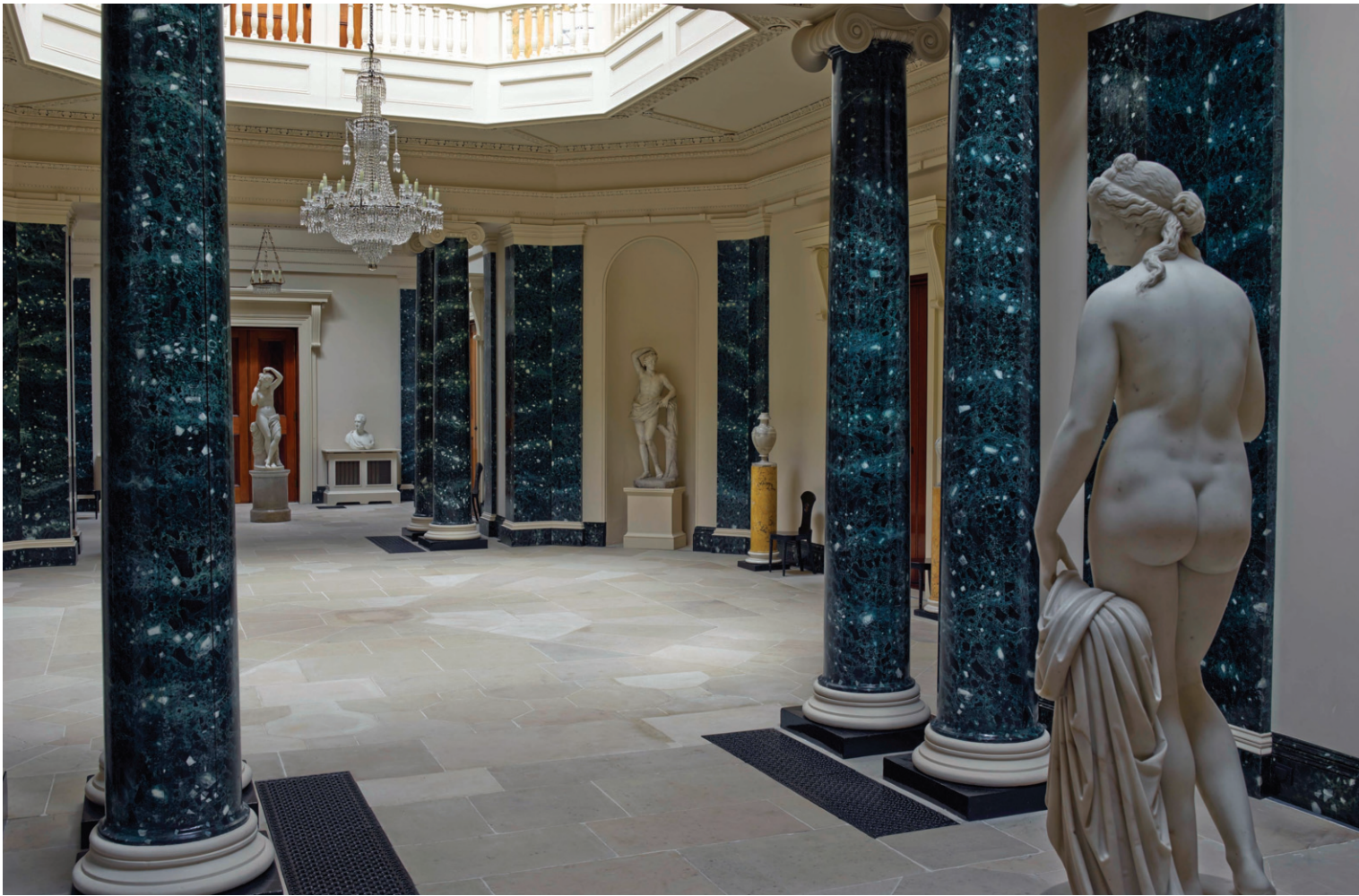


# Icon NEWS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION • FEBRUARY 2018 • ISSUE 74



## A hall restored to former glory

### **Also in this issue**

A railway treasure • Icon's AGM • Interns swap roles



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**FEBRUARY 2018** Issue 74



## From the Editor

### A Happy New Year to all our readers!

I would like to claim editorial clairvoyance for running our cover feature about Mount Stewart just after the announcement of Belfast as the venue for our next Icon conference: Icon19. But alas, it is wholly serendipity. Nevertheless, it is surely an indication of some treats to come when we visit Northern Ireland next year and perhaps Mount Stewart itself, in all its elegance, will be on the menu of visits.

As a sucker for things railway I love the In Practice article about the dynamometer car and it has provided great publicity for conservation, too. The same was obviously true of the Open House day organised last autumn by The National Archives' Collection Care department; their visitors just didn't want to leave!

I also love the idea implemented by our two interns in this issue's Emerging Conservator: to exchange roles for a day. Working in very different disciplines, they get a taste of each other's practice and learn some useful lessons along the way. 'Walking in each other's shoes', as they describe it, is a simple idea that others could easily imitate.

**Lynette Gill**



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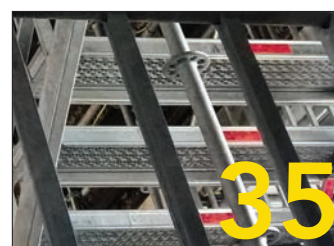
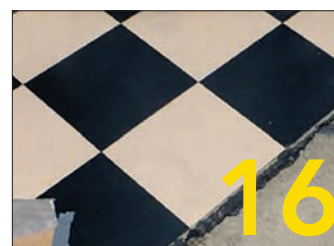
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ISSN 1749-8988

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Cover photo  
The Central Hall at National Trust's  
Mount Stewart in Northern Ireland,  
following a major four-year  
restoration project.  
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### Deadlines for adverts and editorial

For the April 2018 issue  
Friday 2 February 2018

For the June 2018 issue  
Monday 2 April 2018

Icon is registered as a Charity in  
England and Wales (Number  
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# professional update

## From the Chief Executive

**Alison Richmond ACR FIIC comments on issues and events crossing her desk recently**



The latest Plenderleith Lecture was given by Helen Shenton ACR who presented her perspectives on our profession and our field after having held a series of leadership positions in the wider heritage sector. Helen took us on a whirlwind tour of her brilliant career, while sharing her passions and her observations along the way. I use the word 'passion' sparingly and in this case it is deserved. Helen is enthusiastic about the power of heritage in the 21st

century and, importantly for us, the power of conservation.

She spoke about our strengths: we are adaptive. We take ideas and innovations from elsewhere and adopt them in our practice. We are collaborative and able to navigate the blurring of spaces (public/private) and of institutions (archives/libraries/museums/universities). The access agenda speaks to our professional duty and, with public expectations exponentially increasing through digital access, we have new opportunities to flourish. In a paradigm in which content is king we have a wealth of content to draw upon. In the digital age, the experiential is becoming more and more important and we are enablers of those experiences. In a post-truth, post-expert world the authentic has a unique authority. But, she warned, the values of conservation cannot be taken as self-evident. We need to articulate them continuously, linking to the buzz-words and values of the day: Wellbeing, Soft Power, Cultural Diplomacy, Place-Making, and so on....

What came across loud and clear to me were the attributes that make a leader and could be summarised in her advice: don't hold back, be ambitious, look outward, upward and around you, don't be daunted, look to the past but also firmly to the future, don't be afraid of ambiguity or of changing your attitude to risk! And speaking of leadership, Icon has partnered with Transforming Performance to create a twelve-month online Leadership Launchpad™ Mastermind Programme that you can access from your own office or home.<sup>1</sup>

I had another chance to promote Icon to our counterparts in China. This time it was at the UK-China People to People Dialogue held at The British Council on 7 December. The Cultural Heritage Roundtable was chaired by Sue Owen CB, Permanent Secretary of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with heads of four heritage bodies on the UK side: Royal Museums Greenwich, Historic England, The Prince's School of Traditional Arts, and Icon. The other three organisations were there to sign agreements with Chinese

institutions: National Centre of Underwater Cultural Heritage, Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage, and the Institute of Fashion Technology and Dunhuang Culture Promotion Centre respectively. The reason I was invited was because conservation is a key priority area in the five-year plan of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH). In the four minutes allocated, I proposed two areas for collaboration – development of professional standards and training the next generation – and offered to share our experiences of the first as well as strategies to tackle the barriers to the second in our respective countries.

Icon members will be aware of the current review underway of the Masters Degree Course in Conservation at Camberwell College of Art, University of the Arts (UAL) London. Since we posted the message to members in October informing them of the University's decision, I have been active behind the scenes, in close communication with the Course Leader, liaising with members of the Book & Paper Group Committee, and writing a joint letter with the Heads of Conservation and Scientific Research Departments of the National Museums, Libraries and Archives to the Head of Colleges at UAL, David Crow. One outcome of that letter has been an invitation to us to meet Professor Crow in the New Year.

It is always enjoyable to debate the thorny subject of conservation versus restoration and I was delighted to have the opportunity to speak at the inaugural conference of The 1805 Club. The 1805 Club was founded in 1990 to care for the memorials of the Georgian era's naval heroes. The purpose of the conference was to bring conservators in different disciplines together to discuss the varying approaches to and interpretations of conservation, restoration and preservation, 'often influenced by the medium involved – stone, wood, paper, metal, textiles, paintings, interiors etc., and also by other factors, not least fashion'. I was commissioned to speak about the representation of conservation and restoration in the media. While recognising that 'restoration' had had more or less continuous bad press since the controversies of the 19th century, I recommended that conservators stop worrying about the 'conservation good/restoration bad' debate and instead explain that restoration is part of the spectrum of conservation, ranging from doing nothing at all to full replacement of parts. We need that word.

We also need to understand how the media works and this is partly about how we represent ourselves and partly about what the media picks up about us. The trick is to provide a hook that is appealing to the journalist (and hopefully the public) but that conveys the messages that we want to get across. Icon has taken action on this and has developed bespoke media training for conservators with the highly regarded Rough House Media. So, if you are interested – and you should be – in learning to deal with journalists this is a not-to-be-missed opportunity!<sup>2</sup>

We need to write our own stories and expand the narrative beyond the usual cleaning controversies, sensational discoveries increasing the monetary value, 'painstaking' work and the invisible, anonymous conservator. Conservation is a

powerful force in society. Let's talk more about engagement and make meaningful links to people's everyday lives. Let's expand the definition of heritage beyond old master paintings and old buildings, to include things that people have in their own homes. Let's talk about the conservator's role in providing evidence of authenticity that relates to wider societal values of identity and inclusion. It is a challenge but one that we shouldn't shy away from.

1. <https://icon.org.uk/events/leadership-launchpadtm>

2. <https://icon.org.uk/events/icon-professional-development-media-training-smart-video-skills>

## ICON'S 2017 AGM

Icon's 13th Annual General Meeting offered a warm welcome on a cold November night to a core of members who assembled to undertake the formal business of being a charity, listen to a fascinating talk and catch up with friends and colleagues.

### Elections to the Board

Among the formal business items was the result of the elections to the Board of Trustees. In fact, there were no elections as such, since only four candidates stood for the five vacancies for the unreserved seats on the Board. So Sarah Cove, Lucie Mascord, Megan de Silva and Jenny Williamson were declared elected. Lucie Mascord was welcomed as a newcomer to the Board with the other three re-elected for a second term.

Business Manager Simon Green noted the contrast with the previous year when ten candidates stood for five vacancies and the election was close fought. Set against this year's net loss of trustees, the lesson was clearly 'if at first you don't succeed...'

### The 2016/17 year

The full Annual Report of the Board of Trustees can be found on the Icon website in the Icon Documents section under the About Us heading. At the meeting Chief Executive Alison Richmond gave a presentation which summarised developments and issues for the year to March 2017 and where appropriate brought the story up to date. Underpinning the activities and direction of the year were the findings of the membership survey conducted in 2015 which had fed in to the work on developing Icon's five-year Strategy 2017–2021.

Alison commented that professional development is at the heart of our organisation and cited a wide range of evidence in support of this, including the launch of the Network Model and the immensely energetic schedule of Group activities, along with the development of mid-career CPD bursaries; the growth in size and frequency of the Journal, the continuing role for Icon internships and Icon's participation in the development of the Trailblazer Apprenticeships to expand routes in to the profession.

Advocacy had emerged as an important priority for many members in the 2015 survey and the year saw Icon

responding to many more consultation exercises, not least thanks to the help of Group and Network Chairs. However, demand outstripped capacity to engage with policy but thanks to funding from The Clothworkers' Foundation a newly filled two-year Policy Advisor post would strengthen Icon's ability to become an effective advocacy organisation. Alison's British Council funded cultural exchange tour of China, the website and active social media channels and promotion of the Conservation Register were other examples of advocacy at work.

Having thanked staff and members of the Board for all their hard work over the year, Alison concluded her report with an estimate that Icon had benefited last year from 6000 hours worth of volunteer time from its members, worth £260,000 to the organisation. 'I salute you', she said.

### The 2016/17 finances

Iain Boyd, Chair of the Finance Committee, told the meeting that it had been a good year of stable finances. The aim was always to start every year with a budget surplus no matter how small and next year's budget continued this trend. However, he noted that Icon was very good at attracting project funding but the organisation also needed money for other initiatives and activities, so several strands of work were underway aimed at developing income-generating initiatives.

### View from the Chair

Chair of the Board of Trustees, Siobhan Stevenson, concluded the formal meeting with a look ahead at future developments, underpinned by the tri-partite themes of the new Strategy of advocacy, excellence and engagement. She was particularly excited by the choice of Belfast as the venue for the next main Icon conference in 2019 and the event would provide an excellent opportunity to pursue engagement and advocacy. Other work strands are aimed at diversifying the profession and reaching a wider audience, whilst consultations are getting underway ahead of a review in 2019 to promote, strengthen and defend the accreditation standard.

'Icon is a small organisation but it is also very complex' she said, whilst noting that its devolved and diverse structure is also a strength. Concluding with thanks to staff, fellow and departing trustees and, of course, the many members who contribute to Icon's activities, she was looking forward to the year ahead with all its challenges and exciting new initiatives.

### Talk from the field

Important and interesting as the formal business of the evening was, a highlight of the evening was undoubtedly the talk given by Sophie Chessum about the 2015 fire and its aftermath at Clandon Park in Surrey. A curator with the National Trust, Sophie was appointed to the post of Salvage Lead after the fire. Conservators are used to notions of decline and decay – it is our *raison d'être* after all – but the wholesale and terrifyingly swift destruction that comes with a major fire is breathtaking, as the images Sophie showed us proved. An undetectable fault with a modern piece of wiring had caused a shocking loss of material culture.

