



A cathedral conservation course goes online

Also in this issue

Finding funding • More forty year careers • Glass plate photograph sandwiches

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Lara Artemis, Senior Conservator, Lambeth Palace Library.



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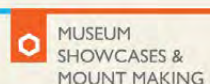
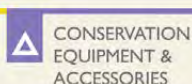
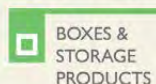
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JUNE 2021 Issue 94



From the Editor

The pandemic continues to have an impact on our members and two articles reflect this. In one, the Cathedral Workshop Fellowship adapts a conservation course to continue its delivery online. This article is in two parts; the first describing the details of how the transformation was effected can be found on the Icon website. The second part here looks at the wider issues and challenges of the approach.

Our second 'pandemic' article follows Alison Lister ACR as she tackles a government grant-application process to help her business through this period of financial strain. As Alison proves, conservators are nothing if not resourceful, persistent and enthusiastic about their calling, and none more so, surely, than those in our article Forty Years at the Coalface. Inspired by the tribute to Robert Minte in the last issue we rounded up some more ACRs who have served four decades in the field to tell us their story. I know there are more of you out there; do get in touch so that we can salute your achievements too. (news@icon.org.uk).

Finally, in the October issue we are looking to run an environmentally-focussed edition ahead of the international climate change conference in November - COP26.

If you think you could contribute, contact me on news@icon.org.uk.

Lynette Gill



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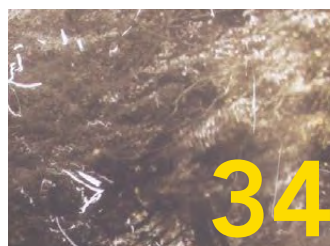
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Cover photo
Carved stones lined up in the workshop ready for the Great South Window project at Canterbury Cathedral. The work of several masons including those enrolled on the CWF course - see article on page 28

Disclaimer:
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Deadlines for adverts and editorial

For the October 2021 issue
Monday 2 August

For the December 2021 issue
Friday 1 October

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professional update

From the Chief Executive



Sara Crofts on quiet diplomacy

As you will read elsewhere in the magazine, we said goodbye to Anni Mantyniemi in April as she left Icon to take on a new role with Transport for London. Anni was Icon's first Policy Officer and her departure for pastures new provides a timely opportunity to review the way that Icon's policy work has developed and changed in the last four years.

The decision to recruit a fulltime Policy Officer arose from the *Membership Survey*¹ carried out in 2015. As Michael Nelles noted in his report summary:

'The most prominent theme to emerge from the survey concerned advocacy. When Icon was created by the merger of the five 'vanguard' bodies in 2005, it was a key ambition of the new organisation to be a strong advocate for the profession at the national level – to be a single voice representing the views and ethics of the entire conservation community; and in so doing, to foster a greater national awareness of the benefits of heritage conservation. The survey results indicate this ambition was a key attraction for many when joining Icon... Respondents spoke of their ambition for Icon to lobby more forcefully in local and national political processes; to spend more time reaching out to key stakeholders with our core message; to embark on more joined-up working with organisations across the broader heritage sector, to take more action on low wages, and to achieve a higher media profile for heritage conservation itself.'

This ambition to take on additional policy work and to become a louder champion for conservation was supported by our long-term benefactors at The Clothworkers' Foundation and Icon was offered a very generous grant to cover the costs of the new Policy Officer post for the first two years. During the initial two-year project we created Icon's first *Policy and Advocacy Framework*² and set up the Policy Advisory Panel³, which has provided valuable insights into various areas of conservation practice and allowed us to prepare detailed evidence-based responses to Government consultations.

More recently we added a stronger communications focus to our policy and advocacy work, which has culminated in the setting up of a new section of the website dedicated to our

current campaigns⁴. You will see that this includes dedicated pages for diversity and inclusion, workforce, and environmental sustainability. This section of the website also hosts the results of last year's *Value of Conservation* research⁵, which will be developed into a new public engagement project later this year. You can also access the extensive library of policy briefings and published responses to consultations. There is a wealth of valuable advocacy material available, and I urge everyone to make use of these resources to support the conversations that you have with your clients, employers, and within your networks.

A specific focus of our advocacy work over the last few years has been carrying out research and gathering evidence. Being able to offer data to support our arguments is vital to achieving a positive result. In recent months we have drawn heavily on the information gleaned from the two COVID-19 impact studies that we carried out, and we will soon launch the 2021 Labour Market Intelligence survey using the new research toolkit developed with financial support from Historic England in 2019⁶.

This is a particularly important project, as the findings will play a crucial role in developing new policy tools to address members' concerns about lack of recognition and low salaries within the conservation profession. This data has the potential to provide the leverage needed to initiate change, as it will offer the opportunity to benchmark our profession against others. Armed with evidence we will have a firmer basis on which to engage with clients and employers. In parallel with this workforce research it is also my intention to widen the scope of the Policy Advisory Panel to specifically include a call to private practitioners and small business owners to take part, so that we can better understand the issues, challenges and opportunities that arise in the commercial sector.

A more recent enhancement of our policy and advocacy work has been the increase in our use of social media. With the support of our Digital Media Officer we have now put in place a structured approach to the stories and campaigns that we share through Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. We continue to refine our digital tactics, measuring our performance and adapting our methodology based on what we learn through Google Analytics. Happily, our audiences in the UK and internationally continue to grow, partly through specific campaigns such as #AskAConservator and events such as Twitter conferences. Social media campaigns have been a success story of 2020 and we particularly appreciate the support that we receive from Groups and Networks and from our members who are active on social media⁷.

However, whilst social media is a versatile and flexible communications channel and allows us to connect with a broad range of people it is limited by its reliance on bite-sized statements, catchy slogans and memes; social media is rarely the optimal choice for nuanced, inclusive and considered debate. We therefore continue to turn to traditional forms of advocacy to make sure that our messages

are heard by those with the power to influence decisions.

An obvious example is our working relationships with other cultural heritage organisations. We attend a broad range of sector meetings and sit on several cross-sector committees. Our membership of the Heritage Alliance is a case in point. Throughout the lockdown we have been feeding evidence of the impact of COVID-19 on institutions and private businesses to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport heritage team via the Alliance. More recently we have been sharing information about the unintended consequences of Brexit. We know that this work is greatly valued by our colleagues. Historic England expressed its appreciation for *'Icon's generosity in being willing to share information'*, describing Icon's Coronavirus research reports *'a great example of working together'*.

This is what I call 'quiet diplomacy' – a highly effective policy tool when used strategically. A great deal of my time is therefore dedicated to 'quiet diplomacy' and influencing policymakers and sector partners through dialogue. As noted in the 2015 membership survey report, stakeholders are key – both the 'usual suspects' as well as those who may not be fully in our sector but whose goals and ambitions align with our own. We strive to foster productive relationships with a range of organisations, which means connecting with individuals and understanding their aims and values.

As a result Icon has strengthened its standing as a trusted source of advice so that policymakers now choose to seek us out because our input is valued. And that's where the real success lies – being asked to join the game rather than shouting from the side-lines.

As we begin to consider the shape of our next Strategy our ambition to be a strong advocate for the profession will remain a key endeavour.

As ever, if you have any reflections, then please email me via feedback@icon.org.uk.

1 www.icon.org.uk/resource/icon-membership-survey-2015.html

2 www.icon.org.uk/campaigns.html

3 www.icon.org.uk/campaigns/policy-advisory-panel.html

4 www.icon.org.uk/campaigns/current-campaigns.html

5 www.icon.org.uk/campaigns/current-campaigns/value-of-conservation.html

6 www.icon.org.uk/campaigns/current-campaigns/workforce-research.html

7 www.icon.org.uk/resource/icons-impact-spreading-the-word-through-social-media.html

POLICY BRIEF

Let's talk about conservation

Last year, Icon launched a new project to articulate the value of conservation to stakeholders and the public. Icon's *Values of Conservation* project challenged conservators and non-conservators alike to think about the value of the act of conserving cultural heritage. It aimed to identify and articulate these values and to consider how we can better communicate them.

The work was envisioned as an engagement exercise from the very beginning to encourage Icon members and external audiences to think about the value of the work of conservators and why people look after their possessions. Although we used a research approach to structure our project, the methodology was consequently an online conversation rather than an academic or systematic study.

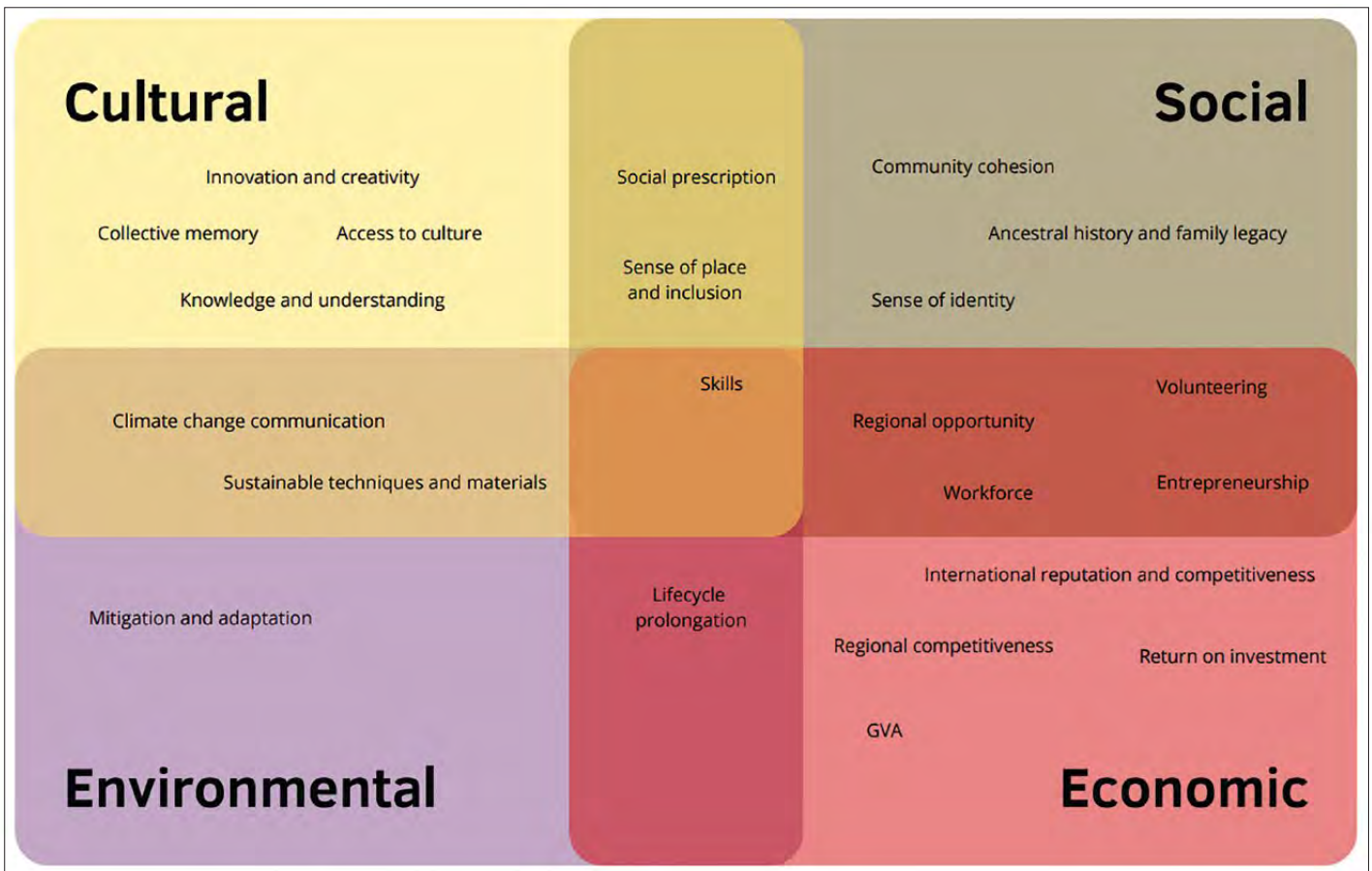
In each stage of the project we collected statements from both conservators and non-conservators on values. We used a range of techniques - from online Padlet boards for our Steering Committee to a social media campaign comprising Twitter polls - to get conversations rolling. We relied on Icon's existing messages on values and conservation to structure the conversation.

