loan requests, (unless courier jaunts are appealing), and look forward to an inflated pension at an early age? Does everybody in the private sector have to compromise to keep the dealers happy? Are paintings conservators actually restorers who tart things up with no regard for

ethics? Do transport collections do likewise? These ideas may never be expressed but are there in the backs of minds.

The most potentially contentious area is that of training and standards. We all like to think that we deliver quality and value for money, but there are still those who feel that some among us are not quite up to the mark, maybe because they did not do the right course, or any course at all. Meanwhile, out there are thousands of people who find our work fascinating and are longing to get involved.

PACR and the Conservation Register have gone a long way both to regularise our profession and make it inclusive. We are off to a flying start, and I fervently hope that what feels to me like honeymoon euphoria does not dissipate into factional infighting.

Dogs in the manger

Mark Jones reminds us of our image as the 'object police', the access-blockers, which we have tried so hard to refute in recent years. Colleagues may in fact prefer to keep us in that role so they can shrug their shoulders and say 'sorry folks, Conservation would never allow that object to be handled, go on loan or whatever'. Then we can be labelled the villains of the access scenario, while in fact both parties are deeply motivated to protect the object in question. It's all part of the game, but we should seek solidarity with those who still care about collections.

Sometimes resentment seems to be driven by envy, because we can get close to wonderful objects, see them properly and play with them, but it seems we won't allow others to do the same. Again, there may be some truth in this and, while it may also be the case that our colleagues are reluctant to acknowledge that conservation work holds the key to access at many levels, some soul-searching may be in order.

Conservation work does not have the direct links to life, death and liberty that give power to other professions. To lose some of the things society cherishes, or their true meaning, would be genuinely tragic for humanity. But we should be humble enough to acknowledge that most conservation work does not entail a threat of this nature. What conservation knowledge and activity can provide is a fast track to intellectual access for many people who will never challenge our role as decision makers and quality controllers.

Now that our work is officially fascinating, glamorous and sexy (Neil MacGregor reported in Icon News 2) our profession will have many more opportunities to take advantage of burgeoning public interest for the benefit of the heritage. So let's lighten up, call a truce with our colleagues and make the word inclusive really mean something.



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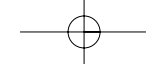
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