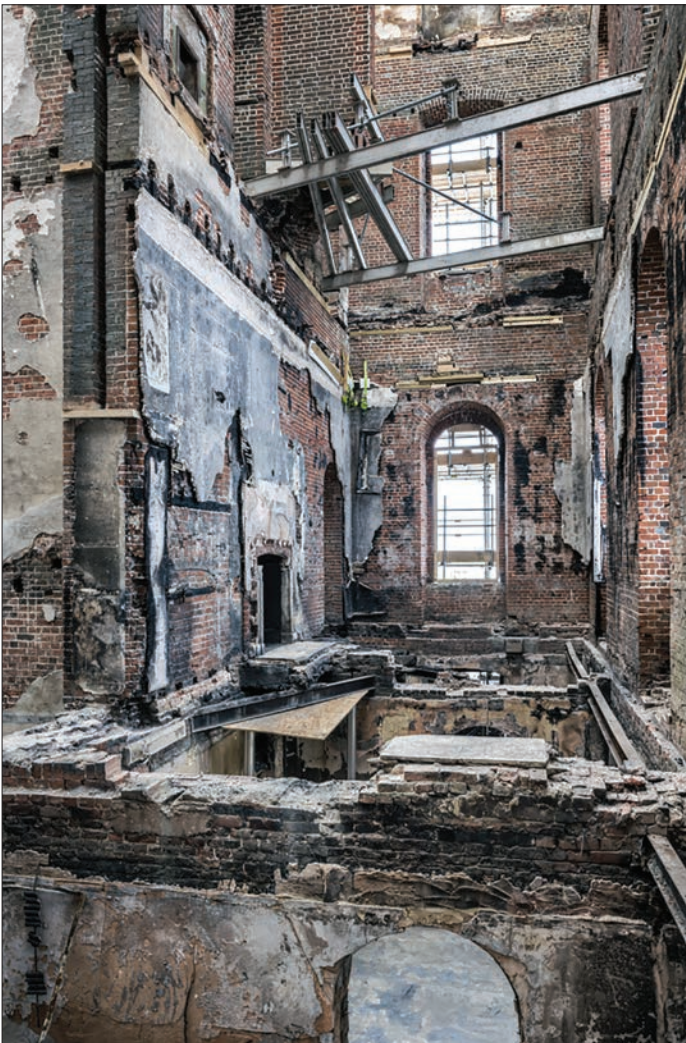




State Bedroom at Clandon Park pre-fire

As the talk developed we also discovered that the work of recovery and renewal proceeds on a grand scale too: the scaffolding alone, thirty one miles of a self-supporting structure, cost £1 million. Sophie commented that she could not offer advice on how to respond to such a catastrophe as every circumstance would be different, with different opinions on the direction to take. 'It was good to plan', she said 'but [quoting a 19thC German military strategist] no battle plan survives contact with the enemy'. Shock, fear, anger and helplessness gave way to a grim determination to do what

Looking up through the fire-damaged building at Clandon Park



Fire-damaged State Bedroom at Clandon Park

had to be done. It was an added dimension that this was the first such disaster for the National Trust since the advent of social media.

A small team of relevant experts was quickly pulled together and principles in play from the beginning were to be open and listening, to keep all options open and to do no further damage. Early work was directed at making the site safe, taking out high-level dangers and getting a roof on. Progress was cautious: the site was contaminated with heavy metals from the lead roof and archaeologists were used for a meticulous search through the ruins and anything that looked like something was kept. Under the Conservation Management Plan, customised from the earlier Uppark fire experience, salvage was divided into three categories of 'keep', 'dispose' and 'not sure'. Bizarrely a few items survived almost intact, other objects were turned by the fire into something different but the furniture was mostly lost.

Not rushing into decisions allowed guiding principles for the long-term future of the house to be drawn up, including a determination to keep it open to visitors and for its future to respond to, but not be constrained by, its pre-fire history. Eight options for that future ranged from leaving it as a ruin to full restoration. A Conservation Plan was commissioned, resulting in a thousand page document of thoughtful analysis covering all aspects of the place. An international design competition was launched in March 2017 to find a multidisciplinary design team for the work of restoring and re-imagining Clandon.

### Postscript

Sophie's story ended at this point but just a week later the result of the competition was announced. The jury unanimously chose Allies and Morrison, an architecture and urban planning practice based in London and Cambridge, to help the National Trust bring Clandon Park back to life.

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/clandon-park](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/clandon-park) for lots more information and pictures about the whole story from April 2015 to date.

## THE ACR CONFERENCE

The first of more to come! The first one-day conference for Icon's accredited members was considered an overall success by the full house of attendees on 3 November 2017. As one attendee reported: '[the] presentations complemented each other and were relevant'. Kindly hosted by the Cathedral and



## Personal Workplace Resilience



Sue Isherwood and Steve Wood

Leading Learning  
PROGRAMME

From a session on resilience at the first ever ACR Conference

Church Buildings Division, the day was designed to address Icon's strategic objectives under the heading *Excellence i) Inspiring quality through support for skills, development, education, and training and ii) Encouraging information exchange and the sharing of knowledge.*

The conference programme featured sessions on leadership and management and included speakers from Icon's membership. Hannah Clare gave an insightful and frank talk on her leadership skills following her experience of the Clore Fellowship programme. Jacqueline Moon ACR reflected on her work in photographic conservation at The National Archives and how the research that she undertook was something of a culture shock but gave her more confidence in her approach on how to do things and inspired her to look outside the box. A full account of her session is featured in the December 2017 PD news.

Feedback included: 'I found Hannah Clare's talk inspirational and brutally honest, Jo O'Sullivan's fundraising was interesting and the Personal Resilience training not as scary as I feared and quite revealing' and 'I was unsure whether to attend or not as I am a sole archives conservator in a joint-service county Record Office with one elderly part time volunteer as staff. I am glad I made the effort' and the 'talk on leadership and workshop on resilience relevant and informative and really USEFUL skills to take away and trial'.

External trainers, Jo O'Sullivan, an Associate Trainer for the Institute of Fundraising, looked at why fundraising matters, and its value. Did you know how many adults have engaged in cultural activity and who donates to heritage? Aunt Sally is a keen donor!

Sue Isherwood and Steve Wood from the Leading Learning Programme provided an interactive session on personal resilience which was found to be '...very illuminating and possibly something that could be expanded in the future'. In small groups discussion took place around what personal resilience looks like, and why it is required to function in all situations, how to generate a sphere of influence, looking to the future rather than dwelling on the past – being in the moment to focus on the present and realise what you can do!

However, the event did not fulfill everyone's expectations, as one delegate noted 'I expected to find more encouragement for Accreditation. I would have expected discussions on ACR status, expectations and a possible Register of ACRs (not the Conservation Register)'. Yet another noted that 'the practical

afternoon session was very good. It would be useful to follow up with a practical day on grant writing, funding bids etc.'

Of course, the conference for next year is yet to be planned. So we would welcome suggestions for any relevant sessions and/or speakers that might be deemed useful for accredited members of Icon, particularly having regard to the cross-sector nature of the profession. Please email them to [sbradshaw@icon.org.uk](mailto:sbradshaw@icon.org.uk) and watch this space for new events in 2018!

## GOOD NEWS FOR CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Two pieces of welcome news have come along to provide some counterweight to the worrying news about book and paper conservation education imperilled at Camberwell.

First, **West Dean College** has announced major plans for an increase in student intake and portfolio development, with new building and renovation including student workshops, library, archive and exhibition space. West Dean unveiled its plans at the beginning of November, announcing a Ten-Year Vision for growth based on increased entry points and study pathways for students. This is accompanied by a £25 million investment in campus development and outreach.

As an indicator of the changes afoot, West Dean is also changing its name from West Dean College to West Dean College of Arts and Conservation.

The second source of good news comes from **Glasgow University**, which is offering a one-year MSc in 'Modern Material Artefacts' starting in September 2018. The new programme has its origins in a Scoping Study commissioned by the Textile Conservation Foundation (TCF) and undertaken by Fiona Macalister ACR, who sought opinion and evidence as to the need for such a programme and its possible structure.

Icon Chief Executive Alison Richmond with Alex Barron, West Dean Chief Executive, at the announcement of the college's Ten Year Vision





At the Plenderleith Lecture

The new programme will be led by heritage scientist and Senior Lecturer Dr Anita Quye and it should get off to a flying start thanks to a successful application by the TCF to The Clothworkers' Foundation to establish an inaugural bursary fund for the programme.

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/postgraduate/taught/modernmaterialartefacts/>

## CONSERVATION +

### 2017 Plenderleith Memorial Lecture Edinburgh, 30 November 2017

The idea for asking Helen Shenton to give a Plenderleith Memorial Lecture came from the interview with her in *Icon News 67*, which came out in November 2016. This interview was the first of a series conducted by Alison Richmond featuring 'role models in conservation', with the aims of '[exploring] the barriers they faced and how they overcame them'. Helen's ideas enthused many conservators, including those who make up the committee of the Icon Scotland Group, and we decided to see if Helen would be prepared to expand some of her themes into a lecture format. We were delighted when she accepted, and after a bit of discussion we agreed upon the title of *Conservation+ personal reflections on a journey from conservator to director*.

Helen began her lecture with a quick look at the various stages of her career and observations about each stage. Highlights she drew attention to included working as an assistant to the conservator who rebound the Book of Kells; participating in the creation of the British Library's high density, fully robotic, low oxygen storage facility at Boston Spa; leading the project for the virtual reunification of the Codex Sinaiticus; attending the Executive Education Programme at Harvard; bringing together the seventy three libraries at Harvard into a consolidated new body; and – neatly coming full circle – being responsible for the care of the Book of Kells at Trinity

College Dublin. She noted that she has observed far more similarities than dissimilarities in the places she has worked, particularly in the advent of the digital age.

Helen went on to explore some key, heritage sector themes. Regarding the ways in which heritage organisations are changing, she suggested that big museums now operate with both a centripetal and centrifugal model, with the centrifugal model resulting in ventures such as the Louvre Abu Dhabi and the V&A Museum Dundee. She noted that commercial income generation and fundraising have become core activities, and that collaborations such as the UK Research Reserve and the shared storage facility at Blythe House in London are commonplace. The demand for access is ever-growing, driven in part by exponentially increasing expectations, and the digital revolution provides new opportunities for offering access, and for enhancing the visitor experience using virtual or augmented reality.

Despite her evident enthusiasm for the digital world, Helen reminded us that the physical objects and buildings in our care are now more of a draw than ever, giving people a unique and highly valued experience. Physical objects are associated with authenticity, as shown in the way archives have been used in major enquiries. And cultural objects and places can also be instrumental as advocacy tools, which Helen referred to as 'soft power'.

Helen provided some interesting thoughts on management and leadership. She noted that good management 'lubricates the machine' but is often invisible, and that administrators should not be seen as the enemy. She praised the leadership programme run by the British Library, which teaches that successful leaders need to combine strategic thinking with the ability to get on and get things done. She also suggested that conservators should be going 'broader and deeper', looking beyond conservation to see the broader picture and continuing to adapt and adopt technology from other fields.

The lecture was very well received and was followed by



animated discussions, both in the question and answer session and at the ensuing drinks reception. The Icon Scotland Group is extremely grateful to Helen for sharing her inspiration and energy, making for a really memorable Plenderleith lecture.

*Isobel Griffin*, Collections Care Manager  
National Library of Scotland

## GRANTS FOR CHURCH REPAIR

**Churches Conservation Foundation** is delighted to announce that its new small grants programme is now open for applications. Grants of £250–£2,000 are available for conservation work to the fabric and contents of historic listed churches, which would not normally be undertaken in the regular cycle of repair and maintenance. Examples include work to listed headstones and monuments, wall paintings, rood screens, fonts, carved stonework, stained glass and altar cloths.

Applications will be considered at the Trustees' meetings, which are 7 February 2018, 19 June 2018 and 16 October 2018. For more information and to download an application form see the Churches Conservation Foundation website [www.churchesconservation.org](http://www.churchesconservation.org). For enquiries email: [foundation@theccf.org.uk](mailto:foundation@theccf.org.uk)

The **Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings** (SPAB) John Betjeman Award 2018 celebrates excellence in conservation and repair projects at places of worship of any faith in England and Wales (and including the Isle of Man), and recognises the highest standards of craftsmanship used in carrying out those projects.

The Award is made for repair or conservation of fabric, fittings or furnishings carried out in the last eighteen months at an historic church, chapel or other faith building which remains in use for worship. However, cathedrals of any denomination are not eligible. It is not essential that the building is listed as being of architectural or historic interest – its age or architectural significance is less important than the quality of the repair.

Information and entry forms can also be downloaded from the SPAB website, where you can also find the SPAB Principles document (in English and Welsh) and read more about the 2017 winning project. The closing date for entries is 20 February 2018.

## GOODBYE TO THE STANDARD CONTRACT

### Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Well, trust a lawyer to recommend abolishing standardized contract templates! Who benefits? Lawyers commissioned to draft and check non-standard contracts.....

All of the UK's most senior professions in the highly litigious architecture, engineering and construction (AEC) industry either compose their own standard contract suites or jointly develop them through the Joint Contracts Tribunal

## ENVIRONMENTAL MONITOR and LOGGER



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[www.jctltd.co.uk](http://www.jctltd.co.uk). The standardized contracts remain templates, to be reviewed, adapted and completed by those employing the contracts, and after checking them with the risk management divisions of their indemnity insurance carriers. They are supported by extensive guidance notes, CPD web seminars etc., and underpin the authority of the professions involved in their development and upkeep – adapted in some instances by case law.

A 'check list' is wholly inadequate. For Icon to bottle out of an underpinning aspect of the role of professional institutions is a sad state of affairs – particularly as much of its private sector membership is based upon singletons and small business ventures that can ill-afford legal fees at the best of times.

I personally have never used an Icon standard contract, having deemed it mostly irrelevant to my line of business. But I imagine many conservators in the UK private sector will feel aggrieved at its loss.

As an architect and building surveyor, I rely on the RIBA, AIA and RICS to support my international practice with requisite standard templates. They do not absolve me from due diligence in developing tailored-made contracts for clients' consideration. But I can rely on them to be updated for new legislative traps and to fairly define and balance my services to clients' needs.

There are enough models of contract templates and guidance in the AEC industry for Icon to reconsider the problem surely?

Yours sincerely,  
John A. Fidler  
John Fidler Preservation Technology Inc

## Icon's response

Dear John Fidler

Thank you for your letter and taking the time to provide some perspective on alternative approaches. It is useful to have your views on the use of standard contracts and those developed through the Joint Contracts Tribunal.

As I am sure you are aware, the examples provided are those of the larger professional bodies and Icon is keenly aware that there are many facilities that can be offered by larger bodies that cannot be provided in a small and by its nature diverse sector. Icon is a very small professional body and does not have the resources to keep templates up-to-date with new legislation and case law. In order to do so effectively we believe it is the experts, the legal advisors, who are qualified to do this.

It is interesting to note that '[the] standardized contracts remain templates, to be reviewed, adapted and completed by those employing the contracts, and after checking them with the risk management divisions of their indemnity insurance carriers.' Unfortunately we have not found this always to have been the case with our membership.

We have recently handled a number of formal complaints, brought by clients against members of Icon, which have arisen around contracts. Either there has been no written contract at all or the conservator has used the Icon standard contract verbatim, without adapting it to their own requirements. Furthermore, in one case, the complainant was under the misapprehension that the contract was with Icon.

We believe that the best way to encourage our members to engage with contracts is to ensure they are provided with guidance and information which supports them but makes it clear that it is the member's responsibility to draft their own. We have therefore provided an excellent questionnaire-tool to obtain the most effective contract for use with their clients.

You go on to say that '[the templates] are supported by extensive guidance notes, CPD web seminars etc., and underpin the authority of the professions involved in their development and upkeep – adapted in some instances by case law.' We are already developing guidance notes and planning training for our members to accompany the new questionnaire and it is our intention to support our members through the process of securing advice.

The Trustees have taken a considered decision to protect the soundness of its members' trading relationships. We wish to avoid future issues associated with not adequately customising a standard template and instead feel that this is an excellent tool to cost-effectively instruct a lawyer on a one-off basis to draft a template which is properly suited to their particular circumstances. In this way we hope to serve the best interests of our members.

We will be reviewing this initiative in a year's time to assess whether it has been effective in its aim of engaging more conservators with their contracts.