The project has now been completed and we are pleased to have collated a range of source material, including comments about conservation from conservators and public votes on what conservation means to people. As a part of the project, we also commissioned a new series of articles for the Icon website, called the Real Repair Shop, which explored conservation projects from both the client's and the conservator's perspective.

Icon's research found that conservators are willing and keen to talk about their work and are already skilled at using values-driven language when describing their activities. However, it also concluded that while we may be driven by a common set of values, there is a need to be more consistent and bold in communicating them.

The research proposes a variety of approaches to developing messaging on values. For example, we're likely to be more effective using factual, evidence-based and informative messaging when appealing to decision makers. In contrast, the use of comparisons to familiar items or storytelling may be more appropriate when attempting to illustrate why conservation matters to a member of the public.

We have presented the findings of the research in a final report, which we published earlier this year. The report



The values of conservation from Icon's *Values of Conservation* report

presents a selection of values associated with conservation that can be loosely categorised under social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts. The research report also includes a toolkit with recommendations on how we can effectively communicate and promote the profession's achievements to others.

I hope the material collected and presented in the report will inspire you to think about conservation from a values-based perspective. Starting with the 'why' of conservation can help us to embed values within every aspect of our messaging and increase awareness of the profession's impact. I also hope that the Values Toolkit will help conservators be more consistent and bold in the way that they talk about conservation to their peers, employers, families and friends.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the project and helped develop our thinking!



You can read the full Values of Conservation report online on the Icon website*.

Anni Mantyniemi

Policy and Communications Manager

*www.icon.org.uk/resource/icon-publishes-values-of-conservation-research-report.html

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

The Diversity and Inclusion Task and Finish Group was formed last year in order to recommend actionable plans to tackle issues around diversity and inclusion within Icon and the wider field of conservation. One of the T&F Group's first actions was to convene a roundtable discussion to explore members' views on this topic. This took place on 25 November last year.

Aiming to capture as diverse a range of voices from the profession as possible, the event focused on three key topics: how we, as Icon, define diversity; identifying challenges faced by those starting their career; and the challenges faced by mid-career professionals. The group members unanimously felt heartened and encouraged by the interest and support expressed by the participants.

Participants would like to see the inclusion of socio-economic background, mental health, nationality, regional accents and languages into Icon's emerging definition of diversity, in addition to the protected characteristics defined by the UK Equality Act 2010, i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or beliefs, sex and sexual orientation.

Many identified economic circumstances as a barrier to diversifying the workforce, especially for those considering studying for, and starting a career in the sector. Gaining qualifications involves high tuition fees, (sometimes unpaid) internships and volunteering, in contrast to poorly recompensed and sparse recruitment opportunities. These circumstances tend to discourage social mobility.

Participants also find it important that diverse lived experiences are fully recognised and appreciated by the employers at the stage of recruitment. Failure to recognise them can result in employers being inclined to recruit people who share a similar background, assumed knowledge and expectations to their own.

Various obstacles preventing conservators' career progress emerged during the discussions. Instability of work and the necessity of relocation cannot be reconciled with various circumstances like family care responsibilities and disability. Essential toolkits for career development, such as CPD courses and accreditation, may be costly, with a limited availability of bursaries. Resources and support available are especially limited to conservators in private practice, particularly in recent light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Disabled conservators reported their consistent experience of exclusion across the sector. They are faced with prejudice against medical conditions and expectation about certain physical abilities. Work environments can include inaccessible sites with insufficient support for necessary adjustments. Reduced mobility with age also makes access more challenging.

Experience of cultural marginalisation was also shared. Many university programmes and heritage/museum institutions are structured with western-centric perspectives contrary to the diversity of their collections. Institutionalised racism and imperialist attitudes are found embedded in many of the institutions. Collective and concerted effort to decolonise the collections, as well as the institutions, are pivotal.

Many ideas to improve fairness in diversity were also brought up by participants. These included:

- promoting awareness of the profession through school curriculums and community engagement
- diversification of the route into a career in the sector and lobbying for more affordable training
- ongoing career development mentorship
- prompting diverse conservators as role models
- advocacy for longer employment and fairer pay
- increasing the diversity of the Board of Trustees
- creation of a standardised procedure for employees' performance evaluation to combat unconscious bias
- mutual and community support for diverse conservators through online meet-ups and events, during and after the pandemic.

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The T&F Group is grateful to all those who took part in the roundtable as the ideas and views will help shape a paper and recommendations that will be presented to Icon's Board of Trustees later in the year.

However, we are conscious that there was little discussion on gender reassignment, sex and sexual orientation, religion and beliefs - are these areas where you feel there is work to be done in our professions? Or would you like to contact us about any of the topics mentioned here? Please share any reflections and insights: Iconinclusion@gmail.com.

Misa Tamura and Clara Low
Diversity and Inclusion Task and Finish Group

ICON'S NEW WEBSITE

We hope that most of you will have found time to explore the new website with its refreshed Group and Network hubs and enhanced members' portal.

We are aware that new systems can take a bit of getting used to, and that new digital tools do not always behave quite as expected 'out of the box' so please bear with us as we seek out and tackle the last remaining bugs. If you do find something that does not look quite right, then please let us know via web@icon.org.uk.

It is also worth noting that we have altered the navigational structure and some resources have moved to new locations. So here are some key webpages that you might wish to bookmark:

- Key contact details: www.icon.org.uk/contact.html
- Frequently asked questions:

www.icon.org.uk/about-us/our-work/frequently-asked-questions.html

- Information about our staff: www.icon.org.uk/about-us/who-we-are/icon-staff
- Information about our trustees: www.icon.org.uk/about-us/who-we-are/icon-board-of-trustees.html
- Important governance documents: www.icon.org.uk/about-us/who-we-are/governance-documents.html
- Professional standards: www.icon.org.uk/resources/standards-and-ethics.html
- Group and Network resources: www.icon.org.uk/resources/group-resources.html

The new website also provides an excellent opportunity for us to share your stories. We always welcome your ideas for articles and snippets of news. We are keen to showcase engaging resources (videos, podcasts, guidance) that you have published on your own websites too. So, if you have something that you would like to share with a wider audience and that supports the profession or helps to champion our messages, then please let us know. Contact our Communications Officer, Geanina Beres, via web@icon.org.uk.

LINKED CONSERVATION DATA UPDATE

Linked Conservation Data (LCD) is a project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council which explores methods of sharing conservation documentation records for the benefit of the profession and for enabling new research in the field.

A sample screenshot of Icon's new website

The screenshot shows the top of the Icon website. The logo 'Icon THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION' is in the top left. To the right are 'Join us', 'Sign in', and a search icon. A red navigation bar contains links for 'About us', 'Resources', 'Campaigns', 'Training', 'Accreditation', 'Groups & Networks', and 'Events'. Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: 'You are here: Homepage → Resources → Icon News (Members' Magazine)'. The main heading is 'Icon News (Members' Magazine)' with a sub-heading: 'Our members' magazine covers all aspects of the conservation of cultural heritage and includes news, features, updates from our Groups and Networks, practical advice, awards, and opportunities'. At the bottom of the main content area, it says 'Displaying 20 of 93 results' and 'Sort by: Featured'. The footer contains copyright information: '© 2021 Icon - The Institute of Conservation. Icon is registered as a Charity in England and Wales (Number 1108380) and in Scotland (Number SC039336) and is a Company Limited by Guarantee (Number 05201058). Membership software by ReadyMembership.' and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube.



The LCD logo

The project is a collaboration among many experts and institutions seeking to communicate their conservation work more broadly. With the term Linked Data we refer to technologies and best practices for sharing records on the World Wide Web. As part of the project, a pilot with sample conservation datasets has been built.

LCD Pilot

Four of the LCD consortium partners represent large book and paper conservation studios: the Bodleian Library, The National Archives, the Stanford Libraries and the Library of Congress. Each studio is in different stages of discussing documentation and effective sharing of data. All came together for the pilot to explore the frequent book conservation task of re-attaching detached boards. The group identified a number of relevant research questions, including the materials and techniques used for board reattachment

and the associated types of damage that can be observed on books with detached boards.

While project members were shifting to working from home due to pandemic conditions/restrictions, they managed to secure access to records that had been selected for the pilot. The University of the Arts London, through the work of the project's Post-Doctoral Research Fellow Alberto Campagnolo, supported the partners in exporting and processing their records. Additional work was contributed by Ryan Lieu at Stanford Libraries. The records were transformed to conform with the Conceptual Reference Model (CRM), which is an international standard for exchange of data developed by the ICOM CIDOC. Extensive discussions around terminology took place. With support from the British Museum and the ResearchSpace project team the pilot is now live at the address: <https://lcd.researchspace.org>.

We welcome questions and comments regarding the material offered by the pilot. A demonstration of the system can be found as part of the recorded seminars on the project website: www.ligatus.org.uk/lcd/meeting/modelling-2 (recording from day 2).

Terminology guidelines

LCD partners have also been exploring how to make conservation terminology more available to Linked Data applications. A list of conservation-related vocabularies has been compiled on the project website: www.ligatus.org.uk/lcd/

Screenshot of the home page of the LCD pilot website

controlled-vocabularies, Sharing conservation records requires agreement on the concepts behind terms used, so that even when word choices differ the reference to the concept remains the same. When external vocabularies have been used, such as those in the list mentioned above, it would be possible to simply refer to their concepts.

When internal vocabularies are used which are specific to the organisation or studio, then a process of matching these to external vocabularies needs to be undertaken. Project partners working with the pilot worked on terminology. A set of guidelines for sharing conservation vocabularies has been published by LCD on the project website. The guidelines were compiled with the help of experts in information science and also with the help of Kirsten Dunne, conservator at the National Galleries of Scotland, who aligned and structured an example vocabulary to illustrate the process.

LCD workshops

LCD has organised several workshops to discuss the value of sharing information in conservation and how this can be achieved at a technical level. These workshops are introductory sessions for conservators to become more familiar with how records need to be transformed to enable sharing. At the end of January the consortium organised a workshop online with broad participation from conservators across the world (see www.ligatus.org.uk/lcd/meeting/modelling-2).

Following introductory lectures by Kristen St. John from Stanford and Athanasios Velios and Stephen Stead from the University of the Arts London, participants broke out into smaller groups with assistance from project members and moderators Rob Sanderson and George Bruseker. The groups reviewed samples of documentation provided by participants and explored how they could be expressed with the CIDOC-CRM. This was followed up with a discussion about what information in documentation could be prioritized for limited sharing when full modelling is not possible. Through 'sign-posting' by sharing metadata or smaller sets of data about conservation work, it is possible to provide enough information for interested parties to find the location of relevant records.

Additional satellite workshops have been organised for specific institutions or countries embarking in documentation projects with Linked Data. The LCD consortium can support workshops in individual institutions, so interested parties are encouraged to get in touch with project members to discuss potential joint events.

Summer school

The Ligatus summer school 2021 on bookbinding history and Linked Data will take place on 20 -24 September and 27 September to 1 October. Co-organised by Ligatus and the Saint Catherine Foundation, it will take place online this year.

Two courses will be taught through zoom by Professor Nicholas Pickwoad (European bookbinding), Dr Georgios Boudalis (Eastern Mediterranean bookbinding) and Dr Athanasios Velios (bookbinding description and Linked Data).



The late David Hallam

For more information and for application deadlines and forms please refer to the website: www.ligatus.org.uk/summerschool/2021

Looking ahead

LCD has published a draft policy primer and template for organisations wishing to share their conservation data. The Boards of Icon, AIC and IIC are considering this document for ratification. We hope that this process will be complete by the time that this issue of Icon News is printed. We are also exploring possibilities for securing further funding to build a portal for conservation vocabularies as well as provide further training and initiatives around sharing conservation data. We welcome ideas and suggestions from the Icon News readership as well as new members of our consortium or communication list.