Yours sincerely,

Alison Richmond, Chief Executive

## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

### Book & Paper Group

#### Chairs' Update

Happy New Year! Hope you all had a fantastic time over the Christmas break! A big shout out to the Committee and Subcommittee for all the fantastic work they have done over the past year. We look forward to continuing this great work in the new year and to welcoming the new members of our team. As you may have noticed, the Committee has grown and we now have sixteen voluntary Committee members and six Subcommittee members. We all hope to see you at this year's AGM in March, adverts for which will be sent out in February. You will no doubt hear more about it via our various social media accounts:

- Facebook: @ICONBookPaper.
- Twitter: @ICONBook\_Paper
- Instagram: @iconbookandpaper

Applications for our inaugural Frederick Bearman Research Grant, which launched last month, will close on the 9 February, so please get your applications in if you haven't already done so. More information available here: <https://icon.org.uk/groups/book-paper/fred-bearman-research-grant>

The Committee would also like to take this opportunity to address the hiatus of the MA Conservation course at Camberwell. We are working closely with Alison Richmond to see what we can do to help keep the course afloat. Please contact us at [iconbpg@gmail.com](mailto:iconbpg@gmail.com) if you would like to be involved in any way.

**Michelle Stoddart and Liz Ralph**

Co-Chairs, Book & Paper Group

#### Events & Training Update

Here at the Events & Training Subcommittee we have been looking back at all the events offered in 2017 as well as all the exciting things coming up on the horizon of 2018!

Last year we coordinated nine practical workshops and talks including magnetic box making, gold finishing and photoshop skills for conservators. We are grateful to all the Subcommittee members who volunteer their free time and without whom these events would not have been possible. In this issue of *Icon News* Nikki Tomkins has written a review of our recent seminar and workshop 'Under the Skin: Studies in Parchment', which explored the analysis and conservation of historic parchment.

Preparations continue for our second Icon Book & Paper Group Conference: *Unexpected fame: Conservation approaches to the preparatory object* (1–3 October 2018, Oxford). We are delighted that the Clare Hampson Fund and Tru Vue are both generously supporting the conference, so we hope to keep ticket prices down in order to make it as affordable as possible for our members. Save the date in your diary if you haven't already done so! Bookings will open shortly so please keep an eye on your inbox for further details



## CALL FOR PAPERS

### Sustainability in Collections Care

The Icon Care of Collections Group committee is inviting submissions for presentations on the theme of sustainability in collections care for the 2018 CCG Annual General Meeting – date and venue to be confirmed. With increasing pressures on budgets and a desire within the sector to become more sustainable, heritage institutions have to re-evaluate their practices and standards in relation to collections care activities. Twenty minute presentations (fifteen minute talks with five minute question sessions) on projects, policy reviews and case studies are welcome, and cross-disciplinary examples are encouraged.

Abstracts of up to 250 words should be submitted to Julie Phippard [j.phippard@britishmuseum.org](mailto:j.phippard@britishmuseum.org) by Wednesday 28 Feb 2018.

or check our Group pages on the Icon website. Contact [iconbpg@gmail.com](mailto:iconbpg@gmail.com) with 'Conference' in the subject title if you have any queries.

With that in mind, we are looking to recruit two new members to the Events & Training Subcommittee to help with coordinating events throughout the year as well as helping with preparations for the conference itself. Ideally we are looking for people with an interest in event coordination who are keen to contribute to an exciting programme of events. If this sounds like you then please email [iconbpg@gmail.com](mailto:iconbpg@gmail.com) with the subject line 'E&T Subcommittee Member' with a few lines about yourself. As usual, we are keen to incorporate members from all geographical areas.

**Fiona McLees** and **Holly Smith**

Co-Chairs, Events & Training Sub-Committee

### Care of Collections Group

2017 was a busy and exciting year for the Care of Collections Group. With events hosted in Oxford, Leeds and London, we have been travelling around the UK and engaging with a wide range of collection care topics. In May the Bodleian Libraries, Ashmolean Museum, Pitt Rivers Museum and Oxford University Museum of Natural History collaborated to bring us a fascinating day on collection moves and collections storage – an event that sold out in record time!

In July the Royal Armouries Museum shared their experience of managing firearms and other tricky collections, and in August similar specialist knowledge was shared on a rather different topic at the Museum of London, where Matthew Read from West Dean College presented a workshop on the care of clocks. November brought us a Risk Management for Conservation Workshop organised by the British Library and led by Conservation Scientist, Dr. Paul Garside, and Conservator, Karen Bradford.

Thanks to these events, as a Group we have spent the year talking about hollowed-out buildings, quarantine rooms, cold stores, sustainable environmental control, collection decants, sharp, pointy and poisonous things, man-traps, asbestos, swift colonies, roller racking, handling, packing and moving dynamic objects, risk assessments, Raspberry Pi, 3D printing,

and bolt shooters...to name but a few! We will be producing summaries of key information from our 2017 events soon, and these will feature on the Care of Collections Group page of the Icon website.

2018 is already shaping up to be another great year for the Group. As well as our AGM and conference in May, due to popular demand there will be a re-run of the British Library's Risk Assessment Workshop. Tickets will be released first to those on the waiting list from the November 2017 event.

Other events will include a Presentation Skills workshop, Working With Volunteers training, Condition Assessment and Survey Skills, and a Preventive Conservator Accreditation workshop. Continue to look out for Iconnects and tweets for date and venue announcements.

Thank you to those who have completed our event feedback surveys and put suggestions forward for events. Please do continue to let us know your training needs, e-mail suggestions through to [emilywatts2@hotmail.com](mailto:emilywatts2@hotmail.com) or tweet us at @CCG\_ICON

### Ceramics and Glass Group

After a short break following the Oxford conference, the CGG committee met in November to discuss plans for 2018 events. We have a few leads on course leaders for a gilding on ceramics and glass workshop and hope to have more details about the cost and location in the next issue of Icon News. We also started planning this year's AGM which will be held in November in Farnham, Surrey and will be combined with a visit to the Craft Study Centre. The committee happily welcomed Emily Thomas, a second year conservation student, who has been co-opted to help support events until the next election at the AGM.

### Committee Members

The committee is currently recruiting new members to support our events planning and publications. Committee members meet four times a year and have an influential role in the direction of the Group. At the moment we are looking to co-opt a second events coordinator and someone interested in publications; both roles are to be formally elected at the next AGM. The co-opted events coordinators will help in the planning of our 2019 conference as well as supporting delivery of the 2018 events currently underway. The publications role supports the Group by updating the Group pages on the Icon website, maintains the Group's social media pages and liaises with Icon's office to produce advertising such as Iconnects.

If you hold an Accredited, Associate, Graduate or Student membership as primary or secondary member of the CGG, then you're eligible for these roles. If you are interested in becoming a member of the committee, or would like to join us at the next meeting to find out more, please contact the Group chair, Dana Norris ACR: [danaenorris@yahoo.com](mailto:danaenorris@yahoo.com)

## Heritage Science Group

On October 17, committee member Eleanor Schofield hosted the Heritage Science Group Committee meeting at The Mary Rose Museum in Portsmouth. Top of the agenda was establishing how to take forward the results of the HSG's membership survey. We extend our thanks again to all those who participated in the survey as the results have given valuable information that has helped us to better understand the needs of our members, other Icon members, and the wider heritage sector. Our new Social Media Officer, Paula Moore, also led a discussion around the HSG's Social Media Strategy which will be released in 2018.

Indeed, since starting in September, Paula has made significant improvements in our social media presence. Our twitter account has been consistently climbing in numbers of followers, profile visits, mentions and reach because of scheduling original content, re-tweeting existing content, and sharing relevant news from Icon and all of the Groups. Social media is an important platform in the achievement of our mission to inform, involve, and inspire engagement with heritage science and we encourage mutual support between all Groups to drive amplification and exposure across all our collective work. To support our work, we are also increasingly building our digital understanding and competencies, and this recently included attending the Wikipedia #openaccess session. This further supports our mission and emphasis on widening participation through a free access education resource.

In November, Matija Strlic (HSG Chair) contributed, on behalf of the Group, to the production of a formal document supporting the Heritage Alliance's proposal to the UK Government for heritage science to be established as an independent strand of the heritage industry sector within the UK Government's Industrial Strategy. This is strategically important as the industrial strategy will define the extent of public funding that is made available to industry sectors, and heritage science has a lot to gain from a sector deal.

On November 24, the Committee organised the first (of two) round-table discussions on ethical sampling in heritage science. Led by Anita Quye and Matija Strlic at the University of Glasgow, the seventeen participants brainstormed the challenges of ethically justifiable sampling and how to define a guideline for both institutions and individuals wishing to make a case for sampling of objects, buildings or sites. The workshop participants were provided the draft report on the ethical sampling questionnaire, which received 116 responses, many of them from Icon members, for which the Heritage Science Group is truly grateful. The report has been made available on the Group webpages.

Finally, keep an eye out for our notices in Iconnect, on our webpages, and on Twitter (@ICONSci) and get in touch via our new Group email address (hsg@icon.org.uk) if you would like to become more involved in the Group's activities. At the time of print, the next HSG meeting will be held on Wednesday 18 April 2018.

**Helen Wilson**

HSG Communications Officer

## Metals Group

The Group would like to thank all speakers and delegates who joined us at our conference and AGM '*Conservation of Composite Objects: Compounded challenges & diverse treatments*' at Tate Britain on 9 November. The day-long conference covered topics that demonstrated the complexity and diversity of challenges working with composite objects: from decision making and identification of materials to new treatment techniques and liaising with stakeholders, stimulating many interesting discussions. Our next conference will take place on 15 June 2018 in conjunction with National Heritage Ironwork Group's event BathIRON 2018. More information about this event and call for papers will be announced closer to date. For updates, follow the Metals Group on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn @IconMetals.

## Photographic Materials Group

On Friday 17 November, the Icon Photographic Materials Group held their first Round Table discussion event at the Dana Research Centre at the Science Museum. Attendee Vivian Yip's summary of this event can be found in the Review section of this issue.

Following the Round Table, our new Chair, Jacqueline Moon ACR, hosted the Icon Photographic Materials Group AGM. Jacqueline summarised the Group's activities over the last couple of years which included: a number of historical processes events run both independently and in partnership with the Icon Book & Paper Group; the Group's contribution to the 2016 Icon Conference 'Turn and Face the Change' in Birmingham; the award of two bursaries to Icon Conference attendees, and the setting up of the Icon Photographic Materials Group Blog to share ideas, exchange knowledge and communicate without the need to travel (<https://iconphmgblog.wordpress.com/>)

Jacqueline expressed thanks to outgoing committee members, Sarah Allen, Zoe Kennington, Elspeth Jordan, Rosalind Bos, Caroline Dempsey and Anthea Henton. Thanks were also extended to Louisa Coles who stepped down as Chair earlier this year but continues to serve on committee as Group Reporter, Lorraine Finch, Social Media Editor, and our long-serving Treasurer, Dominic Wall.

Moving onto the formal adoption of new committee members, Jacqueline presented her proposals for her tenure as Chair. She outlined her aim to 'promote professional practice and provide advice and guidance on photographic materials to photograph conservators and custodians throughout the U.K.'; to improve on the Group's communication through the Icon PhMG blog, the Icon blog, Icon News and social media channels; and to deliver a programme of regular events.

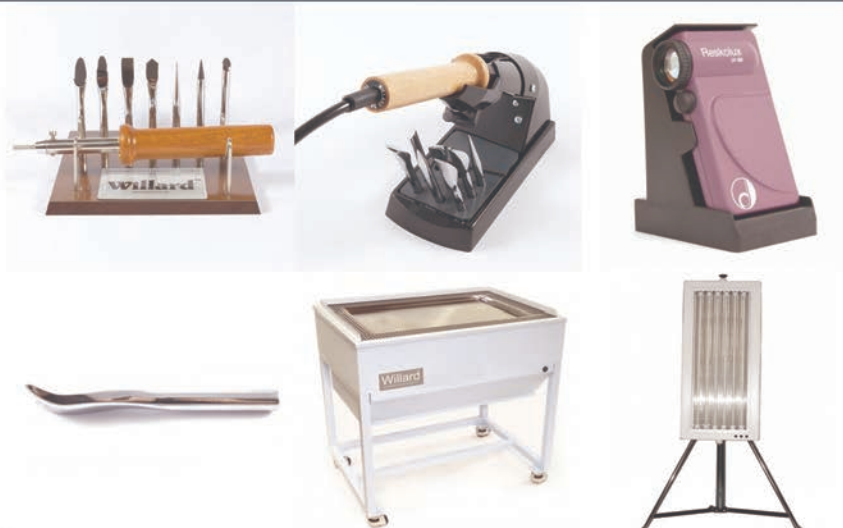
Expressions of interest for the new committee members had been provided and they in turn were formally adopted onto the committee. We welcome Stephanie Jamieson, Boyce Keay, Marta Garcia Celma, Vanessa Torres, Ioannis Vasallos and Jacqueline Moon into their new roles. Details are listed on our website: <https://icon.org.uk/groups/photographic-materials/>.



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Next, Marta Garcia Celma, our new Event Coordinator, presented her proposals for events planning over the coming year, and Stephanie Jamieson, Communications Officer, presented the Group's new communications strategy.

The business of the AGM concluded, Jacqueline handed over to Michael Nelles who provided an update to the attendees on the current priorities and activities of Icon. Attendees of the AGM and the Round Table event were then invited to explore the enlightening Science Museum exhibition 'Illuminating India: Photography 1857–2017'.

On Friday 16 February 2018 the Icon PhMG will host an event for twenty participants on the conservation of modern and contemporary photographic materials. This will take place at The National Archives in Kew, and will include lectures, a workshop, and a display of 20th century colour photographs. Further details can be found on our Eventbrite page: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/a-workshop-on-modern-and-contemporary-photographic-materials-tickets-40916820311>

### Icon Scotland Group

The 20th Annual Harold Plenderleith Memorial Lecture took place on 30 November at the National Galleries of Scotland, with Helen Shenton, the Librarian and College Archivist at Trinity College Dublin, speaking about 'Conservation+, personal reflections on a journey from conservator to director'. Her lecture was inspiring and thought-provoking, and is reviewed more extensively elsewhere in this Icon News. Preceding the lecture was the Icon Scotland Group's AGM, at which we were delighted to hear from Alison Richmond, and

following the lecture there was a drinks reception.

We are currently working on our events programme for 2018, and it is looking like the first event of the year will be a repeat of the popular 'Risk Assessment for Collection Care' workshop, previously run in London by Paul Garside from the British Library. This will be held in Edinburgh in March, with the date to be confirmed at the time of writing.

We have reviewed our committee structure, and we have identified a need for a Communications Officer, who would assist with writing our Iconnect bulletins, responding to consultations and maintaining our presence on social media. A job description for the role will be circulated shortly, and anyone who is interested should contact our chair Rob Thomson by emailing [scotland@icon.org.uk](mailto:scotland@icon.org.uk)

And finally, we submitted a response to the consultation for Scotland's Cultural Strategy, explaining the role that conservation plays in culture.

### Contact and keep in touch

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

## Textile Group

The last couple of months have been busy for the Textile Committee.

### Textile Group Forum, May 2018

The deadline for the call for papers for the forum closed in December and members have been reviewing these. The Textile Group Forum, *The Nature of Textiles*, is being held on Monday 21 May, later in the year than usual, at the Museum of London. Bookings can be made through the Eventbrite website.

### Icon Textile Group Events

Since the last publication, the Textile Group has run two sold out events. Thank you to committee members Branwen Roberts and Freya Gabbutt for organising the Alexander technique one-day workshop and The Westminster Abbey effigies tour, and to Liz Rose, Victoria Walsh and Zenzie Tinker for hosting these.

The next issue of Icon News will feature write-ups of the Westminster Abbey effigies tour and the North American Textile Conservation Conference (NATCC), *Embellished Fabrics: Conserving Surface Manipulation & Decoration*, held in November 2017 in Mexico City.

### Other Events

The Textile Society is running a tour on 22 February 2018, *Behind the Scenes at Kensington Palace*, looking at clothes worn by royalty from the 17th century onwards and includes access to the property and two exhibitions. Details can be found at <http://www.textilesociety.org.uk/events/>.

Due to publication deadlines, it is not always possible to mention all events so please check the Icon website, Facebook page, Twitter feed and Iconnects for details. If you have anything that you would like mentioned in our communications please contact [nadine.wilson@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:nadine.wilson@nationaltrust.org.uk).

## CELEBRATING CONSERVATION AT TNA, KEW

### Icon's Photographic Materials Group Editor Boyce Keay brings together reflections on The National Archives' first public open day in more than a decade

The National Archives' Collection Care department, usually hidden behind closed doors, has many stories to tell and plenty of vibrant personalities to tell them. On 16 September we welcomed visitors into our studio for London Open House weekend to meet the team of conservators and learn about their work.

Five groups of visitors toured the studio during the day and conservators, technicians, scientists and volunteers gave their time to talk about their work. The range of projects on display included innovative uses for 3-D printing, the identification of arsenic in Victorian textiles, fine work on the gouache of Terrence Cuneo's paintings, an 18th century map perforated by iron gall ink and the array of tools used in the traditional



Sonja Schwoell describing an 18th century map perforated by iron gall ink damage

craft of document repairs.

Senior Conservation Manager Jacqueline Moon ACR organised the day and also gave two public talks in the new events space:

'I spoke to approximately one hundred visitors during the day. My talk was entitled "from mummified rats to x-rays", and I spoke about the department and its history before introducing my colleagues and bringing their work to life with film and photographs. Our story started with Henry Cole, who laid the foundations for today's Collection Care team in the 1830s. His campaign for better preservation of public records was boosted when a mummified rat was discovered in a box of documents; the rat remains in our collection to this day, and was recently modelled in software with a view to making a new and better-fitted housing with our 3-D printer. The rat is only one example of innovation in our work. The many wax seals in our collection are equally fragile, and 3-D scanning and printing will soon enable us to make custom housings to protect them, as well as replacements for damaged parts and plastic replicas for use in education workshops.'

Research and Development conservator Dr. Helen Wilson was on hand to demonstrate her work with x-ray fluorescence analysis of the amazing Board of Trade volumes:

'I really enjoyed the day because the people who visited were genuinely interested and excited by the work that we are doing. They were really engaged with the presentations and were often so interested that it took an extra fifteen minutes or so for them to leave the department; this didn't leave much time, if any, for lunch or breaks! I was losing my voice by the end of the day, but I still had fun. I'd be happy to do more of these events as it's a great opportunity to share my work with the public, and to work alongside other departments to raise awareness of our work more generally.'

Preventative Conservation Assistant Amy Sampson, supported by her volunteer team, demonstrated the scanning of plaster seal moulds, 6500 of which will eventually appear on our catalogue:

'It was very clear from talking to our visitors that there is a huge interest in what Collection Care do as a department, and an increasing awareness that what we do is considered to be an essential function of The National Archives. There is a wealth of expertise within the department that marries the traditional with the modern and scientific, and we really enjoyed showing that off to our guests.'

Loans and exhibitions technician Maurice Ronan



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demonstrated some of the department's more traditional skills, and the tools and equipment that he uses:

'I'd never been involved in an open day before, and I really enjoyed talking to visitors and showing them our work. Lots of them asked about volunteering with us. They were particularly impressed with our equipment, including our electric guillotine and board chopper.

People were keen to see the different housings that we make and use. I showed them how I'd presented a wax seal attached by long cords to a piece of parchment for an exhibition, some book shoes and some bespoke boxes and folders for transporting documents for exhibition.

It would be nice for the public to see more original documents next time, if we could display some in a secure area. It would also be good to have longer tours so the visitors could spend more time in the studio.'

Having asked our visitors to fill in an iPad questionnaire, we were slightly overwhelmed by the enthusiastic feedback they left, and particularly pleased that much of it focussed on the lively, varied and innovative nature of our work. Many wanted to stay longer than forty five minutes.

When asked what they'd found particularly interesting about the day, our visitors' replies included: 'Being able to look at original documents and hear from those with expert knowledge', 'having the opportunity to go behind the scenes: conservation is much broader than I had realised', 'lovely to hear the processes, stories and difficulties', 'all these passionate people' and 'I was just overwhelmed to see such dedication and love. Thank you'.

They said they'd been surprised by:

'The variety of techniques, ranging from old fashioned to modern 3D printing', 'the wealth of specialist knowledge within the department', 'the complexity of conservation and how things are constantly changing' and 'the amount of science in the work'.

We also asked them to describe the Collection Care department in three words, and used their responses to make a word-cloud. We're looking forward to planning a range of public events for the future.

We asked ninety one visitors to describe the Collection Care Department in three words



## Appointments



**Rachel Morley** has been appointed Director of Friends of Friendless Churches. Established in 1957, the Friends is a charity which campaigns for, rescues and repairs redundant historic churches threatened by demolition and decay throughout England and Wales.

Rachel comes to the role from the Churches Conservation Trust, where she managed the maintenance and repair of 129 Grade I and II\* listed churches. Since 2014, she has been a Guardian of the Society of the Protection of Ancient Buildings and a Trustee since 2017.

Rachel was the recipient of an Icon/HLF internship, which enabled her to specialise in stone and plaster conservation with Hirst Conservation and subsequently work on some extraordinary projects in the UK and Europe. Her studies include an undergraduate degree in Process and Chemical Engineering and a postgraduate course in Building Conservation and Repair.

This experience has prepared Rachel to lead the Friends, which, she says 'in today's rapidly, often recklessly changing world, is crucial in the preservation of our exceptional architectural heritage'.



**Helen Wilson** has been appointed Senior Conservation Manager – Technology and Preservation at The National Archives (TNA). This maternity cover post will focus on leading a team to deliver preservation activities including environmental monitoring, disaster planning, and pest management, across TNA. The role will also involve providing expert advice and guidance to Government and the heritage sector, and providing handling and disaster planning training to a variety of audiences.

Helen has worked at TNA as a heritage scientist since 2012 and comments, 'I am excited to have the opportunity to work at a more strategic level while broadening my knowledge, skills, and experience through the new responsibilities.'

Prior to working at TNA, Helen completed a Science and Heritage Programme PhD project with the University of Manchester and the British Museum, and an Icon HLF Conservation Science Internship with the Pigmentum Project (now Art, Access & Research). Helen completed her Chemistry Masters degree at Oxford University in 2007. In her spare time, Helen is Communications Officer for Icon's Heritage Science Group.



**Athanasios Velios** has been working at the University of the Arts London since 2003 on conservation documentation. He has been a member of the Ligatus research centre, led by Prof. Nicholas Pickwoad, and contributed to projects about historic bookbinding, including the St. Catherine Library Condition Assessment and the development of the Language of Binding Thesaurus. He has also been supporting IIC as a webmaster since 2009.

In October 2017, Athanasios was appointed Oxford Linked Open Data (OXLOD) Architect working at the Oxford eScience Centre of the University of Oxford. OXLOD is a pilot project to integrate the datasets from the University of Oxford museums and convert them to Linked Data. This includes museum catalogues and conservation datasets. Athanasios will be working with the ICOM CIDOC Conceptual Reference Model and a number of W3C standards, reviewing their benefits for the conservation profession.

The OXLOD pilot ends in October 2018 when Athanasios will return to the University of the Arts to resume his role as Reader in Documentation at the Camberwell, Chelsea and Wimbledon Graduate school.

## Icon staff



Thanks to funding from The Clothworkers' Foundation, Icon has a new Policy Advisor **Anni Mantyniemi**.

*Anni writes:* 'I am delighted to join Icon as the new Policy Advisor. I have seven years of experience in the heritage sector with a BA degree in Art History from Sussex University and an MA in the Principles of Conservation from University College London. Before joining Icon, I worked at Historic Royal Palaces as a curatorial assistant and subsequently in current affairs at the US Embassy.'

During my first months in the job, I have discovered a membership not only supportive of enhancing Icon's advocacy output but also incredibly informed and knowledgeable of the current policy challenges facing the sector. To have such enthusiastic support for my role is truly inspiring! I look forward to working with all our members and stakeholders in enhancing Icon's influence as a strong voice for the sector and promoting the value of conservation to policy makers.'

*Anni works Monday to Friday and can be contacted at [amantyniemi@icon.org.uk](mailto:amantyniemi@icon.org.uk).*



## Welcome to these new members

We would like to extend a very warm welcome to all those who joined us in October and November 2017. We hope to see you at an Icon event soon!

**Ben Bosence**

Bosence Building Conservation  
Associate

**Brian Castriota**

University of Glasgow  
Student

**Anthony Charlesworth**

Smith of Derby Ltd  
Associate

**Kathryn Cook**

University College London  
Student

**Megan Creamer**

University of Glasgow Centre  
for Textile Conservation  
Student

**Timothy Dolby**

Dolby London Ltd  
Associate

**William Donnelly**

Winterthur Museum  
Associate

**Jack Dunn**

Weldon Stone Enterprises Ltd  
Associate

**Elsevier VB**

Organisation

**Justyna Gajko-Berckmans**

Associate

**Amanda Garratt**

Student

**Helen Griffiths**

Associate

**Ulla-Satu Grimmert**

Associate

**Beth Hamilton**

Cambridge University Museum  
of Zoology  
Associate

**Rebekah Harbord**

Student

**Cathryn Harvey**

Student

**Cynthia Inesta**

Icon Staff

**Natalie Ioannou**

Cardiff University  
Student

**Clare Jenkins**

Student

**Miriam Kleingeltink**

Camberwell College of Arts  
Student

**Brianne Kozlowski**

Liberty Stained Glass  
Conservation LLC  
Associate

**Marina Kruger Pelissari**

Student

**Katherine List**

English Heritage  
Associate

**Angela Luppariello**

Associate

**Katya Madrid**

Cardiff University  
Student

**Anni Mantyniemi**

Icon Staff

**Tatiana Marasco**

National Museum of Scotland  
Associate

**Magdalena Marciniak**

Glass Artistry  
Associate

**Andrea Martucci**

EIS  
Associate

**Pamela Murray**

Cardiff University  
Student

**Hajnalka Nagy**

Associate

**Gwynneth Pohl**

Associate

**Ludovic Potts**

Ludovic Potts Restoration  
Associate

**Eileen Procter**

AIATSI  
Associate

**Cesar Rodriguez**

Student

**Dale Sardeson**

West Dean College  
Student

**Niki Sealey**

Associate

**Rosie Shepley**

Student

**Frederick Stubbs**

Student

**Gwen Thomas**

City of Edinburgh Museums  
and Galleries  
Associate

**Sandra Vez**

Palímpsêstos sàrl  
Associate

**Arianna Vinci-Cannava**

Student

**Hannah Winn**

City and Guilds of London Art  
School  
Associate

**Farah Zamir**

The House of Lords  
Student

**Aneta Zebala**

Associate



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**Applications close  
9th February 2018**



# Mount Stewart's Central Hall

Project Manager Claire Magill ACR takes us through the process of restoring the hall and its floor

## INTRODUCTION

Mount Stewart house and gardens sit on the shores of Strangford Lough, twelve miles outside Belfast. Home to the Londonderry family since the late 18th century, it has hosted gatherings of friends, statesmen, artists and intellectuals. Yet Mount Stewart remains a family home, comfortable and welcoming, as well as housing a wealth of treasures, imbued with Edith, Lady Londonderry's unique sense of drama and unconventional use of colours.

The Central Hall remained largely unchanged between the 1840s and the 1960s, although the wooden balustrade in the gallery was replaced with wrought iron. For most of this period the scheme was a cool off-white wall colour with a magnificent Scrabo sandstone floor but in the 1950s, under the stewardship of Edith's daughter Lady Mairi Bury, the pinky-red scheme to the walls was introduced, to mirror the red iron oxide in the china – Chinese armorial ware that was housed in cupboards built into the niches of the hall.

1951 photo by Vandivert for *The Ambassador* magazine



*Country Life* image, 1936

Then in the 1960s, Mairi made a further change, and had the first black and white lino covering laid on the floor, in order to save the maids the hours they spent scrubbing and maintaining the Scrabo stone.

## MAJOR RESTORATION

Starting in 2012, the house and part of the collection underwent a huge, three-year restoration project. Much structural work was carried out and was documented in a six-week television series 'The big house reborn'. The project aim was to celebrate the time of Lady Edith and her husband, capturing the spirit of place and the golden days of the 1930s-50s.

In order to deliver this vision of returning the Central Hall to its earlier scheme, we carried out extensive analysis of the paint schemes on the wall, along with tests to remove layers of cross-linked yellowed varnish on the painted marble-effect columns. With this information, we commissioned building





Central Hall, before the restoration project, 2012

contractors and conservators to:

- restore the wooden balustrades
- re-introduce the faux double doors on the gallery
- recreate the original paint colour
- clean the columns
- reintroduce the sculpture lent back by the family

We also planned to return the floor to its original Scrabo finish but we knew that this required five clear months, which was a huge ask during a complex project with limited windows of opportunity. In addition, we needed the Hall space to house the 15,000 items of the collection whilst contractors worked their way around the rooms, as the cost of appropriate external storage was unaffordable. Racking out the Central Hall for use as an open store also allowed the visitor to see the collection up-close and personal. So work on the floor had to be left until after the showrooms were reinstated. It was the final piece of the jigsaw to return the house to its former glory. With the funds in place the right time to proceed came with the closed season of 2016–17.

## ASSESSING THE HALL FLOOR

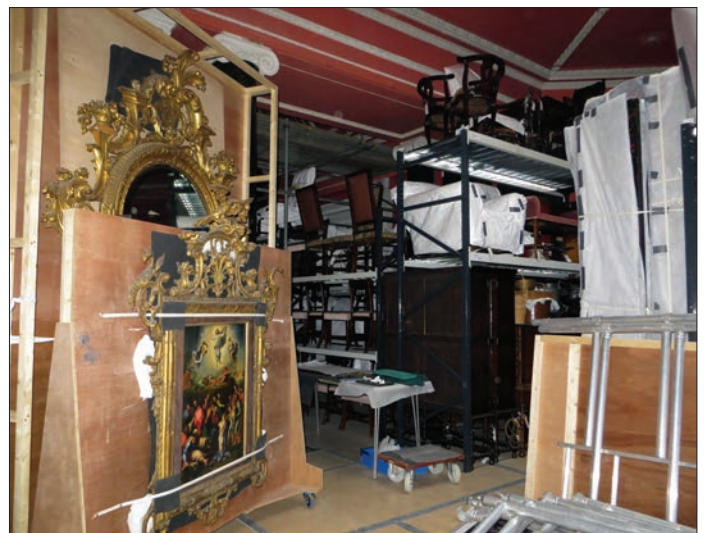
So what did we know about the floor? Apart from images in *Country Life* very little! We knew the sandstone came from the Scrabo quarry, which was owned by the family. From images we could see that the stone in the centre is laid in a radiating pattern whilst the stone at either end was laid in a pattern of octagons and squares.