Athanasios Velios University of the Arts London, and *Kristen St. John*, Stanford University

AWARDS NEWS

The David Hallam Conservation Research Award

A new international conservation award has been established in honour of David Hallam, an Australian Metals Conservator who sadly died last year.

David's own work in metals conservation contributed to the understanding of the agents of deterioration, preventative conservation, collection care, passive treatments, metal coatings, and anti-corrosion treatments, industrial finishes and so much more. He worked tirelessly to promote conservation, the science behind it, and the necessity for original research.

David was a great and eclectic thinker who loved collaboration and cross-discipline projects. So the research prize aims to keep the rules open, the guidelines simple, and the inclusion absolute.

The only real rule is: the research must be science-based and original. It does not have to be monumental or complex, it just has to help us all to move incrementally forward in our knowledge and appreciation of the material evidence of our collective histories.

The submission deadline is **5 December 2021**.

The submission location and more information can be found at www.endangeredheritage.com/conservation-award

The Plowden Medal – last call!

If you are quick, it is not too late to submit a nomination for this year's Plowden Medal.

The medal was established in 1999 to commemorate the life and work of the late Hon. Anna Plowden CBE (1938 – 1997) and was endowed by the Royal Warrant Holders Association, of which she was Vice-President. It is awarded annually to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the advancement of the conservation profession and whose nomination would be widely welcomed within the conservation community. The award covers all aspects of conservation be they practical, theoretical or managerial – and is open to those working in private practice or institutions.

The submission deadline is **Wednesday 30 June 2021**.

A Selection Board, drawn from the conservation community, the Royal Collection and the Royal Warrant Holders Association will consider nominations in July 2021 and the award will be presented to the winner in the Autumn.

Nomination papers can be downloaded from www.royalwarrant.org. And for any queries please contact Claire Anderson - plowdenmedal@rwha.co.uk

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Archaeology Group

We have been delighted with the response to our online events over the last twelve months. A full report on our most recent event, a virtual tour and talk on the Museum of London Docklands new exhibition *The Havering Hoard: A Bronze Age Mystery*, can be found in the Review section of this issue.

The Archaeology Group 2021 AGM will be held online on 18 June. We are looking forward to hosting more events this year and would love to hear your suggestions and ideas for future events and workshops. Please contact us using our Group emails address: archgroup.icon@gmail.com, we would love to hear from you!

Please watch Iconnect, Twitter (@ICONArchaeology) and the Icon website for further announcements. As always we would love to hear about your current archaeological conservation projects big or small, please tag us and #FindsFriday in your posts and follow us on Twitter to see what everyone else is up to. Let's continue to share how exciting our work can be!

Charlotte Wilkinson

Icon AG Communications Rep



The Plowden Medal

Ceramics and Glass & Stained Glass Groups Conference Update

The Ceramics and Glass Group is pleased to announce that our guest speaker for the 2021 joint CGG-SGG conference will be Julie Monique, a master's student currently working on the stained glass windows of Notre-Dame Cathedral. Julie is training in conservation on the Conservation-restauration des biens culturels course at the University of Paris in conjunction with the Laboratoire de Recherche des Monuments Historiques (LRMH). Her presentation will focus on the windows of Notre-Dame Cathedral and how their condition has been impacted by decisions made before and immediately after the fire on 15 April 2019.

The title of Julie Monique's talk is *Diagnosis and Characterisation of Notre-Dame Stained-Glass Windows*. In it she will argue that 'stained glass as an ornamental enclosure in a building is affected by the damage that the monument suffers. The history of restoration proves this as much as recent events in France. The presentation questions the role and action of restorers in the context of disaster management in which other actors are jointly mobilised (rescue services, architects, conservators, construction companies).

'The identification and evaluation of potential risks linked to a disaster allows for reflection on the necessary and possible conservation operations during the emergency phase. On the other hand, the historiographic study of stained-glass windows that have been damaged allows us to gradually build up and characterize a corpus of alterations to the glass, lead and paint. The objective is to be able to propose, in the long term, an optimization of the action of the restorer of stained-glass windows in an emergency context by setting up specific protocols concerning all the steps of safety: condition reports, emergency consolidations, sheltering, packaging, transport and storage.'

Julie's talk is an exciting way to kick off the programme and should be very interesting for members of both groups. We are looking forward to this event, which will be a much needed opportunity to share ideas and reconnect with colleagues.

Dana Norris ACR

CGG Events Coordinator

In other news...

The Ceramics and Glass Group is currently recruiting for Group Chair. If you have experience relevant to the role, or are interested in professional development, then don't be afraid to get in touch to find out more (cggicon@gmail.com). This is a great opportunity to join a friendly and dynamic community of students and conservators working with ceramics and glass.

CGG Committee

Paintings Group

The Paintings Group held their AGM online on 24 March 2021, where it was announced that Alex Gent had stepped down from the committee after many years of work and support for the Group. Jane McCree, Section Head for Paintings, Frames & Workshop Conservation at Tate, and Alexandra Taylor, Paintings Conservator at Saltmarsh Conservation were nominated and subsequently elected to the committee.

The AGM was followed by a talk from James Grierson (Chair of Icon's Board of Trustees): 'Conservation Training - Working with Charitable Funders'. James talked about his position as a trustee of the York Consortium for Conservation & Craftsmanship and their work supporting trainee and early-career conservators, as well as craftspeople. The audience was very interested in the tips James generously gave to anyone planning to make funding applications for conservation projects or training.

We are continuing our series of online talks in 2021. On 22 April we had a talk from Olympia Diamond: 'Seamless Solutions: Treating a contemporary painting with agarose gel'. Olympia and her colleagues at Julia Nagle Conservation treated *Timescape 00:30, 2016*, by Darren Almond, using a single large sheet of agarose gel after the acrylic painting was damaged by rain. In June we hope to hear from Christine Sitwell about nineteenth-century restorers and later in the year we hope to hear from Elizabeth Wigfield from the Art Institute of Chicago, on her conservation treatment of two Del Sarto portraits. We look forward to welcoming many Icon members as well as other interested people to our online talks.

The postprints from Icon's Paintings Group conference 'Wet Paint - Interactions between Water and Paintings', held in Edinburgh in October 2018, are still available for purchase at the reduced price of £17.20 (including postage within the UK). Payment by BACS and cheques will be accepted.

Please email Julia Jablonska at icon.paintingsgroup@googlemail.com to place an order.

Icon Paintings Group Committee

icon.paintingsgroup@googlemail.com

@IconPaintings - twitter

@iconpaintingsgroup – Instagram

Icon Scotland Group

Training and events

Building on the success of our Take 5 webinars last year, we held two further webinars on 5 May and 16 June. The format of five presenters each speaking for five minutes is a fantastic way to get a quick taste of what is going on in Scotland and beyond, and the presentations will be summarised in a blog post and available to view through YouTube.

We also supported the Paper Conservators in Scotland news and ideas exchange 2021. This event is run annually in Scotland by Helen Creasy from the Scottish Conservation Studio, and was held online for the first time on 12 May 2021. Keep a lookout for a review in *Icon News!*

And coming up is a webinar about a collaborative European research project: project CMOP: Cleaning Modern Oil Paint. The webinar will be given by Bronwyn Ormsby and Judith Kerr on 8 July from 4-6 pm, and tickets are available now through Eventbrite.

Committee membership

We have co-opted Elina Rodriguez Milan onto the committee as our Events Coordinator, and she is proving a huge asset to the committee. Sadly our Training Officer, Claire Hutchieson, has had to step down due to other commitments, but we hope she may return at some point in the future!

Other happenings

We are all expecting 2021 to be a challenging year as we begin to recover from the pandemic, and we are working closely with colleagues in the Museums Galleries Scotland Stakeholders Group and the Built Environment Forum Scotland to lobby for support for the cultural heritage and historic environment sectors in Scotland.

We contributed to Icon's initiative to create and implement an archive management policy for Icon; there are substantial archives from the Scottish Society for Conservator-Restorers (SSCR) and subsequently the Icon Scotland Group, and it is good to know they will be part of this initiative.

Contact and keep in touch

We are always delighted to have new members in the Group, 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. Our general email address is admin@icon-scotland.org and comments and suggestions for events can be emailed to events@iconscotland.org

Stained Glass Group

This year continues to be challenging for us all as we adapt to the constant changes brought about by the pandemic. As such it remains difficult to promote events well ahead of schedule with any certainty. However, as this edition of Icon News went to print, we remain optimistic about hosting our joint conference with the CGG in Bath on 16th & 17th October 2021. Please keep a close eye on our Icon webpage and social media for up-to-date information about this event. Similarly, we will continue to advertise webinars and other interesting news through these platforms.

A number of committee members are due to complete their tenure this year and we are very keen to invite enthusiastic members to join the committee from October. If you would be interested in learning more about this opportunity, please email us at the address below to find out more.

Similarly, we are always delighted to welcome new members into our Group. Please tick the stained glass box on your membership enrolment or renewal form, or simply email Head Office to request Iconnect updates from this Group.

If you have any suggestions about how the Stained Glass Group can further support its members, please get in touch at iconstainedglass@gmail.com

SGG Committee

Textile Group

Latest News

Huge thanks go out to the many Textile Group members and attendees from far and wide who continue to show their support by attending our varied online events; from our Spring Forum & AGM, to our many, many talks...we are always so delighted to see the number of attendees tally up as you log on! The Icon Textile Group is continuing to add to our already successfully well attended online offerings in 2021. Please see our section of the Icon website for more details. The Group also welcomes feedback and suggestions from members for new event ideas.

In March, Kelly Grimshaw, our Student Representative on the committee hosted two evenings of online talks by emerging professionals – ‘Emerging Professionals: Making a Career in Conservation’. Many thanks to all those who attended the event and to the speakers for all their hard work in putting the talks together.

Earlier in the year we were treated to an online talk presented by Ksynia Marko ACR & Glyn Charnock of the NCCA on the topic of cleaning methodologies applied to two historic carpets at Felbrigg Hall (National Trust) in Norfolk. As a follow-on from this talk there is now a brilliant carpet manual entitled ‘The Guidelines for the Routine Care of Historic Carpets & Rugs’ available for purchase through Glyn’s website: <http://www.historiccarpetcare.co.uk/training-manual/4595231391>

In This Issue

We are pleased to include a review by Ksynia Marko ACR of the excellent talk given by Jane Thompson Webb ACR on 16 February. The online talk discussed the ways in which Jane, Conservation Team Leader at Birmingham Museums Trust, has determined the life expectancy of the William Morris Holy Grail Tapestries which are in their care.

Keeping in touch with the Textile Group

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

Writing for Icon News

If you would like to submit an article or review an event, details of how to write for *Icon News* can be found here: www.icon.org.uk/about-us/our-work/icon-news-magazine.html or by contacting Terri Dewhurst.



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Andri Maimaridou, MA Conservation Studies alumnae

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A new Icon trustee



At the beginning of the year the Nominations Committee launched the recruitment process for a new co-opted trustee. We set out to find some who has board level business and financial management experience in a commercial, public sector or charitable environment, with a view to the appointee becoming the next Chair of Icon's Finance Committee. The Nominations Committee was pleased to receive eighteen applications and four candidates were selected for interview.

At their meeting on 24 March 2021 the Board of Trustees approved the Nominations Committee's recommendation that **Richard Bruce** should be appointed as a co-opted trustee.

Richard is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants and has diverse business and professional experience, including running his own business and working with small charities. He is also the treasurer of General Education for Museums (GEM) which provides learning across museums, heritage and cultural settings, publications, digital resources, conferences and advocacy.

As our chair, James Grierson, noted: 'we are particularly pleased to see the combination of large and small organi-

sations, private, public and third sector in Richard's career, which will give a very rounded perspective that Icon will benefit from greatly'.

Richard also brings a welcome sense of humour and a willingness to challenge.

Richard himself comments about his appointment 'I'm extremely interested in museums, collections and the heritage sector, and am delighted to be part of this established, member-led organisation, with such an excellent reputation'.