Opportunity to see 'Hambletonian, Rubbing down' by George Stubbs, at close proximity.

Because there were so many unknowns, we lifted the linoleum in seven trial areas to get a better idea of condition. We chose areas which would have the most wear and tear – various thresholds and walkways. Our National Trust conservation advisor on stone, Trevor Proudfoot, and his company Cliveden Conservation Ltd, carried out the trials to inform the specification. From these we estimated that about 20% of the stone beneath was defective. Samples of the bitumen used to adhere the lino to the stone floor were sent away for asbestos analysis and came back clear.

Central Hall used as a store for collections, accessible to the public,







One of the six open days with various stakeholder groups, helping explain the processes and techniques involved (looking at the painted skirting boards, with the paintings and furniture conservators, in the conservation workshop)

## SPECIFICATION AND PROCUREMENT

Once we had the specification, we followed the National Trust's Project Management Framework, working with the General Manager to produce a clear brief, scoping out the options within the business case to identify the many known unknowns and planning the resource needed – human and financial – and the timescales that would fit with the property's busy event schedule. The project budget was set at

The Cliveden Conservation team meticulously removing the screed and bitumen layer



Removing the sculpture to the adjacent east passage, which had been load tested, and protected in situ

£300,000, which included a significant contingency to reflect the extensive unknowns: What condition was the floor in? How much of the stone would need replacing? How complex was the design? What finish would we achieve overall?

At this point, we decided that whatever company we used would need a wealth of experience of historic stone floor projects and we felt that this expertise did not exist in Northern Ireland. However, we had direct experience of Cliveden Conservation working at Mount Stewart during the

One of the seven pre-project investigative trials, revealing the screed and bitumen layer, and Scrabo stone, beneath the lino tiles,







Half-way through the project, we were beginning to see the radiating geometric pattern emerge

earlier building work and in other National Trust houses and we knew that they had the skills, knowledge and experience of working on similar floors. So Cliveden were commissioned on a single action tender, which included the requirement to hold several open days with our local heritage construction companies, by way of sharing the methodologies, learning and best practice.

Half the budget was directly spent on stone conservation with the remainder spent on removing the sculpture, protecting historic surfaces and preparing the space. This was carried out by the art handlers Grallagh Studios working with Cliveden Conservation, and the house team. So, with everything in place, including Listed Building Consent, fire risk assessments and an asbestos plan, we began in October 2016.

## WORK BEGINS

A team of four stone conservators methodically worked through the space in three phases, removing the lino first, followed by the screed and bitumen layer. Then began the arduous task of cleaning back the stone. A very specific technique called 'plucking' was involved in removing the bitumen from the stone face and the correct angle of the chisel was crucial to ensuring that large amounts of stone did not come away with the bitumen. The Cliveden conservators used brushes and sponges, but it was the little diamond pads that were most successful in enabling a uniform appearance to be achieved across the floor.

The work took the predicted five months and accommodated the property's two successful Halloween and Christmas events, which enabled over five thousand visitors to go

through the house. We even managed to put a positive spin on the 'clinking' sound of the chisels, telling visitors that it was Santa's elves working away in the background!

With the stone exposed and cleaned, we could ascertain how much replacement was needed. Timescales were tight if we were to open the hall on schedule, so we worked closely with the quarry, based in the northeast of England, to ensure that our order was on time and that all stones sent across were of a high quality, standard and colour.

We drew up a plan to identify the stones which fell into one of three condition categories and therefore needed an appropriate treatment:

- 1 completely defective – replacement required. If part of the stone could be used elsewhere on the floor, Cliveden cut and dressed it for re-use.
- 2 trip hazard – to be repaired or replaced. We assessed each stone with an eye to the health and safety of our 80,000 annual visitors, many of whom are elderly. We chose to replace those stones within the thresholds which were considerably worn down as well as any others that presented an obvious trip hazard. Many stones were treated by minor repairs rather than replacement.
- 3 wobbling/rocking – required re-bedding. Many original stones rocked when walked on, which had led to cracking and breaking. This was mainly the result of later interventions to introduce heating systems, which had disturbed the hard-core beneath the stone flags. Cliveden removed, re-bedded and then pointed these stones.





The skirting boards were removed with the help of a furniture conservator, labelled, and documented before being conserved on site

## ASBESTOS ISSUES

We had discovered asbestos in various parts of the building during the major building project. So before replacing or removing any of the hall stone, we spent a day lifting stones in areas where we knew there were pipe runs. With a fully developed procedure in place, one of the Cliveden team worked in a tented area, wearing appropriate PPE with a fitted face mask, and lifted the defective stones. Our Operational Risk Business Partner and an independent asbestos air sampling provider were both on site to supervise the procedure and take air samples. All stones were found to be laid on red brick substrate or on hard core, with no visible evidence of asbestos. Air samples were taken within the voids and all returned clear.

## CONSERVATION OF PAINT AND WOODWORK

Paintings conservator Ros Devitt, who had worked on cleaning the columns and pilasters during the building project, returned to clean and restore the skirting boards, which were in very poor condition. Ros worked alongside Fergus Purdy, local furniture conservator, to remove and reinstate the boards. We also brought back one of the project joiners to work with Fergus in removing, adjusting and re-hanging the eight sets of mahogany double doors in the Central Hall. Working with specialists and conservators we had used during the building project proved to be very successful, as they already knew the property and understood our conservation and curatorial vision, as well as the National Trust ways of working.

## COMMUNICATIONS

A crucial lesson from the building project was around communication and I arranged to have one point of contact for the contractors and the property team. This role was filled by Aileen McEwen, who was working at the property full-time on another project. She acted as my eyes and ears on the ground, checked in the contractor every morning and was always at the end of the radio to answer their queries and requests, so that the project kept within its tight timeframe. Aileen was also the main point of contact on a day to day basis for property staff, referring to me if she could not answer any query directly.

The progress of the project was fully documented with our professional photographer, Bryan Rutledge, visiting the site twice a week to build up our record of images on our Collections Management System (CMS). Taking images of whatever the conservators were doing and any interesting finds, three or four times a day, has allowed us to build a picture of the various stages of the project, as well as attach a range of self-explanatory images to the CMS inventory and conservation record created for a particular stone.

As part of our Heritage Lottery Fund bid, we undertook six open days with stakeholders, supporters and volunteers, to bring them with us on the journey. We also designed an interpretation leaflet for visitors, including a children's version.

Another interesting facet of the project was its engagement with local artists. We invited them along to see the project and gave them a tour of the house, after which they produced a lino cut print using the discarded lino tiles. The resulting limited edition works of art were displayed in the gallery area of the Central Hall, and have proven very successful.



## The final finish!

### MAINTENANCE ISSUES

The ongoing maintenance of the floor is a live debate because the stone is very porous and vulnerable to soiling from our many visitors. As part of the project, I worked with the house team to ensure that all the appropriate layers of protection were installed on the way into the property: metal scrapers to remove stones and fine gravel, hedgehog brushes for muddy boots, coconut matting to remove dirt from visitors' shoes, and protective overshoes for wet feet. We also commissioned a robust Axminster carpet for the Entrance Hall, to remove any remaining dirt and moisture from visitors'

Ros Devitt, paintings conservator, retouching the worst affected boards, in the conservation studio at Mount Stewart



feet before they enter the Central Hall.

Working with the volunteer co-ordinator, we created a specific role profile for a dedicated team of volunteers to help us maintain and record the condition of the floor. Two training sessions, by the house team and myself along with Cliveden Conservation, trained the volunteers in how to clean and care for the floor, as well as monitor patterns of wear and tear and any significant changes. This has proven very successful, in that it has eased the pressure on the house team and has shown a real investment in our volunteers, who happily undertake three hour sessions on a daily basis, each morning. Many are so enthusiastic, they wish to undertake similar monitoring of the floors elsewhere.

### OPEN ON TIME!

It was with great satisfaction that we threw open the doors of the Central Hall, on St Patrick's Day last year, to hundreds of visitors. In the first eight weeks alone we welcomed 11,000 visitors through the house and the floor bore up incredibly well.

The established band of volunteers continues to care for the floor and record crucial data to help inform ongoing house plans. The feedback from visitors has been very positive, even though many of them had loved the 'iconic' black and white lino that they associated with the space. The final piece of the jigsaw has been fitted, and Mount Stewart continues to welcome friends, artists, statesmen and supporters alike, to enjoy its fully restored glory.

For more information, please visit:  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/mount-stewart](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/mount-stewart)

**Photo credits:** ©National Trust Images / Ambassador; Vandivert, Country Life, Bryan Rutledge, Cliveden Conservation, Claire Magill, Aileen McEwen.



## COURSES

### PRESERVING HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS

London 14 November 2017

In November I had the privilege of being able to attend this one-day course at the British Library given by **Susie Clark ACR**. Susie's teaching was well-structured, really engaging and clear, so that although a lot was covered, one did not feel overwhelmed but rather better equipped with a clear understanding of the care of photographic materials.

We began the day looking at the history and identification of photographic processes. The development of photography is fascinating and it was helpful to be shown real examples alongside teaching, so that we could identify immediately the characteristics we were being taught to look out for.

The second session covered conservation problems and solutions, this was my favourite part as it is fascinating to see how different processes behave and degrade so differently. Something I have been thinking about a lot in the past year is wet plate collodion negatives, so I was really interested in hearing Susie's thoughts and tips on this, particularly her views on repairing glass plates in order to keep the historical integrity of the object as a negative.

The final part of the day covered preservation measures, from storage environments to enclosure materials, explaining why keeping in line with recommendations was so important and comparing the different options available. I will be applying this practical advice in my current work, having various types of photographic materials under my care.

Throughout the day, Susie was open to questions and really keen to share her knowledge, experience and passion, which was contagious, and I have come away reminded of what first got me interested in photographic materials and keen to continue learning more.

I would like to thank the Book and Paper Group for giving me the opportunity to attend this course with a CPD Bursary.

**Rebecca D'Ambrosio** Project Conservator  
Barts Health NHS Trust for the historical archive of St Mark's Hospital.

### COLOUR FILLING: skills for great results

#### Sarah Peek Conservation

Brighton 22–24 November 2017

**Sarah Peek ACR** and **Jasmina Vučković**

ACR recently ran a three-day porcelain colour-filling course for conservators. The six participants of the course included ceramic conservators seeking to build on their specific skills, as well as stone and wall painting conservators, an object conservator, and me, a metals conservator, all looking to

broaden our materials repertoires. We each came with a lot of questions and a thirst for knowledge.

Sarah began the first day with an introductory talk, outlining the ceramic body types, and which types lend themselves to the different methods of repair, using which materials. It was fascinating to understand the different properties of not only the ceramic substrates, but also their compatibility with the fill materials as well. The technique we learned particularly lends itself to porcelain, some stone substrates and enamelware conservation/restoration.

As with all conservation treatments, timing is paramount. The fill materials, all two-part epoxy resins, have different workability and curing times, so that we could polish some of our fills on the final day, we started colour filling as soon as we could on the first day. After a talk by Jasmina on health and safety, we were given a demonstration of mixing the fill material, with added bulking compounds, to bring it to a workable stage.

From an initial 'mother lode' of fill material a working palette of colours was created, from which to blend and colour-match core and surface fills. By experimenting with bulking agents and pigments we were able to understand different levels of opacity and transparency; these are incredibly important when working with porcelain bodies because of the different core and glaze layers. Shadows can appear at break edges that remain visible if the fill is too transparent; and if core fills do not match, the glaze layer can cure visibly different too. The basic technique and theory can be learned but, as in all disciplines, it is years of practice that allows a conservator to match colour and opacity/transparency with confidence, and



Preparing the colour fill for the cloisonné dish

know exactly how far they can push the materials they use.

As an initial exercise, Sarah and Jasmina had prepared identical porcelain plates for us to fill. One might think that filling a white plate would be a simple task – but finding the exact white and eliminating shadows was not easy! We then worked on objects either provided by Sarah or that we had brought with us, pertaining to our individual interests. I was definitely more in my comfort zone when preparing the metal substrate and then filling losses on an enamelled cup and a small cloisonné dish. This, in comparison to filling ceramic objects, was much more straightforward because of the level of opacity required. My next challenge will be filling losses in objects decorated with transparent enamels. Others worked on a range of porcelain objects and in one case, stone.

On the last day we were given a polishing demonstration, and were able to polish the porcelain plates we had filled on Day 1, as

#### Sarah demonstrates the colour filling technique



well as any other cured items. We painstakingly worked our way through progressively finer-gritted polishing cloths, until the fill matched the object in glossiness. The outcomes were very satisfying; all repairs were invisible at six feet, and many at six inches. Although some flaws and errors could still be observed, they served as learning reminders for future fills.

The course was well-paced and split up with slide shows and demonstrations. Being able to see Sarah and Jasmina at work was excellent – the workshop gave me insights into the intricacies of ceramic conservation that only strengthened my respect for this specialism and the levels of delicacy and patience that it requires. Both Sarah and Jasmina were incredibly generous in their responses to wide-ranging questions, as well as providing suppliers' lists and information on their preferred tools and materials.

**Belinda Hager** Metals Conservator

Please look at [www.sarahpeek.co.uk](http://www.sarahpeek.co.uk) for future courses

## RISK MANAGEMENT FOR CONSERVATION Icon Care of Collections Group London 24 November 2017

On 24 November a cross-disciplinary group of conservators attended an interactive Risk Management for Conservation Workshop organised by the Care of Collections Group and presented by the British Library's Conservation Scientist **Dr Paul Garside** and Conservator **Karen Bradford**.

The evening workshop began with an introduction to the risk assessment process as applicable to the British Library context. This included a theoretical session, detailing the multifaceted applications of conducting risk assessments as well as the benefits that can arise from them. The focus was on the use of risk assessments as a systematic and methodical manner of justifying, demonstrating and recording conservation decision-making processes.

We were taken through the stages of a risk assessment systematically with a view to ultimately inform decisions to mitigate risks to collections. We were taken through defining risks, impact and likelihood, mitigation and interpretation. Of particular interest was the way in which the assessment process has been adapted to suit the needs of the organisation, which incorporated risk appetite or the level of risk we are willing to take – which may vary from collection to collection.

This was followed up by Karen Bradford, who gave a practical case study detailing how the British Library had used the risk management process as a decision-making tool to improve integrated pest management protocol. It specifically used the risk management process to detail possible outcomes based on a reduction of

pest traps throughout the building, taking into account object significance and risk appetite.

We then moved onto a practical session, where delegates worked in groups to complete one or two scenarios, where the opportunity to work practically through an example gave an insight into their application.

Whilst there is some commonality, there is scope for the risk assessment and management process to be more fully adopted by and applied to conservation problems, with room left for individual organisations to adapt the tool to suit their requirements and establish a more nuanced approach to risk management. But it should not be used as an indicator to be followed blindly.

I highly recommend any conservators with an interest in this area to attend this workshop if the opportunity presents itself again in the future. It was an enjoyable and productive evening and has given me the confidence to more fully embrace the risk assessment process. Overall the overriding message I took away was to be more risk aware rather than risk averse.

**Amy Crossman**

Conservator, British Library

## UNDER THE SKIN: Studies in Parchment Icon Book & Paper Group The National Archives, Kew 19–22 October 2017

Back by popular demand, this October saw another four day training event in parchment conservation brought to you by the Book and Paper Group Events committee. Hosted by the National Archives and supported by the Clare Hampson Fund, the event was



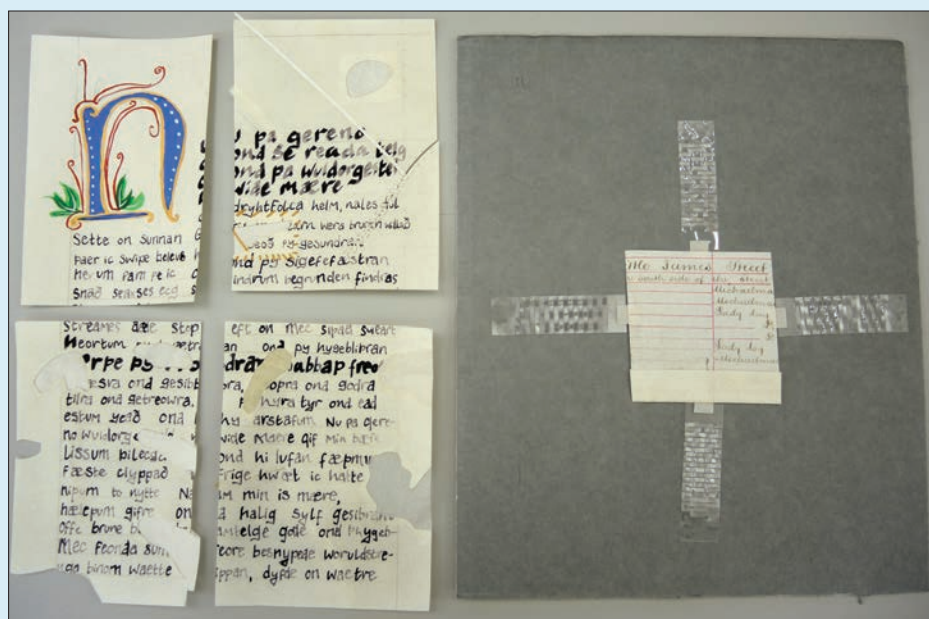
Kimberley Kwan practicing her calligraphy

divided into two days of talks and two days of workshops.

The seminar covered a range of current research and treatment of parchment, from codicology to scientific analysis. The talks presented explored the what, how, and why of parchment production and deterioration: tracing its use over centuries and looking at current approaches to its care. We kicked off by dissecting manuscript codicology with **Theresa Zammit** and choral manuscripts, before looking at Ethiopian manuscript codicology in theory and practice. A selection of the talks then focused on scientific approaches to analysing parchment, including radiocarbon dating methods with **Fiona Brock**, and **David Mill's** exciting new advances in x-ray microtomography. **Matthew Collins's** presentation on 'biocodicology' was particularly interesting, illustrating how through analysis of parchment proteins we can begin to construct a narrative of historical trade and animal husbandry.

**Jiří Vnouček's** two-part talk steered away from scientific analysis, and focused on more tangible means of 'reading' historic parchment: how to trace the history of the object empirically. He drew on his extensive

## Example of practical workshop parchment repairs, and a novel approach to mounting







Mariluz Beltran de Guevara demonstrating techniques to the class

research in traditional parchment-making, looking at how the practice hugely varied between countries and centuries. Even the fact of using lime in the process is not ubiquitous, as his experiments in Iceland show: the fast flowing rivers and hot springs playing a key role in a land without access to lime.

Finally, the talks concluded with **Edward Cheese** ACR bringing the practice of parchment conservation into the subject of contemporary treatment decisions. Much of the seminar had discussed the mechanisms of parchment degradation and the risks of common treatments, and Cheese's talk eloquently articulated the complex decision-making processes when considering what is best for the object and its use.

Alongside the talks the National Archives put together a display of objects from their collection, exemplifying some of the features discussed in Jiri's presentation. These formed a range of archival documents, which we were invited to look at closely and even smell.

In this spirit of learning by doing, the seminar was followed by a two day practical session. With thanks to the National Archives, we were able to use their fantastic studio space to work in, a place that has seen many parchment treasures. It was here that tutors **Lara Artemis** ACR and **Mariluz Beltran de Guevara** ACR led us through a history of parchment repair and

conservation, which began with the manuscript itself.

With a selection of pigments and iron gall inks to hand we put together our own illuminated manuscript fragment, seeing how different tools and media affected the final work. We then proceeded to tear, cut and deface our manuscript before piecing it back together using a range of techniques and materials from medieval stitching to more contemporary use of Japanese papers.

Alongside the practical, Mariluz led us through a range of humidification techniques; sharing her extensive knowledge and experience with the group. Mounting and housing designs were also covered, with the opportunity to try out some new approaches. I have been sharing some of the ideas here with the team at OCC, and am looking forward to continuing the conversations with a number of other attendees who shared their experiences.

Thanks to Lara and Mariluz for leading a packed and productive two day class that was both creative and technical, allowing some of the ideas and discussions from the seminar to take form on actual objects. Thank you, too, to the National Archives for hosting us, the Book and Paper Group events team for organising and the Clare Hampson Fund for their financial support.

**Nikki Tomkins**, Conservator  
Oxford Conservation Consortium

A range of pigments and inks used in the parchment conservation course



The Hungarian poster at Hamilton Square underground station

## TALKS

### CLOSE SHAVES AND WIDE BERTHS: some recent case studies

Independent Paper Conservators Group  
London 10 October 2017

The Grand Robing Room at Freemason's Hall was an august setting for seventy conservators to attend a fast moving talk by **Graeme Storey** ACR, with nine well illustrated examples of why conservators are always having to think on their feet on a tight rope of value conflicts.

The conservation work described included large format chalk drawings, pastels and watercolours and even a paper dress. Graeme has had to develop some innovative techniques to grapple with complex objects belonging to clients ranging from local authorities to aristocracy, all of whom have expectations and budgets that have to be carefully managed.

The first job Graeme talked about was a discoloured and traditionally mounted Burne-Jones black chalk drawing, pasted onto linen, on a stretcher. After establishing that the medium was stable enough to undergo treatment Graeme used an interesting 'sandwich' of materials to 'wash' the drawing on a vacuum suction table. Graeme uses cotton sheeting as a base layer to absorb soluble degradation products - this proved of interest in the Q&A session when conservators were pleased to hear how effective, cheap and re-useable it is (after washing). Also cotton sheeting is dimensionally stable as opposed to blotting, as it does not distort when wet.

A dramatic example of chemical cleaning was described with reference to a watercolour portrait. The body colour heightening gave a false balance to the image where the paper had become so discoloured. The original paper tone was evident underneath the original mount. After cleaning with Hydrogen Peroxide the colour balance was restored and the image became clear.

Float washing using a silk screen is a technique Graeme has developed. This case study showed successful removal of severe creasing from a pastel portrait belonging to the National Trust. Ultimately the drawing





Washing the Burne Jones chalk drawing on the suction table

was pasted onto Japanese tissue that had been pasted up and laid onto a vacuum suction table.

Another example of when to leave well alone was illustrated by a 1957 poster, in situ on Hamilton Square Station wall. We may never know the outcome – although the bottom corner appeared to lift 'dry' with trains rattling past at speed only feet away – Graeme considered the risks to life, limb and paper, gave a large estimate and never heard another word. Experience tells us that it would indeed have lifted, until the middle section, which would be stuck like glue, then a train might go past, at speed...

'You may expect trouble if you don't pay' was the final piece in Graeme's lecture. This inscription was revealed on a document in a Court roll. A veritable millefeuille of paper

and parchments that had been rolled since the 18th century. All were relaxed, flattened and repaired. We assume Graeme got paid!?

A lively Q&A session followed with an interesting warning from Piers Townsend when discussing IMS:H2O. The IMS evaporates first so that is when a medium can start to bleed having been perfectly stable in the admixture of the two.

Those who didn't have trains to catch stayed for a convivial chat and network over drinks and nibbles, which for those of us who live in the sticks is always an invaluable opportunity.

**Sarah Bull** ACR

Independent Conservator  
Gloucestershire

*The Independent Paper Conservators' Group, IPCG, was set up fifteen years ago to*

Washing the Burne Jones chalk drawing on the suction table: a detail showing extraction of staining



create better contact between conservators who work independently or alone. IPCG is a completely independent body and there are no charges for being a member. Meetings and workshops are mostly midweek evenings in London but we have also had day trips to institutions, studios and manufacturers. Contact Laila Hackforth-Jones if you wish to have more information about the group at [laila.hj@blueyonder1sgvb](mailto:laila.hj@blueyonder1sgvb)

## ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

### ICON PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIALS GROUP London 17 November 2017

It was with simmering excitement that many of us made our way to the Dana Research Centre and Library at the Science Museum last November. Out of thirty-six attendants, sixteen were presenting, each given a strict five-minute time limit. This format was inspired by the Icon Paper Group in Scotland, which has already held three meetings of such nature with the aim of gathering and exchanging ideas amongst their members. It is a concept I have heard discussed often and now am thrilled that the PhMG organising committee have brought it to London.

A quick glance down the programme showed a wide scope of topics. Two sessions and a coffee and cake break later, I mentally reviewed each talk and was surprised by the amount of information shared. It is impossible to summarise the content of all sixteen presentations here but I will highlight a small part of each talk.

Black and white photo collages on gouache are difficult to treat and I was fascinated to hear how **Lorraine Finch** ACR developed a technique to reattach lifted photos to the water sensitive medium. **Emma Bonson** was faced with the opposite problem when she had to remove original envelope residues from the emulsion of glass negatives.

**Rebecca D'Ambrosio** rehoused broken 19th century collodian wet plate negatives using a light-weight 'Plastazote sink-mat' option while **Lauren Ashley Irvin** learned from previous failed examples of mounting for photographic negatives and came up with an ingenious solution using polyester window mounts. In preparation for transit and display of salted photographs going on loan to Russia, **Vanessa Torres** provided visual aids in addition to the internal guidelines and instructions to mitigate risk of damage.

**Emmanuelle Largeteau** presented exhibition lighting solutions for original glass plate negatives – two light sources, timers and monitors that helped realise the vision of the curator and exhibition designer without sacrificing object safety. **Ioannis Vasallos** looked at storage solutions for a mixed photographic collection, showing custom-made silver insulating envelopes used to acclimatise photographic materials



Nicholas Burnett drew attention to the on-line resource *Daguerreobase*

taken out of cool storage.

Overview survey tips from **Anita Bools** ACR reminded us of the importance of preparation, of defining and agreeing on objectives and focusing on the big picture.

**Helen Lindsay** ACR's experience with mixed archive collections and dealing with different types of institutions highlighted the need to be aware of significance and priorities, to be a part of the discussion of solutions and cost related issues.

The role of reproductions in the conservation of historic film and the technical challenges of producing them were highlighted in an eye-opening talk by **Kieran Webb**. Focusing on the use of reproduction in the conservation of contemporary art photography, **Marta Gracia Celma's** ongoing research looks at its use, production and decision-making process. **Jacqueline Moon** ACR gave an engaging talk on the investigation of two causes of the yellowing of silver gelatine prints and whether the causes could be distinguished by the naked eye. **Stephanie Jamieson** looked at a mystery print from 1835, 'Rooftops of Paris', created at the advent of photography.

**Nicholas Burnett** ACR drew attention to *Daguerreobase*, an online database giving access to over 15,000 treated and untreated British and European daguerreotypes, provided by members and their affiliates, complemented by related information and an online journal. **Dominic Wall** ACR pointed out resources, particularly BS ISO 18902:2013, that make updated knowledge accessible, such as the use of buffered paper for photographic materials. Lastly, **Craig Horsfall** ACR presented a partnership opportunity to make use of advanced analytical equipment from Camberwell College of Arts, such as their spectrophotometer and FTIR.

I am grateful to the colleagues who have taken precious time to share their knowledge so generously. Icon PhMG did a

stellar job hosting the event and I hope the idea will take off with other Groups. Looking forward to the next Group event in February.

**Vivian Yip** Project Conservator  
UCL Special Collections

## CONFERENCES

**THE 39TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE: The Japan Society for the Conservation of Cultural Property**  
Kanazawa, Japan 1–2 July 2017

I was lucky enough to attend this year's annual conference of the Japan Society for the Conservation of Cultural Property (<http://jsccp.or.jp>), an organisation of over a thousand members and similar to Icon in its objectives to promote and disseminate the science, technology and skills necessary for the conservation of cultural property.

Kanazawa, the venue for the Society's 39th conference, is famous for its traditional crafts, its well-preserved Edo-period districts, and now its 21st century Museum of Contemporary Art.

Unlike a themed conference, such as Icon16, the thirty three oral presentations of twenty minutes could only be loosely grouped into eight sessions over the two days, with time in between for the audience to view the very varied one hundred and twenty posters, or browse the trade stands of companies providing analytical equipment, services, or traditional Japanese tools and materials.

The proceedings kicked off on Day One with a session on the effects of natural disasters, including tsunamis and earthquakes, with projects ranging from work to mitigate water damage to acrylic paintings to earthquake damage to lacquerware. Needless to say, there were also posters on the theme given Japan's history of natural disasters, and several featured the problems faced in the aftermath of 2016's Kumamoto earthquake.

Given the theme of this session, which recurred throughout the conference, this writer did wonder if there were anything to include on the 'fall out' for cultural heritage from the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster.

'Disaster' also featured in the first two papers in the second session, with one focussed on mitigating the risk of fire in response to the impact of a fire at the National Museum of Ethnology – an impact-response mechanism perhaps all too common across the globe. The session then moved on to the intriguing multi-component features hidden in the construction of palaguins (norimono) and then onto the restoration of carved masks.

Session Three moved through a perhaps overly-positive update on a somewhat controversial treatment of a stone temple with epoxy-based consolidation some thirty years ago. This was followed by the first of the two non-Japanese respondents with a report (in Japanese) on the conservation of the large scroll, the 'Death of the Historical Buddha' which has, since July 2017, been on loan from Boston Museum of Fine Arts to the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum.

An interesting paper on tackling the problem of the transmission of intuitive knowledge rounded out the session. The research was tasked with exploring how to capture and pass on the implicit and extra-sensorial behaviours conservators acquire as they master their specialism. The authors reported results from comparing eye tracking movement between master and student in the lining of paintings from which they wish to investigate potential pedagogical models.

The final session of the day focussed on multi-spectral imaging techniques used in glaze, paint, sutra and thread analysis and included a presentation by a conservator from the Smithsonian Institution describing the differences in gamboge as used across Asia. The final paper was a keynote address on the conservation of cultural properties in the Kanazawa region.

On Day Two, Session Five focussed on organic glues and treatments, with presentations on removing degraded polyvinyl alcohol from polychromy using enzymes, an exhaustive catalogue of collagen marker peptide tests to determine the animals used in a variety of glues, and a paper reporting an equally extensive testing regime of animal glues, but this time to gauge the appropriateness of their use in conservation in Japanese traditional painting.

Session Six addressed further aspects in the conservation of Japanese paintings with studies on the use of radiation to sterilise mould, malachite corrosion on paper, a 'two-in-one' consolidation and deacidification process for paper using nanofibres, and the





Jonathan Kemp at the conference reception with the traditional painting/paper conservator Mr Takayuki Kimishima

analysis and proposals for the interventive restoration of the polychromy on a late-Edo painted screen by the painter known as Ekin. This provoked bemusement in the audience as, although less than half of the original material remained, a strategy for its recreation was presented. That these objects still had a social function was highlighted as the Ekin screens are annually displayed at night by candlelight in the small town of Akaoka in the Kōchi Prefecture.

Presentations in Session Seven detailed analyses of various reaction products including the corrosion on the massive bronze Great Buddha of Kamakura, the deterioration of pearl caused by the denaturing of its proteins, and the volatility of substances used in diazotype prints.