Icon staff news



Congratulations to **Geanina Beres!**

Geanina has been our part-time Digital Media Officer for the last few months but at the end of April she became our full-time Communications Officer.

She will be the main point of contact for all news, website matters and social media activity, so be sure to welcome her to the role and send her all your news and stories, great and small.

Geanina says: 'After being part of the Icon family for six months, I am absolutely delighted to join the team on a full-time basis, and get to know our colleagues and members even better. My new role will include writing news content for social media, the website and the newsletter, so I am excited to keep up to date with sector news and commission content from sector professionals – our members are great writers!'

She can be contacted at geanina.beres@icon.org.uk

Farewell to **Anni Mantyniem!** On Friday 9 April the Icon team met (online) to say farewell to Anni, who has been a well-respected member of the staff since November 2017 when she joined us as Policy Officer, thanks to generous funding from the Clothworkers' Foundation.

Over the course of two years Anni created our Policy and Advocacy Framework and set up our Policy Advisory Panel, which provides input into our responses to consultations from Government and elsewhere. She was responsible for dozens of letters and briefings sent to MPs and has done a huge amount to raise Icon's profile and standing in the sector and beyond.

In the spring of April 2020 Anni's role evolved into Policy and Communications Manager to reflect our changing needs and our desire to place more emphasis on our external communications. Anni continued to support the delivery of Icon's robust approach to policy work alongside her new communications activities.

Our overarching aim was to promote the value of conservation and the conservation profession to all stakeholders and to members of the public. As you will have seen from Anni's recent updates on the Values of Conservation project and the impact stories on our website she excelled in her new role. Speaking personally I would say that the development of a Campaigns 'hub' on our new website and launching the new external newsletter have been particular highlights of the last year.

Lastly, I was delighted to see some of the lovely messages that members sent to Anni prior to her departure, and I know that we all wish her well as she takes her career in a new direction with Transport for London.

Sara Crofts
Icon Chief Executive

Welcome to these new members

We would like to extend a very warm welcome to all those who joined us in February and March 2021. We hope to see you at an Icon event soon!

Marta Artigas Coll
Student

Rufus Bird
Associate

Rhys Briggs
Student

Morgan Browning
Student

Liberty Caithness
Student

Emma Callaghan
Associate

Felicity Conway
Student

Ann Deckers
Associate

Kate Dieringer
Student

Robert Donald
Student

Spencer Dyment-Shone
Student

Moné Eppel
Student

Mariana Escamilla
Student

Eleanor Gaines-Burrill
Student

Sara Gonzalez
Pathway

Marianna Grieco
Supporter

Genevieve Hancock
Associate

Alex Haycock
Associate

Grace Howson
Student

Hamish Innes
Pathway

Victor Jefferys
Student

Caitlin Jenkins
Associate

Libo Jin
Student

Camille Lafrance

Student

Jason Lai
Associate

Andrew MacDonald
Pathway

Alvar Mailan Escolano
Pathway

Aleksandra Masalska
Pathway

Sofie Meuwes
Associate

Emma Miller
Supporter

Gail Niinimaa
Supporter

Lucy Norfolk
Pathway

Winona O'Connor
Student

Emily Phillips
Student

Marie-Luise Ronsch
Associate

Freya Sackville West
Student

Megan Salas
Associate

Moe Sato
Associate

Paige Schmidt
Associate

Nicola Sheehan
Student

Elizabeth Stettler
Student

Kyoko Takemura
Student

E.J.Telleman
Associate

Albert Traby
Pathway

Makiko Tsunoda
Student

Laura Elena Vázquez Ortiz
Student

Flo Watson
Student

Elizabeth Wells
Student

Glenn Wharton
Associate



© Chapter of Canterbury

Looks like he would like to be an Icon Member.....We just had to find room for this splendid grotesque - part of a new pinnacle on the North Nave Aisle of Canterbury Cathedral, worked by Senior Mason Benn Swinfield, a past student of the City and Guilds Art School. See article on page 28

ARE YOU WORTHY?

Alison Lister ACR relates a private sector conservator's experience of applying to the Government's Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage

INTRODUCTION

In January an Iconnect announced that for-profit conservation businesses were eligible to apply for the Culture Recovery Grant for Heritage, second round. This fund was part of a rescue package announced by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport to 'safeguard cultural and heritage organisations across England from the economic impact of the Coronavirus' (Iconnect Special, 7/1/2021). As the fallout from the pandemic was causing ever greater strain on the finances of my business, Textile Conservation Limited, I decided to apply. The following is an account of my experience of the application process, the issues it raised and the outcomes it achieved.

ABOUT US

Textile Conservation Limited (TCL), based in Bristol, is an independent studio offering services to owners and custodians of textile artefacts in the public and private sectors including museums, historic houses, community groups and private individuals. The commissioned conservation work is most often interventive in nature. The studio has its origins in a partnership business established in the south west in the late 1980s and has been a limited company since 2006. It occupies a purpose-fitted industrial unit of approximately 1000 square feet and is normally staffed by a team of three to four qualified textile conservators. It regularly offers work experience to students and emerging conservators, and its

Pre-pandemic the large work space was an advantage. Alison Lister stitches a silk damask panel from Brodsworth Hall





Marina Herriges applying a net overlay to a large banner from Berkeley Castle

team has participated in numerous professional activities over the years.

THE FINANCIAL EFFECT OF COVID

As a for-profit business TCL is rarely eligible for funding from the established supporters of heritage such as charitable trusts. However, as the economic impact of the Covid 19 pandemic took hold it was able to apply for support via the business rates and job retention schemes. These provided much-needed funds to cover its biggest costs – staff and premises.

All freelancers and small business owners know the pressures of balancing income and expenditure, and for many the first lockdown tipped the balance dangerously, even fatally, towards having too little income to carry on operating.

Before the pandemic TCL's generously-sized work space and relatively large team was advantageous, as it could take on large objects such as tapestries, wall coverings and banners and accommodate the scheduling demands of a diverse client base. However, as the crisis deepened and commissions for new work dwindled the studio's scale placed increasing strain on its financial reserves. It is difficult for a small business to accumulate any financial reserves let alone enough to sustain it through months of little work.

Following the departure of two of the team in the late summer of 2020 (for reasons unrelated to the pandemic) it fell to me and the studio's one remaining employee to generate the income needed to keep the business going. The Iconnect announcement about the grant could not have come soon enough.

MAKING AN APPLICATION

Guidance from the National Lottery Heritage Fund on making an application was provided via extensive written notes, live webinars and an online Q&A contact. The webinars were particularly helpful and encouraging with the main message being 'If you meet the stated criteria, apply'. Having confirmed the eligibility of the business, I completed the online application within the required three-week period.

The application paperwork consisted of three main elements: an online application form, Business Action Plan and Cost Breakdown spreadsheet. The form was to be completed in no more than six thousand words. The main document consisted of thirty seven questions, the first seventeen of which asked for general information about the company and could be answered easily. Questions 18-37 required a great deal more thought and planning.

DEFINING OUR SIGNIFICANCE

Question 18 asked about the local, national and international significance of the heritage the applicant owned, managed or worked with. For organisations that were not collections or sites it requested information on the significance to heritage of the services provided, the importance, scarcity and level of specialism of these, and the impact on heritage if the provider could not operate viably. Details of the role played in 'nurturing growth, diversity and creativity in the sector' was also requested.

The significance question proved more difficult to answer than it first appeared. While I could easily make a case for conservation, establishing TCLs 'quality of being worthy of attention' (Oxford Languages/Google dictionary definition for significance) led to some serious reflection on its purpose and value. My response was to explain and illustrate the significance of the studio through reference to the expert knowledge, skills and resources it contains and provides.

A brief history of the studio was given to show its long standing and well-established relations with local and regional heritage organisations, some of which were listed. Since its establishment over thirty years ago the studio has always had a wide variety of clients so the list was easily able to show the diversity of heritage that it supports. Examples of the contributions its team makes to local heritage and to conservation education were also provided. The effects of closure of the business on both clients and the conservation profession was explained with reference to the scarcity of similar providers, locally and nationally of both services and training/employment opportunities. Answering this question alone took over eight hundred words.

DESCRIBING OUR IMPACT

Questions 19-29 focussed on the cultural and economic impact of the organisation making the application. Information was requested on its contribution to local culture and heritage, to economic regeneration in the local community and for local people, particularly those in 'underserved audiences'. Several questions focussed on employment in

the organisation and how it would use the grant to broaden the diversity of both its workforce and audience.

I highlighted the studio's long-standing connection with individuals and organisations that support and enhance local cultural activity, including friends of heritage sites and bodies such as the Diocesan Advisory Committees. The local significance of objects conserved by the studio, such as John Wesley's bed, textiles linked to the SS Great Britain and flags and uniforms of the Somerset Regiment was also mentioned.

Reference was made to the current local public engagement activities we offer such as hosting work experience placements for Year 12 school pupils, and how new ways of connecting with the local community are being developed. I was able to show that the studio's client base covers a wide range of socioeconomic groups reflecting its awareness of how heritage exists in many contexts and is valued for different reasons from the personal to the global. I stressed that TCL is an inclusive employer that values diversity in its workforce, and that its recruitment and employment policies have no exclusions.

I felt it was important, however, to acknowledge that the UK heritage sector still does not fully reflect the diversity within its population, and that all parts, including conservation, have a role to play in reaching out to excluded groups.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

Questions 30-36 were all about finances and required the help of our accountant. I had to state the exact amount being applied for and precisely what it would be spent on, provide financial accounts for the past two years, give a forecast of how much money TCL would have in unrestricted reserves at the end of the month and an estimate of how long these reserves would last.

Covid-19 related government grants had to be declared and explanations given on how all other reasonable financing options had been exhausted. This information needed to tally with the details given in the Business Action Plan. The required figures were provided demonstrating TCL's micro-business scale and modest turnover but also its careful matching of supply with demand, maintenance of a simple and flexible business model and cautious approach to financial management. All that used up another seven hundred words.

PLANNING AHEAD

Finally, question 37 requested information on TCL's plans to ensure its viability and sustainability for the coming year. It asked for a narrative to support the Business Action Plan and Cost Breakdown. I explained how the pandemic had disrupted TCL's normal pattern of income making specific reference to the postponement and cancellation of some high value commissions placing the long term workforce and financial stability of the business at risk.

Looking forward to the summer of 2021, however, I anticipated a growth in demand for our services as activity in the heritage sector increased. I argued that if TCL could continue



Stella Gardner and Alison Lister vacuuming the reverse of a tapestry 'The Triumph of Mordecai'

operating until that period, using the grant to prevent any further loss of essential resources (staff and premises) it would be able to rebuild its capacity and reserves. To mitigate the risks caused by a slower than expected recovery the studio planned to extend its marketing efforts and explore new areas within the heritage sector that might have need of its knowledge and skills.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Completing the application form and providing all the supporting documents was both time-consuming and stressful. It took approximately thirty-five hours to prepare and submit the application plus additional time provided by my colleague and the studio's accountant. Time is money in commercial practice, so the financial stakes were high.

Getting to grips with what was being asked for and determining what information and evidence I could supply to meet the identified requirements was challenging. Every stage of the actual submission process also demanded close attention and a steady hand on the keyboard. At one point a character limit to the word count suddenly appeared causing some anxiety and a rapid rewording of the larger pieces of text.

The biggest challenge however, was not technical but conceptual - how should the heritage significance of a commercial conservation studio be defined and substantiated?

Could I provide a convincing argument for the contribution my business makes to heritage, the negative impact its closure would have on heritage and the future benefits to heritage it could provide if financial support were given?

Would a major funder, receiving applications from hundreds of heritage sites, organisations and groups consider the information and justification I gave sufficient to grant my request for £25,000?

THE ANSWER IS YES!

Textile Conservation Limited is number 322 in the list of 477 organisations awarded a grant by the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage announced on 2 April 2021.

Thank you, National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic England. The funds will be used to help cover the costs of running the studio for the next three months, recruit a new member of staff, develop our marketing strategy and update the old and tired IT equipment, all of which will put the business on a firmer footing for the future.