The final session addressed difficulties in transporting wall-paintings, the storage of ethnographic collections, and the crowd-sourcing of support and funds for the preservation of in-situ items of cultural heritage left in deserted villages (an increasing problem in Japan). The final paper, and the only one which covered anything of contemporary art or culture, was on the databasing of digital copies of graphic novels using proprietary software.

The event was very well organised and well attended. A noteworthy thing about the conference 'goody-bag' was the thick black and white book of abstracts which also included the posters in their entirety. Furthermore, the programme of the presentations and posters in English can be found here:

[https://jsccp.or.jp/taikai39/data/program\\_en.pdf](https://jsccp.or.jp/taikai39/data/program_en.pdf).

One striking point is that the conference featured almost entirely presentations of analyses or treatments (including preventive). But, in contrast to, say, Icon16, there was nothing that addressed theory or ethics, nor any presentation on the education, training and changing role of conservators in the face of what is generally perceived as the profession's increasing complexity. It is not that these things are not discussed on a

social level, rather it is that they do not seem to have been formally incorporated into the conference programme of the Society, an omission this writer senses will be addressed by the newer generations of Japanese conservators.

#### Jonathan Kemp

Editor Journal of the Institute of Conservation

#### SHIFT IT

#### West Yorkshire Archive Service Wakefield 15 November 2017

West Yorkshire Archive Service have moved four repositories and more than 150,000 boxes during the last ten years. To share their strong collection moving experience, they organised a conference at their Wakefield site. The superbly run day included perspectives from each of their archive functions.

From a collection care perspective, it was heartening to see the early and full involvement of conservation. West Yorkshire Archive Service's multiple collection moves were initiated with succinct collection surveys upon which other team members built pragmatic plans and estimates. These surveys also proved useful for funding bids as well as building the team's comprehensive knowledge of their collection. One of West Yorkshire's initial surveys of 35,000 items used the time of two full time archivists for two weeks. They recorded data such as existing packaging dimensions, noting unpackaged items and minimal notes on future conservation requirements.

The day was full of pragmatic tips including:

- Demand a consistent move team with minimal rolling on and off of individuals. Get to know them, show them the collection to engender a sense of custodianship and reduce any sense of disassociation.
- Set aside a holding area for discovered items until they can be appropriately

processed as they may otherwise slow down the overall programme.

- Consider using a well-managed volunteer programme. For one of the West Yorkshire moves they benefitted from the time equivalent of two years of two full time employees given over the course of five years.
- Savings were made by using standard stationery supplies for barcoding with assurances that the labels remained stuck.
- Consider changing from historic storage arrangements to organising by size and plan for expansion space in the new location.
- Archive-quality materials were used for packaging, however archive-friendly material of lesser quality and cost was judiciously used when not directly in contact with collection items.
- There were mixed opinions on Tyvek. It was an easy material to use for covering oversized rolled maps and plans and envelopes for oversized volumes but proved slippery during handling.
- Retaining historic location information helped team members adjust to new

A place for everything and everything in its place. Shirley Jones showing us her well organised supply cupboard.







Shirley Jones describes commissioning equipment for their new conservation studio including the wall-sized light box from a local lighting company.

locations as well as being able to virtually recreate the original storage. This was useful for identifying historic mould hot spots.

- Be aware that the move may necessitate additional work such as addressing a previously unidentified mould outbreak.
- Build in rewards and milestone celebrations. Cake was repeatedly mentioned throughout the day as a vital part of the process!

West Yorkshire built in targeted break-out sessions during the day, including demonstrations of their barcoding system as well as tours of their new facility's storage areas and conservation studio. **Shirley Jones**, Head of Conservation, showed us the new studio, which is a flexible open space. She deliberately commissioned equipment from local businesses including an impressive wall size light box from a nearby lighting company and moveable benching from a local scientific and education equipment manufacturer. Clever money saving ideas helped with their move to a new location including using heavy plastic sourced from a local printers that was cut and sewn into carrying wallets.

Thank you for the extremely informative and candid day.

**Meagen Smith** Archives Conservator  
Parliamentary Archives

#### **GELS IN CONSERVATION** **International Academic Projects / Tate** **London 16–18 October 2017**

I gratefully received a Book and Paper Group Professional Development Bursary towards the cost of attending this event last October. The conference showcased investigations into gelling materials and their uses, alongside case studies of objects treated with gel systems. I found this considerable new knowledge essential to the development of my budding conservation skills and future treatment ideas.

The opening lecture by **Richard Wolbers** on greener chemistry announced a chorus of praise towards using gels to minimise free solvents in conservation treatments and their associated risks to objects, conservators, and the environment – a great reminder, as a current student, to seek alternatives to common treatment options being taught.

Sessions were sorted by gel type to foster the important cross-over of ideas and disciplines which drives conservation forward; case studies with wide-ranging objects, from a felt hat to a roundel of giant Sequoia, inspired many minds indeed.

Diverse treatment variations were shown, such as using agar before it reaches its gelling temperature (**Paolo Cremonesi**), or thickening protein glues with methylcellulose to adapt their diffusion and adhesion according to treatment needs (**Karolina Soppa**).

Research into gels gave a deeper understanding of the materials at play, such as **Michelle Sullivan's** detection of residues left on paper by rigid polysaccharide gels, while several comparative studies presented the advantages of cleaning with gels against traditional methods. Finally, novel contributions included **Lora Angelova's** research into creating an 'ideal' gel by modifying poly(vinyl alcohol)-borax gels, and **Charis Theodorakopoulos' design** of surface-attached gels which facilitates handling and mechanical stability.

The conference ended with a panel discussion which highlighted the need for innovation, education, and collaboration in the conservation field as it faces the future. I look forward to opportunities to apply the treatment procedures and ethical considerations I gathered at this constructive conference.

**Mathilde Renaud** MA conservation  
student  
Camberwell College of Art.

#### **TREATMENT 2017: Innovation in conservation and collection care** **AIC 45th Annual Meeting:** **Chicago USA 28 May–2 June 2017**

This year's Annual Meeting of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works was a fantastic three days of international presentations focusing on preventative and interventive treatments undertaken by conservators working in the private and public sector. Presentations explored different conservation treatment options and how decisions were made to design and implement ethical and sound conservation treatments or why they made the decision not to treat a work of art.

The Opening Reception was hosted at The Art Institute of Chicago on a beautiful sunny evening where we were free to look around the new galleries and I caught up with old friends from Northumbria, Boston and San Francisco as well as meeting conservators from around the world.

The meeting got off to a roller-coaster ride with the award ceremonies and General Sessions which included the conservation of paintings, paper and objects ranging from the 21st to the 15th century. All but one involved in-depth treatments. A case was definitely made by these talks and others about the importance of conservation records giving details of past conservation treatments, and the value of information from the artist/artist's studio on the materials and techniques used by the artist, and how

this can inform conservation treatment today and in the future.

The debate about conservators losing practical skills was raised. What is the public's perception of damage and how far do we need to go during treatment to make the work of art presentable to the viewer? Notably, the majority of the Paper and Photographic sessions did deal with interventive treatments, including the recreation and conservation of two megalithoscopes which I had never heard of before. Overall I felt the Meeting was very useful for someone working in private practice with insights into new treatments as well as confirmation that sensitive well-informed intervention is better than doing nothing. Since attending the conference I have been able to put into practice the method of removing pressure sensitive tapes from a group of colour slides.

Attending the AIC Annual Meeting in Chicago was a fantastic opportunity made possible by generous support of CPD grants provided by the Icon Book and Paper Group CPD Bursary, Anna Plowden Trust with The Clothworkers Foundation, Tru Vue and the York Consortium for Conservation and Craftsmanship. The meeting was beneficial and re-invigorating for my professional development as a mid-career conservator specialising in Works of Art on Paper. A longer description of the conference can be found on the Icon website:

<https://icon.org.uk/news/conservation-through-the-megalithoscope>

**Katharine Lockett** Independent Paper Conservator  
Kirkbymoorside, North Yorkshire.

## ATTENDING THE ICON CONFERENCE: SCOTLAND TOUR

**Icon Scotland & Care of Collections Groups**  
27 October 2017

I am writing this shortly after attending my first conservation conference (of many, I'm sure!). Due to popular demand, the Scotland Group and the Care of Collections Group hosted a one-day event, in which they returned to some of the key themes and presentations of the 2016 Icon Conference in Birmingham. It proved to be a stimulating day full of interesting and informative talks that provoked many questions about how a collaborative and multidisciplinary approach can enhance and improve not only individual treatment strategies, but the field of conservation as a whole.

The conference opened with a paper from **Emily Hick**, Special Collections Conservator at the University of Edinburgh's Centre for Research Collections, about her experience organising a two-day crowd-sourced conservation event, the first of its kind to occur at the CRC. Emily spoke about the benefits of such an event, including wider public engagement and a reduction in



Slide from Helen Hughes' presentation

project hours, and also advised on some of the potential challenges, such as security and ethics. I found it particularly interesting to see 'behind the curtain' and realise how many extra considerations and much additional time go into the successful organisation of such an event.

Next, **Claire Thomson**, Book and Paper Conservator at the National Library of Scotland spoke about the conservation of the 'Chimney Map'. Claire has spoken often about the detailed process of its conservation and took this opportunity to focus instead upon the media aspect of the story, in particular the making of a short film, which followed the treatment process through to its completion and generated a huge amount of attention across the globe.

The final talk for this session came from **Lizzie Miller**, Object Conservator at Birmingham Museums Trust, who spoke about the difficulties of keeping up with contemporary collecting. She stressed the importance of building a good relationship with the artist, the absolute necessity of

detailed documentation and willingness to collaborate with external experts. Again, some interesting questions of ethics arose, especially how one interprets and honours the artist's original intent while remaining conscious of the preservation needs of such rare and unstable materials.

The second panel began with **Dr Cordelia Rogerson**, Head of Conservation at the British Library, discussing the unexpected benefits of risk assessments. This paper, co-authored with **Dr Paul Garside**, offered brilliant practical insights into how to collaborate and engage effectively with other institutional departments, and how such assessments can offer a way to present risks to an object or collection in a logical, impartial, and unambiguous manner, so that concerns held by conservators can be readily explained to other stakeholders.

**Sarah VanSnick**, Senior Conservation Manager at The National Archives, then spoke about the challenge of tackling a mould outbreak as a multidisciplinary team. The talk took us through the main points of

## Question and answer session at the Icon Conference Scotland Tour





TNA's recently reviewed treatment plan, including the reorganisation of a treatment space and the conduct of experiments to gauge the risk of re-infection of collections or any risk to the health of those coming into contact with it.

In the final paper of the morning, **Dr Isobel Griffin**, Collections Care Manager at the National Library of Scotland, discussed the pros and cons of environmental standards, debating whether documents such as PAS 198 and PD 5454 are informative and useful, or vague and potentially obstructive. The importance of transparent communication when it comes to collections loans policies and conversations about museum environments was clear.

The final panel began with a paper from **Helen Murdina Hughes**, Textile Conservator at Glasgow Life, detailing an interdisciplinary project that saw the conservation, documentation, and inventory of a collection of union and community banners held by Glasgow Museums, with conservators, photographers and students working in collaboration throughout. A fascinating time-lapse video showed just how laborious a process it was to unroll, document and re-roll each banner.

**Richard Welander**, Head of Collections at Historic Environment Scotland, delivered **Lyndsey Haworth's** paper on strain monitoring of tapestries. It was a fascinating look at how the physical structure of a tapestry, specifically the strain upon certain areas when hung, will have an eventual effect upon its decay. By capturing high quality time-lapsed images of the newly completed Mystic Hunt of the Unicorn tapestry from Stirling Castle, and then feeding these images through a software program, the project created 'strain maps' which highlighted areas where deformation had taken place.

Next, **Sarah Foskett**, Lecturer on the MPhil in Textile Conservation at University of Glasgow, demonstrated how a collaborative effort between conservation students, conservation professionals, and museums and institutions proved valuable for all parties. Conservation students at the University of Glasgow joined forces with Glasgow Museums to undertake environmental monitoring of an exhibition at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, providing the students with invaluable and transferable 'real-world' experience, and the museum with useful and informative data that can be referred to when planning future exhibitions.

The day closed with a fascinating look at the complex nature of the preservation of Polaroid prints. **Ioannis Vasallos**, Photographic Collections Conservator at the National Library of Scotland, discussed the treatment undertaken to ensure the preservation and accessibility of three



Inside the Knole Conservation Studio

continuity albums from the Stanley Kubrick Archive, used during the filming of *The Shining*. Research was undertaken to determine the cause of fading in many prints from these albums, and both the materials of the photographs and the albums were examined. The study and the identification of the prints assisted the decision-making process for subsequent treatments.

Attending this conference has strengthened my desire to work in conservation, as well as my awareness of the financial, logistical, and ethical concerns that must be considered when proposing or undertaking any project. As a student hoping to embark upon a professional career in the conservation of book and library materials, the ideas presented throughout the day not only gave me a more nuanced view of the field, but also provoked questions that will stay with me as I progress in my career. I was particularly struck by the importance of remaining receptive and open to cross-sector collaboration; in an age of specialization, interdisciplinary endeavours are now vital to a comprehensive understanding, not only in conservation or the cultural heritage sector, but also across academia, industry, and science.

**Holly Sanderson**, Conservation Volunteer, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh

## VISITS

### KNOLE CONSERVATION STUDIO Icon Gilding and Decorative Surfaces & Furniture and Wooden Objects Groups Sevenoaks 25 September 2017

Earlier this year our Gilding and Decorative Surfaces Group committee discussed the idea of offering a joint event with the Furniture and Wood Group as we share many key interests, practices and techniques. Following the opening of the new Conservation Studios at Knole House in Sevenoaks we sought to organise a joint visit. **Gerry Alabone**, Senior Frames and Furniture Conservator at Knole kindly offered to host a visit for our members to take place on a Monday, the only day of the week when the Conservation Studios are closed to the

general public.

The day began with coffee in The Hayloft, a perfectly located education space adjacent to the studio. **Gerry** and **Kirsten Walsh** first provided a fascinating presentation into their research, analysis and subsequent treatment of a unique set of six large black and gold 'Sansovino' style frames which are housed in the Cartoon Gallery within the house and date back to the 1630s. The frames were made for copies of Raphael's tapestry cartoons and have been at Knole since 1702. The frame sections underwent surface cleaning, areas of bronze paint were removed along with patches of paint varnish which could be found surrounding the sight edges. Areas of old woodworm infestation were also treated prior to their complex re-assembly.

We were then given a tour of the recently reopened showrooms, originally designed as sumptuous apartments in the early 1600s but used for hundreds of years to display the Sackville family's wealth and status. The rooms contain rare furnishings and fabrics which have been redisplayed to highlight several of the key pieces already conserved by the team on site.

Following lunch, attendees were invited to view the Conservation Studios and meet conservators working on a variety of objects for display. This provided a great opportunity for all those attending to discuss ideas, materials and technique. **Jan Cutajar's** treatment of a rare Dutch Kussenkast, an ebony veneered wardrobe, was a particular highlight and great to see a demo of some agar gel surface cleaning!

As part of the visit, all those attending were then welcome to visit the Gatehouse Tower, the home of Eddy Sackville-West, the reluctant heir to Knole, from 1926–1940. A panoramic view across the house and parkland from the roof provided a fitting end to a thoroughly enjoyable day.

Many thanks go to Gerry Alabone and the Conservation team at Knole for allowing us into the studios on their day off from public view.