Conservators in private practice – you are worthy.

Alison Lister ACR is Director/Principal Conservator of Textile Conservation Limited, Bristol
a.lister@textileconservation.co.uk
www.textileconservation.co.uk

FORTY YEARS AT THE COAL-FACE

Following on from last issue's celebration of Robert Minte's forty years at the Bodleian, we thought it would be a splendid idea to celebrate other Accredited conservators who have served for a similar period of time in the field. We have tempted a few of them to look back, tell you a little bit about themselves and offer some words of advice

DEBORAH BATES ACR

If I could counsel my twenty-one year old self, unsure about setting up in private practice, I wouldn't hesitate to say: 'Go for it!' The decision was regarded as foolhardy by many at the



Deborah Bates: 'after over forty years in the business, this photo sums up the need to have an outlet elsewhere than conservation, especially as at this stage of a career the work is high risk and high stress!'

time but in 1980 jobs in conservation were scarce. So, after three years at Camberwell, I embarked on a career as an independent conservator.

The first sixteen years of my career were spent in partnership with my friend Camilla Baskcomb and together we built a strong network of clients, saying 'yes' to every opportunity. Private practice seemed fraught with difficulties but we had fun along the way including, during recessions, exhibiting at art fairs where we gave talks and demonstrations educating dealers and the public about paper conservation when the professional profile was not what it is now.

The decades have flown by, the business undergoing many transmutations. In the early days, the flexibility provided by partnerships permitted diversity: in parallel to studio practice, I've been a publican, a winemaker, gallerist and perhaps more pertinently a founding-trustee of the European Art Conservation Trust. Later, as a sole trader, I continued to enjoy the company of employees and interns, whose contribution has always mattered. Change has enthused and reinvigorated me: even in the last few years I've taken on more, leaving London to establish a studio in Kent

Now, with forty years' experience, it's my pleasure to work with some remarkable collections. Rewarding ongoing projects include the restoration of important Impressionist pastels from a major private collection and overseeing work on loan internationally, liaising with curatorial staff to ensure best practice. To my twenty-one year old self I can confidently advise that a career in independent conservation needn't preclude museum experience.

Working for the high-stakes art market can be stressful and I try to be more selective about work these days. Like all of us, I am learning to focus on what matters. That's what my picture is about!

CORINNE FARMER (nee HILLMAN) ACR

I am an Art Conservator and member of gallery staff at Towner, the art gallery in Eastbourne, Sussex, which won the Art Fund Museum of the Year award in 2020. I have worked there since its new building opened in 2009. As a conservator I work with the curatorial staff to care for the celebrated five thousand strong collection (including work by Bomberg, Christopher Wood, Eric Ravilious and Tacita Dean), doing everything from condition reports to full conservation treatment. With my gallery staff hat on, I carry out front of house duties, tours and lectures. I also work for private clients in the UK.



Corinne Farmer

Earlier jobs in my career have included Glamorgan Archives, National Museum of Wales and then the Public Record Office which became The National Archives, where I established the outline for in-house photographic conservation training

As for my most rewarding project or work of which I am most proud, that is very difficult to answer as every piece of work presents a challenge. But highlights include:

- The Jamie Reid Archive, which was a fascinating and iconic contemporary collection. (Reid was a designer famously associated with the Sex Pistols)
- Preparation for major Towner exhibitions, ie. *Ravilious & Co: the pattern of friendship* (2017)
- Preparation and attendance at the London Art Fair in 2019
- My many years as Undergraduate Course Director at Camberwell College of Arts, teaching and supporting conservators wishing to join the profession – their ideas and projects were often extremely thought-provoking as well as challenging
- Working as an Icon Accreditation Assessor in Singapore (2012) – a wonderfully rewarding experience.

Addressing my younger self early in my career, I would say: 'Regard every project as an opportunity: to further skills and knowledge, meet professional colleagues who will be your life support system (particularly if you work in isolation), and preserve the most amazing artefacts for future generations. When I started out in the profession, little did I know that my life and my work would allow me to travel - to India, America and Europe - to impart knowledge through training and conferences.'

My final words of advice are attributable to Dr Sabrina Cohen-Hatton, one of the most senior female firefighters in the UK, whose 2019 book *The Heat of the Moment* published by Black Swan is inspiring and translates to any profession:



Corinne Farmer undertaking surface cleaning work in the Towner gallery art store

'It's essential that you feel supported in your work, from not only a well-being perspective but also in terms of performance. Supported decision-making is vital: how often do we instinctively assume something will work without considering the implications...instincts alone are not the answer – remember your support group, the professional colleagues who have honed their skills over years, always ready to impart their knowledge'.

PENNY JENKINS ACR

I've been an independent paper conservator since the early 1980s and now work on a part-time basis. I enjoy the continuous learning of the skills and medium. With more knowledge about historical papers, the more sensitive one becomes to the integrity of a piece; with a greater awareness of risks and yet more confident in carrying out practical treatments. I love the challenges of pressing papers, preserving plate marks on prints, accounting for example, whether it's a soft plate paper or a sized sheet.

Aside from the studio, I've served as a Trustee of the Institute of Paper Conservation and of Icon and I am a trustee or committee member on other arts and heritage organisations.

After college (at Camberwell) there were no structured employment positions. Many of us set up our own practice after a few years. Before setting up a studio, I worked for a print dealer where I built up practical skills and it was a good grounding to becoming a competent expert.

Practically, there are very few people who have an outstanding natural ability to conserve works but everyone can become good, if they have the aptitude, a chance to practise and love of the subject.

If I could talk to my younger self I would advise her to put aside time for research and share findings. To lecture is the best way to learn deeply about the subject.

A particular mentoring article is on friction pressing by Keiko Keyes*. I was lucky to meet Keiko when I attended an AIC conference in Los Angeles in 1984. That particular trip to the United States to tour conservation studios was an affirmative



Penny Jenkins

experience. People were generous and full of innovative ideas. (The Suction Table!). There was an infectious confidence in paper conservation and research.

* Keiko Mizushima Keyes, *The Use of Friction Mounting as an Aid to Pressing Works on Paper*, The Book and Paper Group Annual Volume Three, 1984, The American Institute for Conservation. Paper delivered at the Book and Paper specialty group session, AIC 12th Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, 1984

RICHARD NICHOLS ACR

I have recently embarked on an exciting venture as a Conservator in Private Practice. After a fulfilling and enjoyable forty-four years in continuous employment (and forty-four years membership of Icon and other bodies) I am officially 'retired'. However, in addition to private commissions, I will continue with seminars and other projects.

For the past thirty years I have been Senior Conservator with the Staffordshire Archive and Heritage Service. This has been a wonderfully privileged position, working on a diverse collection with material ranging from Anglo Saxon parchment documents to volumes representing all aspects of bookbinding development from the twelfth century onwards.

Some of my most fulfilling ventures have involved training and teaching, for example grant-funded projects where I supported conservators, just post qualification, to work on the conservation

of major special collections. One of these was the archives of the Earls of Bradford dating back to medieval times: 'Paper, Parchment and Book'. This project, suggested by Icon's Susan Bradshaw, was funded by The Clothworkers' Foundation and was carried out under the Icon Internship Programme.

Another project was the conservation of the design drawings and business records of the Minton pottery company of Stoke on Trent, funded by the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust, the Wolfson Foundation, the Art Fund and the Pilgrim Trust.

I have also been privileged to teach undergraduates at Camberwell and West Dean, and, for twenty-five years, trainees on the Archives and Records Association training scheme. I have held many voluntary positions, including for many years being on Icon's Accreditation Committee.

My earliest inspiration was Dr Douglas East. He taught me bookbinding, printing and calligraphy at my secondary school and afterwards on the conservation course at Camberwell. Dr

Richard Nichols treating minor edge tears prior to exhibition. The object is the will of Wulfric Spot 1004, an Anglo Saxon thegn, in which he endows a Benedictine monastery at Burton upon Trent



East was still conserving books for Westminster Abbey Library and teaching until his death a few years ago at the age 93!

On graduating from Camberwell in 1976, my first job was with Derbyshire Record Office where I was employed as 'Manuscript Repairer'. Our profession has evolved a long way since those days, although one of our core principles - 'to make material accessible to our users' - remains just as relevant now as it was then. In the 1980s I worked for a couple of years at Hertfordshire Archives, my memory is of a quiet rural idyll. I then worked for nine years at the London Metropolitan Archive, a large and busy enterprise with a small but dedicated team of conservators.

Looking back, I would say to my younger self or to any recently qualified conservator: whilst ours is a specialised and niche field there are some great opportunities out there, be prepared to move to find the right position for yourself, keep growing your technical skills and knowledge, and be ready to 'give back' by engaging with our users and professional bodies, our students, trainees and volunteers. There is huge enjoyment to be had in contributing to the evolution of our methods and in sharing the wonderful work that we are privileged to do!

PAULINE WEBBER ACR

What was my first conservation project? Thinking way back, it must have been when I was twelve years old and volunteered to repair a pile of battered Latin textbooks for our teacher, Sister Mary Regis, who later commended me for choosing the worst ones to tackle first. As a child, I always enjoyed going to the museums of Oxford. Then later, as an art student in London, I was a frequent visitor to the nearby V&A and its magnificent collections, not knowing that in a few years I would be working there myself.

I have always felt fortunate that I began my career in paper conservation at the V&A during the formative years of the profession. For me, it was exciting and stimulating to work with a diverse and multi-skilled team of colleagues on collections of such variety, breadth and depth. There were opportunities for learning about all aspects of museology – teaching, mentoring and learning were all encouraged.

For eleven years, I was Head of the Paper Conservation Section and, for a further three years, the combined Paper, Books and Paintings Section. It was a very happy time, largely due to the inspired direction of Dr Jonathan Ashley-Smith, and the successful working relationships that flourished between the conservation staff and other departments throughout the museum. It was a delight to walk through the museum in the morning on the way to the studio and see such wonderful objects en route: I still remember a beautiful 15th century painted Spanish textile; a colourful 14th century marriage chest, and a magnificent ceramic ceiling by Della Robbia, now beautifully conserved and redisplayed in the Mediaeval & Renaissance gallery.

In 2005, I left the V&A to join my husband in Boston USA, where I have been working since, largely as an independent conservator, on various projects at institutions such as the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, and the Rhode Island School of Design Museum. It has



Pauline Webber and the Strathallen Chinese Export Wallpaper installation at the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts, USA.

been something of a luxury to focus on practical work and learn new documentation systems and procedures. Perhaps my most favourite project whilst here was the treatment of the suite of Chinese export wallpapers from Strathallen Castle, recently installed in the new wing of the Peabody Essex Museum as a complete room with an immersive twenty-four channel sound system*.

The world of conservation has expanded enormously since I first joined the profession, with so many more fields and areas of specialization. And it has been heartening to see colleagues of all ages who have been able to find their niche and follow a career path that makes the most of their talents, capabilities and interests. I am thinking of the changes and challenges that lie ahead for all of us in these uncertain times. It's not always easy to plot your path in any career, but it has been my experience – and I see this in others, too – that, despite difficult times, sometimes new and unexpected opportunities can present themselves, and that an open and positive attitude can help to recognize and use them to move yourself forwards in directions you had never imagined.

For myself, I continue with practical work, which I enjoy immensely, still learning and honing my skills. Before conservation, I studied Fine Art at Canterbury and Chelsea Schools of Art, and more recently I have returned to producing and exhibiting my own work. Much as we have loved living and working in New England, the time has come to return to my roots, to where I grew up in Oxford. I am now looking forward to renewing old friendships and acquaintances, to being closer to our families, and to enjoying the adventures that the future brings.

*pem.org | If These Wall#2416BB1
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00393630.2020.1752435>



Elizabeth Sobczynski and Fr Bigoul, Librarian, examining a 13th century Coptic manuscript in the Deir al-Surian old library, Egypt

ELIZABETH SOBCZYNSKI ACR

I am a conservator specialising in art on paper and over the years I have worked for the leading collections and museums in the UK and Egypt. In that time, I have been privileged to handle the most amazing array of old and modern master drawings from the 16th century masters such as Bernardino Luini, Ludovico Carracci to Paul Rubens, Picasso, Cézanne Tracy Amin, Banksy and many, many others.

I am co-founder and partner of Voitek Conservation of Works of Art. Our purpose-built studio is based in central London where numerous conservation projects for private and public collections including The Government Collection, The Arts Council England and the Henry Moore Foundation have taken place. My work at Tate where I have been working as a free-lance conservator for around twenty years also includes exhibition condition assessments and reports. Hundreds of works have passed through my hands, have been preserved and are now on display all over the world.

Until recently, I had a studio assistant while large projects were usually undertaken in collaboration with extra conservators. I have always liked working with other professionals; conservators, historians, scholars etc. In my view, it is hugely important for professional development. Collaborations and partnerships stimulate discussions, the exchange and sharing of knowledge and the widening of a specialised network vital in any profession.

In the mid-nineties, as a member of the Institute of Paper Conservation Executive Committee I devoted much time to designing and delivering seminars and international conferences on topics of conservation. But it is The Levantine Foundation where I think my greatest contribution to the profession lies, through advocacy and education.

I am founder and CEO of The Levantine Foundation, which is a charity registered in England and the Arab Republic of Egypt. Our aim is to preserve Near Eastern historical documents on paper and parchment, and to disseminate their enormously important cultural content to a broader public. The Foundation

also organises and assists in the provision of lectures, courses of instruction and educational activities with a view to promoting cultural heritage preservation.

Since its inception in 2002, the Foundation has been preserving and facilitating the cataloguing of the unique collection of ancient Christian manuscripts in Syriac (a dialect in Aramaic), Coptic, Christian Arabic and Ethiopic, dating from the 5th century AD and held at the Coptic Orthodox monastery Deir al-Surian (the Monastery of the Syrians) in the Western Desert of Egypt. (Our construction of a new state of the art library building to house the collection was covered in Icon News issue 46 in May 2013.)

For the last two years, the British Council Cultural Protection Fund in partnership with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport has awarded us major grants to continue conservation in Deir al-Surian, internships for university students and training of local museum professionals in Egypt. The grant enabled us to deliver a highly successful virtual training programme last November delivered online by eleven eminent conservation and museum specialists from six different European and Egyptian centres to over two hundred participants. We were also able to make two educational films to raise awareness of the Collection's importance and introduce primary school children to the tradition of bookmaking for world-wide distribution. Both films can be watched on the Foundation's website and YouTube.

As for what my greatest inspiration and influence has been, well, there have been many but I suppose if I wanted to name just one it would be my art history professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow who said that every country has its cultural legacy that needs preserving and from which all humanity and future generations can profit.

My professional journey continues to be very exciting; I would like to expand our training programmes to include schools as the future lies in their hands.

More information can be found on our website www.thelevantinefoundation.org

PUBLICATION

ENGLISH HERITAGE INSECT PEST POSTER: its history and evolution

Available online at:
 eh-bugs-poster-web_240321.pdf
 (english-heritage.org.uk)
 Printed copies available from:
 English Heritage Customer Services
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 Quote the Product number 506506

The new poster 'Insect Pests in Historic Houses and Museums' was recently published in March 2021 and is the third in the series produced by English Heritage. The poster originated with 'Insect Pests found in Historic Houses and Museums' in 1998 with support from the Museums and Galleries Commission and Central Science Laboratory (CSL) and has since undergone two major revisions in content and format.

The poster was originally devised by Amber Xavier-Rowe ACR, now Head of Collections Conservation, as a cut and paste hand-out, with images supplied by CSL, for English Heritage staff who attended their first Integrated Pest Management (IPM) workshop. It was well received by participants who then used it as a guide to identify the pests they found on the monitoring traps. The poster was thereafter used widely in the UK and other countries.

By 2008, over five thousand copies had been distributed and it was decided that the poster needed a major revision to include more recently established pests such as the Guernsey carpet beetle *Anthrenus sarnicus* and the Brown carpet beetle or 'Vodka beetle' *Attagenus smirnovi*. The colour and layout of the poster, re-titled 'A Helpful Guide to Insect Pests Found in Historic Houses and Museums', was changed and new images of the pests were supplied by CSL/Collections Trust. Over twenty-five thousand printed copies of this new poster were distributed over the next ten years to fifteen countries as well as being available for download from the English Heritage Collections Conservation Advice and Guidance website.

In 2019, the poster once again required a revision to include more new pests, such as the grey silverfish *Ctenolepisma longicaudatum* and allowed for a revamped layout. The new format puts a

cutaway infested house at the centre of the poster emphasising some of the key factors to take into consideration when seeking to prevent insect attack within a domestic environment, the principles of which are readily adaptable to a cultural heritage setting. This, in combination with a colour categorised insect pests key, allows for a visual contextualisation of

materials most at risk of attack and provides tips for prevention. A new series of insect images commissioned from the Oxford University Museum of Natural History provide an excellent identification guide.

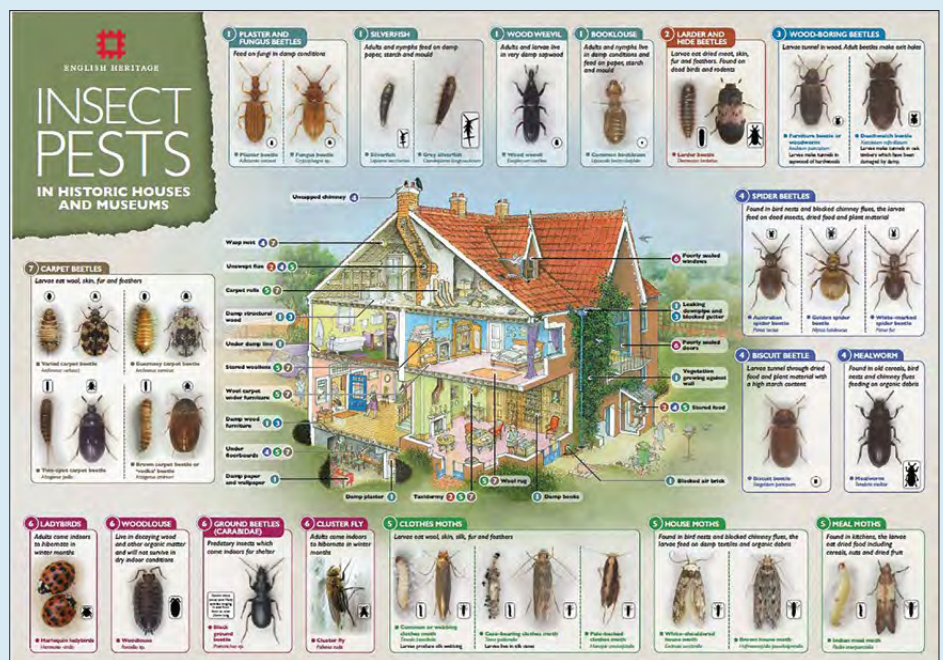
The poster in its new intuitive format is an invaluable resource to all who work in a cultural heritage context, and I look

The first version of English Heritage's pest poster



© English Heritage

The latest version of English Heritage's pest poster



© English Heritage

forward to seeing it used as a point of reference for historic houses, museums, archives and libraries across the world. The history of insect pests in historic houses and museums is recorded through these insect pest posters and they have themselves become pieces of history (particularly the early green one - if you are lucky enough to get your hands on one)!

Thanks go to Amber Xavier-Rowe, Head of Collections Conservation, and Dee Lauder, Collections Pest Control Manager, for their enthusiasm and support for this project and for providing the statistics contained within this review.

Amy Crossman
Collections Care Consultant;
with **David Pinniger**
Consultant Entomologist

TALKS

DETERMINING THE LIFE EXPECTANCY OF TAPESTRIES

Birmingham Museums Trust
Online 16 February 2021

This talk was given by **Jane Thompson Webb ACR**, Conservation Team Leader at Birmingham Museums Trust. It focused on a set of six tapestry panels, which were designed by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, with input from John Henry Dearle and William Morris and were woven by Morris & Company at Merton Abbey in the 1890s.

The tapestries tell the story of the Legend of the Holy Grail which was popular at the time and several sets were commissioned. Apparently the first set, woven between 1890-1894 for William Knox D'Arcy for his dining room at Stanmore Hall in Middlesex, cost around £3,500 - just under £500,000 in today's money. The tapestries now belonging to Birmingham Museums originate from three different sets woven between 1895 and 1900. Individual pieces were acquired by the museum between 1907 and 1980 and are significant in being the most complete series of these designs in the UK and, as such, are much appreciated by visitors.

The last time the tapestries were seen on display was in 2014 for the best part of a year. The conservators expressed concerns about the amount of exposure that the tapestries were subjected to, even under controlled lighting levels, and especially with regard to loan requests.



The Attainment: the last scene in the Holy Grail tapestry series

An initial aim, before tests were carried out, was to allow three months exposure followed by storage for five years, but this advice was not followed. Six months exposure caused more concern and it became obvious that detailed research was required.

The research question asked by Jane and her team was: 'how much time before we get to JNF (Just Noticeable Fade) if the tapestries are shown continuously at 50-80lux, and what implications will this have for future exhibition planning?'

The smallest tapestry panel depicting a ship measures 1040mm wide x 2390mm high and the largest, at 6050mm wide x 2440mm high, depicts the last scene in the series '*The Attainment; the vision of the Holy Grail to Sir Galahad, Sir Bors and Sir Percival*'. The tapestries are woven with cotton warp, and wefts of wool, silk and camel hair. Jane explained some of the weaving techniques employed and noted that Morris preferred to use natural plant based dyes in his attempt to emulate medieval tapestries.

She commented that visible change to newly applied natural dyes could occur within three years, even under 50lux controlled light exposure, and this rapid change in natural dyes is often observed by conservators when dealing with previous repairs. The fading rate of

original yarns, which may be one- to five-hundred years old, has normally slowed down in contrast to any repair yarns, resulting in a visual disharmony between the two. In terms of display, there is a balancing act between being able to see and appreciate an object whilst limiting damage.

Dye analysis was first undertaken which showed the range of natural dyes used in the tapestries, which included both madder and indigo. An initial fade rate was measured using the Blue Wool Standard BS1006 (1961) scale 1-8, where 1 = least stable and 8 = most stable. The scale 4-8 is considered stable and resistant to fading. The National Trust uses the Blue Wool Standard scale 1-3 to inform unacceptable changes to its collections and, with many objects on permanent display, the information collated on an annual basis is used to inform a property's light plan, for example whether blinds and curtains should be open or closed or access limited. Tests on the Holy Grail tapestries were undertaken by Bruce Ford, a specialist consultant providing an on-site service and, whilst the Blue Wool Standard showed that the colours were fairly stable, a longer-term projection was needed.

Jane explained that light can be described as energy and on the electromagnetic spectrum the wave-length is



Photo by Birmingham Museums Trust, licensed under CC0

measured as a straight line, the longest wave-length being red and the shortest violet. The shorter wave-length has the most energy and interacts with molecules in an object causing deterioration. Jane also pointed out that this should not be seen in isolation as fibres are also affected by changes in relative humidity and dust deposition, which is why environmental control and routine vacuuming are part of the care regime.

So what is micro-fading? Jane clarified that micro-fading is a technique used to establish the actual light sensitivity of an object by exposing a tiny area (approx. 0.3 - 0.40mm) to both infrared and ultraviolet light, and then measuring the colour change with a spectrophotometer. Exposures equivalent to five to ten years' display at normal museum light levels are achieved within a ten minute test period. The small colour change is not visible to the human eye and does not damage the object.

A perceptible change, or JNF, defines a colour change that is just visible, and whilst this can be compared to the blue dyed wool swatches that comprise the Blue Wool Standards, micro-fading provides a greater distinction between the different scales and between specific colourants. It is a method that is now employed by a number of international cultural institutions to inform strategies

for the care of collections.