**Claire Irvine**  
Secretary, Gilding & Decorative Surfaces Group

## A DYNAMOMETER CAR

**Helen De Saram, Conservation and Collections Care Manager, and Wendy Somerville-Woodiwis, Conservator, at the National Railway Museum (NRM) describe the treatment of an unusual railway vehicle**

### BACKGROUND

The North Eastern Railway, (NER) dynamometer car was built in 1906 by York works and ceased operation in October 1951. A dynamometer car primarily records the drawbar pull and speed from which drawbar horsepower can be calculated for steam and diesel locomotives. This dynamometer famously recorded the record-breaking speeds of both *The Flying Scotsman* in 1934 and *Mallard* in 1938.

The car itself is significant to the museum because it is a mobile laboratory, used principally to measure the power of a locomotive and it still has the original interior which includes a fold-down bed, a kitchen area with a stove for hot drinks and a beautiful lavatory that has a wall mounted flush.

### CONDITION

The car has a steel frame, a timber body and a roof. The latter is covered with canvas and a roofing compound which would have ensured a watertight surface when the car was first built. The carriage surface is decorated in 'as built' condition – an imitation grained teak finish.

Unfortunately, the dynamometer's waterproofing had gradually deteriorated over many years and was no longer effective. As a result, the carriage had historical water damage which affected both the interior and exterior of the carriage. There was a small amount of irreversible staining on some paper objects such as recording paper roll and an original annotated notepad. However the damage was limited.

Conservation department at NRM left to right: Wendy Somerville-Woodiwis, Martyn Halman, Chris Binks, Helen de Saram in the front sitting in chair



© National Railway Museum.

Conservation department at different heights! Colour matching areas of loss

The outside of the dynamometer car had more damage. The exterior protective coating had failed, white drip marks and a crocodile skin-like surface were visible, which had led to damage to the graining beneath, and the London North Eastern Railway (LNER) transfers had lifted.

### TESTING & TREATMENT FOR THE EXTERIOR

Various solvents were tested from the weakest to the strong and it was found that Industrial methylated spirit (IMS) was the most effective for removing the failed varnish. Test results concluded that the coating was shellac, which was not an appropriate varnish for the dynamometer as it yellows and does not provide a watertight surface for the carriage. The coating was probably applied in 1963 when the car was prepared for display at the museum of British Transport at Clapham; its British Railway livery was removed at that time.

The shellac was mechanically removed using IMS solvent gel and cotton wool swabs. Its removal revealed areas of missing graining, which was colour-matched using water-based acrylics, applied with fine paintbrushes.

Using a fine brush, the loose fragments of the transfers were stabilised and consolidated with Lascaux 498; the adhesive

Original engineers when the dynamometer was in use, names are unknown



© National Railway Museum.



© National Railway Museum.





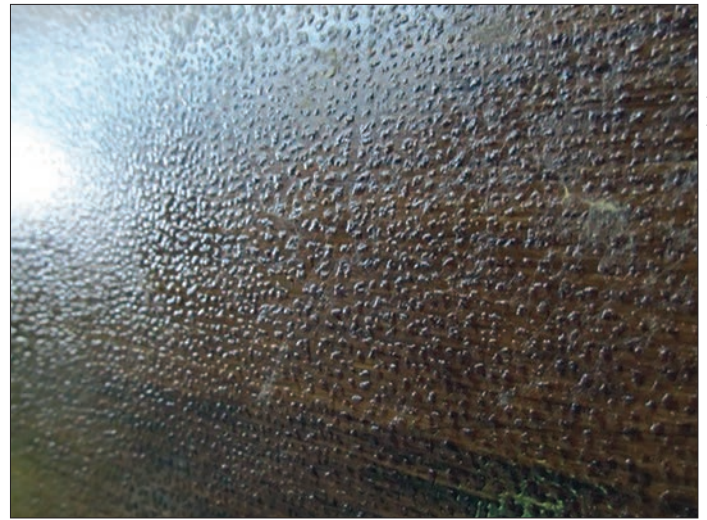
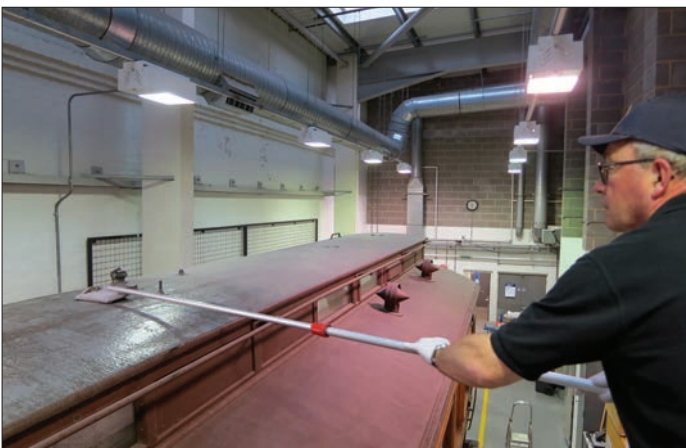
Scientific instruments inside the dynamometer 1

was applied behind the transfers which were gently manipulated back onto the carriage surface. Areas of transfer loss were also colour matched using water-based acrylic paint.

The decision to apply varnish was a point of ethical consideration. Based on the research from the archives and curators at NRM, the original coating would be turpentine-based. This would have yellowed over time and it would become unstable. Although it would be historically correct, it would also be irreversible and hazardous to use in large quantities for the conservation department to apply.

A paper written by Arlen Heginbotham describes a method of replacing French polish with paraloid B-72 in Shellsol A which is suitable for the dynamometer (Heginbotham: 2016). We contacted Arlen for advice and Tristram Bainbridge ACR, a

Chris Binks applying paraloid B-72 to the roof



Damaged shellac which has yellowed and hardened to a crocodile skin-like appearance before conservation



Colour matching Japanese tissue paper to the colour of the original vehicle roof guttering

furniture conservator based in London, who also uses the method. The varnish is 20% Paraloid B-72 in Shellsol A and this treatment is currently used in furniture conservation at the Getty Institute. The concept is that the solvent is petroleum-based, which means that the drying time is much slower and the finish is very similar to that of the original surface.

Wendy Somerville-Woodiwis painting in areas of loss with acrylic paint





Paraloid B-72 was chosen for its various properties such as its reversibility, its longevity, ultra violet protection and waterproof surface. After testing different concentrations, we used 20% and applied it with a fine sable brush. This produced an even, reflective surface. We found that only one coat could be applied, as the solvent would dissolve the earlier layers under the layers of varnish, which caused streaking. The solvent is slow-drying which allows the varnish to dry in accordance with the original carriage surface and it did not change the appearance of either the transfers or the acrylic colour-matched paint.

## THE ROOF

The dynamometer has a painted canvas roof. The roof itself is stable but not watertight. It also has an uneven surface that attracts surface dust which is difficult to remove and can cause long-term irreversible damage. The surface was therefore cleaned mechanically using brushes and vacuum and then cleaned with microfibre cloths dampened with water. Once dried, 20% Paraloid B-72 in acetone was mechanically applied to the roof using large brushes. This provided a protective reversible surface which could be more easily cleaned on display

The painted surface of the roof guttering had deteriorated: the paint was starting to become unstable as the surface was cracked and flaky. It had the same problems as the roof surface in that it had become difficult to clean and had significant surface dust.

The guttering was cleaned using the same methodology as the canvas roof. Once dried, 4mm thick strips of Japanese tissue paper, that measured the width and length of



Transfer before conservation

guttering, were colour matched using acrylic paint and then applied to the guttering with Lascaux 498. The Japanese tissue paper matched the texture, appearance and strength of the canvas roof. Once adhered, the Lascaux 498 dried to a hard, waterproof surface and became a smooth surface easier to dust and maintain. The treatment is also reversible, whilst protecting the original surface of the guttering underneath.

## DISPLAY

The dynamometer car was finished in time to be displayed in the Great Hall at the National Railway Museum behind *The Flying Scotsman* as it had been in 1934 when it recorded its first official 100mph on rails in the United Kingdom.

## REVIEW

The scale of the dynamometer was the biggest challenge, in the context of the amount of conservation and materials it needed. Scaffolding, hard hats, litres of solvents, the time and the budget to conserve it – all had to be carefully planned in

Transfer after conservation







Vehicle body with areas of painted loss



Painting in areas of loss with acrylic paint

time for *The Flying Scotsman's* arrival. The carriage is still in a working mechanical order and so it had to be moved into position in stable weather conditions in order not to reverse the conservation that had just been completed. The project was a successful example of conservation and restoration working in harmony to display the carriage as it originally would have looked.

The display of the dynamometer caused considerable interest among the public with a visit from the local press and BBC Look North. We also invited all members of the staff and volunteers to visit the interior of the carriage to both showcase the conservation department and further develop the department's role within the organisation.

The NRM also uses the dynamometer as a showpiece for important guests and international visitors such as Uday Singh Mina, the Director of the National Railway Museum in New Delhi, Sir Partrick McLoughlin and Sir Peter Hendy, Chairman

of Network Rail. We are extremely proud that we can help preserve the dynamometer and would like to thank the NRM for its support for conservation.

#### Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to:

Chris Binks, Conservation Assistant, and Curatorial Team Assistant Martyn Halman

Assistant Director Andrew McLean and Bob Gwynne, Curator, who gave invaluable help with the history of the dynamometer

Arlen Heginbotham and Tristram Bainbridge ACR for their help and advice on the methodology with using Paraloid B-72 in Shellsol A.

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Dynamometer currently on display in the Great Hall





# the emerging conservator

## SHARED EXPERIENCE

**Icon interns Eliza Doherty and Hilary Jarvis explain how they joined forces to fill gaps in each other's experience and share learning opportunities in their respective trainee-conservator placements**

**Eliza Doherty** joined the conservation team at the Old Royal Naval College last February as gilding intern, helping to survey, clean and conserve the decorative surfaces in this iconic building at the heart of the World Heritage Site in Maritime Greenwich.

Designed by two of England's most celebrated architects, Sir Christopher Wren and Nicholas Hawksmoor, the College's Painted Hall was elaborately decorated by Sir James Thornhill, providing a dramatic backdrop to mess dinners and grand Naval occasions throughout the mid-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Working on a gravity-defying scaffold construction, often at heights of sixty feet and in full view of the public, Eliza has been expanding her skills in practical conservation, documentation and public engagement, under the watchful eyes of Stephen Paine and Icon Intern Advisor Helen Lindsay ACR.

With a wider and more expansive brief, **Hilary Jarvis** joined the National Trust as preventive conservation intern last January. Supervised by the Trust's Head Conservator, Katy Lithgow ACR, and Icon's Shulla Jacques, Hilary works closely with the National Trust Specialist team, who between them cover everything from advice and guidance on mould, UV light and dust deposition to the conservation of some of the world's most significant paintings, furniture and tapestries. Hilary has already been involved in a wide range of projects,



Eliza and Hilary at the Old Royal Naval College



Hilary in action at the Old Royal Naval College

The ceiling of the Painted Hall seen through the scaffold







Eliza in action at Sissinghurst

shedding light on the role of regional and project conservators who care for collections and interiors in around three hundred historic properties across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Icon internship programme positions a comprehensive framework around a variety of trainee-conservator placements in organisations across the UK. Each internship is supported by a bespoke Activity Monitor and regular feedback from the Icon Intern Advisor, who oversees learning-outcomes that are diligently written up in quarterly reports. In this way, all interns receive a consistent and thorough grounding in the field of conservation, regardless of the scope or focus of the host organisation.

Eliza's internship centres around conservation treatments, with less emphasis on the role of preventive conservation. Hilary, by contrast, has been thoroughly immersed in the multiple arts of preventive conservation, with little opportunity for readily accessible remedial work on her London doorstep. The interns decided the answer lay in shared learning, with Hilary donning a hard hat and high-vis for a day of condition mapping and cleaning gilded stone in the Painted Hall, while Eliza exchanged her overalls for a National Trust fleece to help decant the varied and eclectic contents of Vita Sackville-West's writing room in her tower at Sissinghurst Castle, ahead of major building works and renovations.

Both felt they learned something very special and valuable by walking in the other's shoes. 'Eliza showed me how to think and work like a wall paintings conservator, whose painstaking art has barely changed across the centuries; indeed, close up, we could see the hands of other craftsmen and conservators before us', said Hilary. 'It's an entirely different world to mine: often very private, concentrated and calm.'

Eliza described her experience at Sissinghurst as 'a fascinating glimpse into daily life in a National Trust property. I gained very useful insight into collection management systems, emergency salvage, and the logistic involved in packing and moving objects. I felt very fortunate to have had such close access to the varied and unusual pieces in Vita's writing room'.

While Eliza is thinking about her next steps, having just entered the final quarter of her one-year internship programme, Hilary is focussed on the next twelve months of her two-year placement. They are resolved to keep in touch and intend to follow each other's progress closely. And neither will easily forget the day they swapped clothes and shared toolkits as part of their Icon internship schemes.



Packed boxes in Vita Sackville-West's sitting room

Victoria Sackville-West's desk tray



Hilary Jarvis's internship is funded by the National Trust. Eliza Doherty's internship is funded by The Pilgrim Trust.





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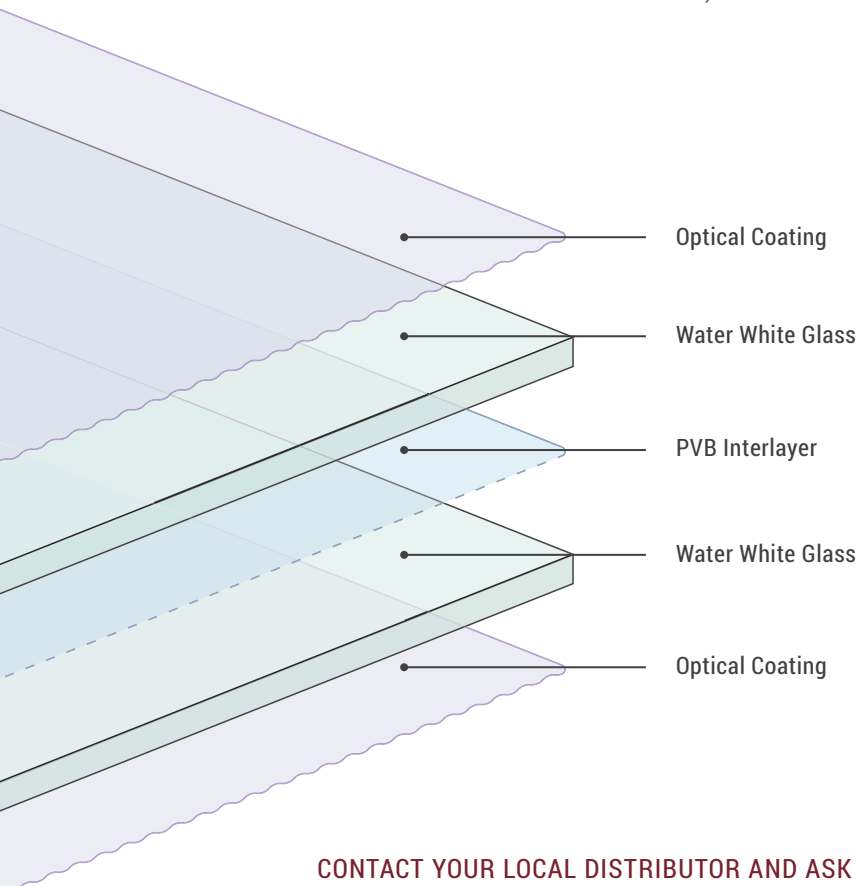


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