Jane explained that the tests and research undertaken have allowed both curators and conservators to agree a policy for future display with much more confidence, based on specific data, rather than assumptions. The current regime has been implemented to make up for the over-exposure experienced in the last twenty years, so the tapestries will initially remain in store for the next twelve years, only being seen again in 2026. After that they will be exhibited for three months and rested for five years as part of the on-going programme of care. If this is maintained test results indicated that it will be two hundred and ten years before a JNF is observed.

What I enjoyed about Jane's talk was the fact that she did not assume that those listening knew anything about the subject. Her talk was well-prepared and her explanations clear and informative, making it easy for anyone to take notes. I have not been personally involved with this type of research, and it was only in recent years that micro-fading was undertaken on a tapestry treated at the National Trust Textile Studio for the Bodleian Library to help inform their rotational display. Rotational display within Trust properties is limited, even for sets of tapestry, as objects are shown in context and rarely seen as stand-alone

items as they are in museums. Also storage is not always practical.

Following the talk there were several questions from attendees and discussions around the possibilities and limitations of rotational display, the use of UV glass as a protective screen in front of the tapestries, the use of barriers, and issues regarding storage over a prolonged period. Jane's short talk has provided much food for thought and, whilst some may disagree with the outcome, she reminded us that, as William Morris said, 'We are only the trustees for those who come after us'. Thank you Jane for an engaging and informative talk.

Ksynia Marko ACR

This talk was given on behalf of Birmingham Museums Trust whose collection of around 800,000 objects, designated as being of national importance, are displayed and stored in nine different venues, showcasing the arts, industrial heritage, science, technology and medicine. Tickets for the event were sold at the reasonable price of £12.50 in support of the museum as a charity. <https://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/about>

For more information about micro-fading see: <https://www.microfading.com>

THE CCG AGM

Icon Care of Collections Group

Online 25 March 2021

Focusing on all things positive, the day's talks were chosen to reflect on the last year's events. Without taking away from the tragedy and awfulness of Covid and its repercussions, the aim of the day was to look at some positive outcomes for people and objects: what have we learnt about ourselves and objects, what is essential for the wellbeing of both, what is now important, essential and a priority, and how we use this new found awareness to create a more sustainable and caring future.

The event attracted one hundred and eighteen participants from the UK, USA and Europe and there were seventeen presentations on a wide variety of topics. I won't go into details about each talk here as they will be available to watch on the Icon YouTube channel - accessible via the Icon website - but here are some of the overarching themes:

Environmental control

All museums and heritage sites spent the majority of the last year closed with only a skeleton staff to manage and monitor collections. Risk assessments were carried out to identify what was and was not essential and new-found technical skills allowed conservators to assess conditions

At the sign of the Pest Trap: adjourning to the virtual pub after the CCG AGM



A conservator of the future? Viki McAllister enjoyed the AGM with her daughter Heidi

and objects remotely. Some of the benefits were not having to heat places for visitor comfort, reduction generally in wear and tear, and time to focus on planning and prioritisation.

Reopening

Planning for reopening is now key and conservators shared lessons learnt from last year, and new ideas, on how this can be achieved safely. Managing social distancing and the use of appropriate cleaning techniques and materials were discussed.

Training

Last year with many conservators working from home, furloughed or out of work, there was the opportunity for training and CPD. There was a wealth of virtual material available on-line covering every topic and subject matter. The virtual nature of these events allowed them to be accessible to conservators all over the world, and with no travel and costs involved, a much more sustainable way of learning for the future. Many institutions developed training programmes that they could deliver virtually to their teams and there was discussion about how in the future this resource could be shared more widely.

Wellbeing:

Finally, and very importantly, the wellbeing of conservators was highlighted in a number of talks. Although it was wonderful to see how conservation has been considered an essential activity for many museums, still conservators were separated from their collections and sites, working from home, furloughed, or not working at all as freelance work ground to a halt. But conservators are a creative and resourceful bunch of people and talks highlighted the positives: what we have learnt from this year, how we manage our wellbeing better, and in the future achieve a better work life balance. The days talks really did end on an affirmative note.

So what do we want for the future: more balance in our lives, some online events but not all the time, and definitely more cat gifs!

The day ended with a well-deserved trip to the virtual pub, The Pest Trap, and to enjoy a cocktail made under the direction of the wonderful Amanda Richards. Thanks go to the Committee for all their support and hard work for the event, the Events team for coolly dealing with technical glitches on the day, and all the participants for engaging with the event and discussions.

Siobhan Barratt ACR

COURSE

UNDER THE INFLUENCE: influence for collection care training course
Icon Care of Collections Group
Online 17 & 24 February 2021

Under the Influence was a two-part training course delivered across two afternoons on Zoom. The course was led by **Professor Jane Henderson ACR** and focussed on influence techniques, aiming to help participants become better communicators.

The Care of Collections Group was keen to offer this soft skills training in response to increased awareness of the importance of influence and communication skills in delivering effective collection care. The course was subsidised by the Care of Collections Group and sold out within minutes of being advertised and generated a substantial waiting list. The response to this course suggests a clear interest and demand for this type of training among collection care professionals.

The first session looked at influence as a skill, and explored the components of influence and incremental change. Participants were also encouraged to think about who they want to influence and why, and analyse the characteristics of these individuals, questioning why should or would this person listen to me, and what is in it for them?

In between sessions, participants were



© Kayleigh Spring

CC Group committee member Kayleigh Spring's take on the recent training course

encouraged to watch a Ted talk on *Mass Influence - the habits of the highly influential* by Teresa de Grosbois. The talk can be viewed on youtube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i18fY_WCq8) and is well worth watching.

Session two explored in more detail how the person that you are trying to influence might evaluate you, and how this may affect the way that you are being heard. The group discussed issues such as expertise, gender, image, credibility and personality.

We were also encouraged to reflect and analyse frustrating encounters that we have experienced, with a view to identifying where we may have gone wrong, or what we could do to adapt our message and communication mode to increase the likeliness of success. We used this time to produce a personal Action Plan to put into action.

Overall the course was thought-provoking, impactful and very practical, and it highlighted how valuable influence and communication skills are in delivering effective collection care.

Due to the overwhelming response received for this course, the Care of Collections Group is planning to offer a repeat session of the training, as well as look for additional soft skills training opportunities to offer its members going forward.

Abby Moore

Collection Care Conservator
Museum of London

VISIT

THE HAVERING HOARD
Icon Archaeology Group
Online 12 February 2021

The Icon Archaeology Group, in collaboration with the Museum of London (MOL) and Drakon Heritage and Conservation, held a virtual Zoom tour of the *Havering Hoard: A Bronze Age Mystery* exhibition. The hoard at the centre of this event was

excavated by Archaeological Solutions in September 2018. The Museum of London acquired the hoard in 2019, and in August 2020 a small group of curators, conservators and technicians installed the objects. Because of the pandemic, access to the exhibition has been severely restricted. With this event we were hoping to invite the Icon membership to explore the exhibition remotely and hear from the curator and conservators who took part in bringing this exhibition to life.

The event started with a ten-minute flythrough video of the exhibition. The video was recorded by the MOL AV (Audio Visual) team shortly after the installation was completed. The flythrough was accompanied by a soothing narration from **Kate Sumnall**, the curator of the exhibition, explaining the history of the discovery of the hoard, the types of objects found and the four main hypotheses surrounding the deposition of the hoard.

Following the video, **Pieta Greaves ACR** discussed the micro-excavation, recording and conservation of the 454 Bronze Age objects that make up the hoard.

From the Havering Hoard online event:

Top left: Luisa Duarte (Icon AG and MOL Conservator); top right: Pieta Greaves ACR (Drakon Heritage and Conservation)

Bottom left: Kate Sumnall (MOL Curator); bottom right: Helen Ganiaris ACR (Icon AG Chair)



The entrance to the Havering Hoard exhibition

After this, Kate Sumnall and **Luisa Duarte** (MOL conservator) had a conversation regarding their experiences of the design process and installation of the exhibition. They particularly discussed the effects of Covid-19 on the exhibition and some of the solutions used to make the installation process and display interactives safe.

The event finished with a lively question and answer session and closing comments from **Helen Ganiaris ACR**, the Icon Archaeology Group Chair. The one hundred and sixty people who attended indicated their enjoyment of the virtual tour and short lectures in the chat bar. Many expressed an interest for similar events in the future, as people are missing visiting museums and exhibitions.

Havering Hoard: A Bronze Age Mystery is a free exhibition at Museum of London Docklands. The museum is expected to reopen in May, and the exhibition will be available until September 2021.

Luisa Duarte

Icon AG, Secretary and Events Officer



REMOTE LEARNING IN A PANDEMIC

Frances Cambrook, Heather Newton ACR and Karen Powell examine how effectively conservation training can be delivered online

INTRODUCTION

The Cathedrals' Workshop Fellowship (CWF) is an association of ten Anglican cathedrals established in 2006 to provide education and training for the craftsmen and women who maintain cathedrals and other historic buildings. Its students include heritage stonemasons, carpenter/joiners, electricians and plumbers. The Foundation degree in Applied Historic Building Conservation and Repair has been running since 2010 and was validated by the University of Gloucestershire in 2017. We recruit students from the ten CWF cathedrals and from commercial contractors.

Tony Nothard, one of the Canterbury masons currently enrolled on the CWF course



Senior Mason John Crump on site with masons Tony Nothard and apprentice mason Niall Horsefall-Turner, who hopes to enrol on the CWF course next year

Nine stonemasons, two carpenter/joiners and two plumbers from eight cathedrals and two commercial contractors joined the current cohort of the CWF Foundation degree in September 2019. Little did they know just what lay in store for them!

The course is delivered through a combination of residential Study Workshops and practical work-based learning projects and assignments. By March 2020 half the modules for the year had been delivered and students were busy with assignments and practical projects which were due to be assessed on-site during late Spring and early Summer. Then everything stopped. The students and tutors were furloughed, the cathedrals and their Works Departments were closed and the course was suspended 'until further notice'.

Undaunted, the course team started to think about what would be required to move the course online and whether we could complete the year remotely without losing too much of the essence of what the course is about. With support from Historic England's Covid-19 Emergency Response Fund, work began to adapt teaching materials, create virtual tours and design methods of conducting practical assessments remotely.

As a result, one module, Principles of Historic Building Conservation led by Heather Newton ACR, was delivered and assessed remotely through virtual Study Workshops in 'Virtual Lincoln' and 'Virtual Winchester'. The module was delivered across two online workshops in Autumn 2020. All of the usual elements of the module were replicated online, assessments were completed, and, importantly, all of the students passed the module. Material created for this module included pre-recorded presentations, pre-recorded Cathedral tours, pre-recorded demonstrations of hot lime and lime putty mixing and online resource folders containing images, documents and document links, relating to group assessment.

Just how all this was achieved is set out in detail in the case study on the Icon website. Here we pick up the story to assess the challenges, issues and outcomes.



The extent of scaffolding on the South side and West Front of Canterbury Cathedral, needed for the £24.7million 'The Canterbury Journey' National Heritage Lottery Funded project, which sees repair and conservation of the roofs of the Nave and Western Towers; the construction of a new Visitor Centre and shop; new exhibition spaces within the cathedral; new landscaping in the Precincts and the repair, conservation and re-presentation of Christ Church Gate

REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS LEARNT

Students took on the challenge of both the Study Workshop and the Group assessment exercise remarkably well and embraced the online delivery model. Fortunately, they had 'gelled' as a cohort extremely well prior to Covid, and we had kept them engaged throughout lockdown and furlough through regular Zoom catchups. So interacting in the online environment was sufficiently familiar to enable the sessions to proceed without a hitch. Remarkably, everyone's computers and IT connections held up under the strain and whilst there were occasional 'dropouts' there were no complete IT failures to deal with.

Naturally everyone missed being face-to-face, and visiting the two cathedrals, but given the alternative of suspending the course for a year or more, everyone agreed that the online environment was a satisfactory compromise and that they were able to actively learn from the sessions as they were presented.

The most important thing we learned from running this module online was that sessions need to be short and varied and that students need to be given regular breaks. A mixture of pre-recorded and live delivery helps maintain interest, with as much live interaction with speakers and demonstrators as their time will allow. It is also helpful to build in plenty of time for the group to interact with one another, both with and without the tutors present. They miss their evenings in the pub during Study Workshops and gain so much from that informal interaction and networking.

We are very fortunate that our tutors and guest speakers are always willing to give up their time for students, but this was taken to another level in the online environment. So we are

very grateful to Michael Sheppard ACR, Director of Works and Property at Lincoln Cathedral, Jane Cowan ACR, Head of Conservation at Lincoln Cathedral, Historic buildings consultant David Watt, David Odgers ACR, Jamie Fairchild, a consultant specialising in cleaning and surface treatment of historic buildings, York Minster stonemason Lee Godfrey and from Winchester John Crook, the Cathedral Architect, David Rymill, the Cathedral's Archivist, and stonemason and CWF graduate Pourang Tajally.

There was a real sense that everyone, tutors and speakers alike, wanted to give the students the best possible experience under the circumstances. An example of this was an invaluable Q&A where students were able to quiz Jamie Fairchild on techniques for their own cathedral worksite issues. The Winchester Archivist and Archaeologist were absolutely key to the practical group assessment, providing resources, direction and the odd red herring as students completed their conservation enquiry.

It is fair to say that the preparation for online delivery took a lot longer than we anticipated. There was a great deal of coordination needed to get pre-recorded presentations processed – gone were the days of the speaker arriving with a memory stick; everything had to be delivered via WeTransfer, edited, checked and loaded onto YouTube and our virtual learning environment in advance.

All the practical demonstrations and presentations went well and whilst they cannot compare with being there in person, we now have a useful legacy of craft-based audio-visual material for our archive with the big advantage that students can (and do!) re-watch these demos and presentations at their leisure.



The main pinnacles on the North East Transept of Lincoln Cathedral showing its poor, dilapidated condition and new replacements. The pinnacle was removed in its entirety and replaced with New Lincoln Limestone incorporating as much original fabric as possible

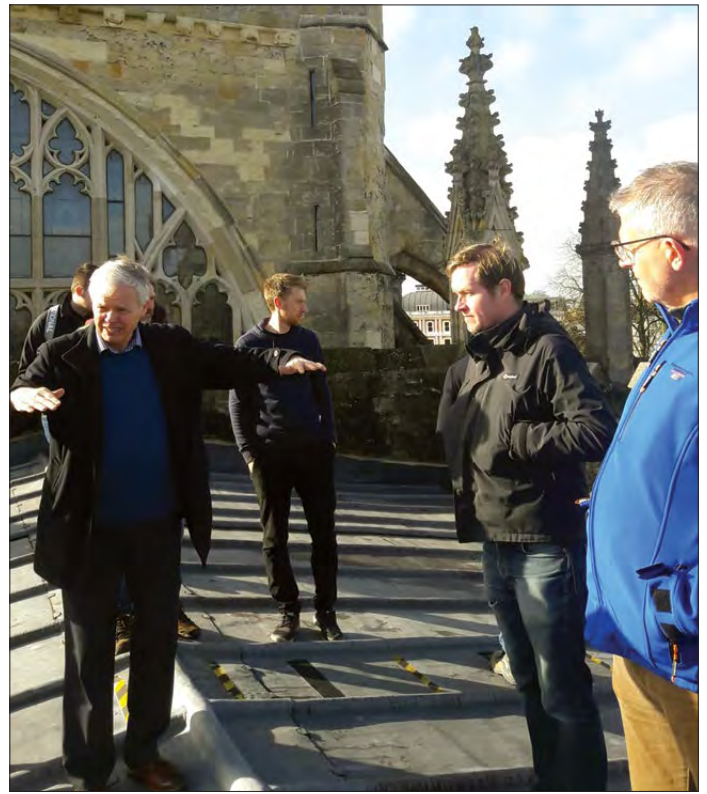


WAS IT ACADEMICALLY & PROFESSIONALLY SOUND?

It was vital that we could be confident that what we delivered was pedagogically robust despite the change of delivery mode. The initial planning meetings were critical for this in ensuring that everyone was clear about how all elements of the curriculum and learning outcomes could and would be covered effectively.

Risk management was also key: choosing the best delivery platform for our purposes (Zoom) and ensuring that everyone was confident in its use, and that we had failsafe mechanisms in place if the technology did falter (mobile numbers for off screen texting/trouble shooting).

Early research on the shift needed to a blended learning model was important. This included helpful pointers on timespans for attention, the importance of preparatory reading, Q&A sessions, time together and apart, plenty of



One of the rare opportunities to get out and about between lockdowns: the students on site at Exeter Cathedral

online interaction and including a mixture of delivery methods in every session (Nordman, E. et al, 2020; Brown, S. 2020)

Ensuring students could communicate easily with each other and with tutors, despite being miles apart, was important in helping to emulate the 'normal' learning situation. In addition to the chat facility on Zoom, students also used their existing WhatsApp group to share comments between (and sometimes during) sessions, which helped to create a sense of normality in an abnormal setting.

The Zoom calls did not stifle the banter as there was opportunity at the start of sessions, within the Q&A and at the end of each day for some chat, jokes and evaluation of that day's sessions. We also got to meet many of their pets!!

There was always the opportunity for 1:1s at any time but these were particularly encouraged at the end of the day and were sometimes academic, sometimes pastoral, as our craftspeople grappled with huge shifts in domestic and working circumstances.

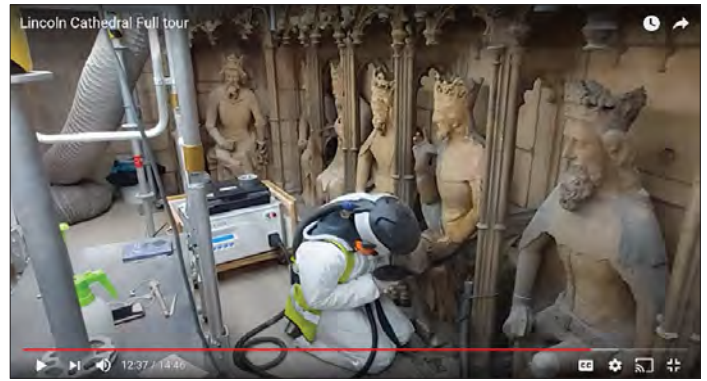
WOULD WE DO IT AGAIN?

Moving the course to online delivery was certainly a steep learning curve for everyone involved, particularly those with little or no prior IT experience. By their very nature craft skills tend to attract practical hands-on people for whom the concept of doing anything 'virtually' can seem to rather miss the point!

Whilst it would not be true to say that anyone took to this approach like ducks to water, it is certainly the case that all the tutors and work-based tutors involved have emerged from the experience with a new set of skills and a much stronger sense of shared responsibility for delivery of the course, and the students have benefitted from being able to continue studying, albeit in a very different way.



Lee Godfrey and colleague giving a pre-recorded demonstration of hot lime mixing



From the video tour of Lincoln Cathedral



Winchester stonemason and CWF graduate Pourang Tajally in a pre-recorded Introduction to Conservation Assessment



A video tour of Lincoln Cathedral led by Michael Sheppard ACR, Director of Works and Property

However, whilst we feel, and the students agree, that the route we took was the right one for the circumstances at the time and was satisfactory for the level the students were studying at the time, everyone recognises that a purely online experience is not sufficient to meet students' needs and expectations now that they are in their final year of study. It has therefore been decided to extend the current academic year to December 2021 and to 'back-load' this year's practical modules, including conservation, into the autumn in the fervent hope that by September it will be possible to return to face-to-face delivery.

Having said that, there are aspects of what we have done this year that are likely to remain a part of the course. Previously it had been difficult to embed very much online learning in the

course, mainly due to the resistance to IT indicated above. Now, both staff and students can see that IT can be used effectively to support face-to-face learning and to provide regular engagement and interaction between formal teaching sessions. The students are also more comfortable with the online environment now than they were a few short months ago.

Whilst it is unlikely that whole modules will remain online, it is possible that elements of teaching that are not 'place specific' may use this method as a way of saving time and money (in terms of travel, accommodation and time away from home/work), thereby making the time that is spent on site in different locations more efficient and focussed.

In addition, increased confidence in using video conferencing software will be harnessed to increase the frequency of both formal, and more importantly informal, staff meetings and discussion, previously constrained by issues of logistics, time and cost. As a geographically distributed team of people who all have busy day jobs, creating sufficient opportunities for the team to grow and learn together has always been a challenge; the pandemic and technology have changed that and that is a valuable legacy.

Short clips of some of the presentations and demonstrations are available as follows:

- Jamie Fairchild and David Odgers on Cleaning Techniques at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glyF2ZsyZc4>
- David Watt on Building Pathology and Timber Decay (includes Q & A) at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-le1t0qvcJQ>
- Lime Putty and Lime Mortar demonstrations at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIBn078J0GE>

A compilation of short clips from one of the student group assessments is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9C-npsog0U>

See cwfcathedrals.co.uk for more information about the CWF and the Foundation degree

References

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Brown, S. Question of the Week - Online replacements for traditional lectures. Extracted from blog by Sally Brown at <https://sally-brown.net/> 1/6/20

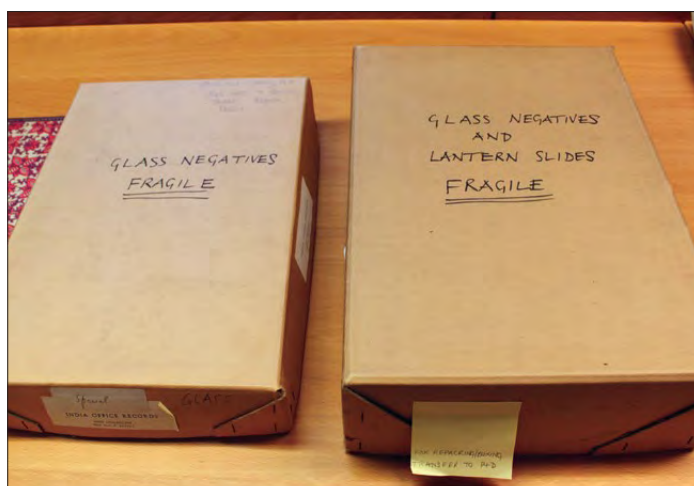
NEW MATERIALS AND EMERGING TECHNIQUES

Julia Wiland ACR, Conservator at the British Library, on conserving glass plate photographs using Vivak

This paper was first presented at the Icon conference *Turn and Face the Change: Conservation in the 21st Century* which took place in Birmingham in June 2016. The coronavirus lockdown has provided the opportunity to write it up for a wider readership.

The case study provides an overview of the Hunt Collection photographs at the British Library, their condition and the conservation methods used, as well as the tests we were able to perform at the time. As several of the photographs were severely broken, I decided to try a new technique of rehousing them in sandwiches made of Vivak, which would allow them to be kept upright with the rest of the collection.

The Hunt collection photographs in archival brown card boxes at the British Library



Glass plate photographs in their original branded boxes, and others already rehoused in pHoton 4-flap envelopes



Vivak is a new type of high grade co-extruded polyester sheeting with very good optical properties. As well as clear, it comes in different finishes, is printable and food safe. Although it was designed for advertising and display boards, it has started to be used in various aspects of conservation, especially photographic conservation and mounting.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COLLECTION

The Dr Edmund Henderson Hunt Collection was acquired from the Hunt family by the British Library in 1985. Among the collection of mainly photographic items are about two hundred and fifteen gelatin dry plate photographs, including negatives, positives and lantern slides. After their arrival at the Library, the glass plate photographs were stored in two archival brown card boxes, with items stacked on top of each other in smaller, original Kodak, Ilford and other branded boxes.

As Hunt was a surgeon and anthropologist, many of the photos are of medical or anthropological subjects from the mid to late 1800s. Among the medical photos, there are many of Rafai Fakirs from Hyderabad (India) performing rituals and ceremonies.

When I received the boxes, some loose photographs were already rehoused in four-flap pHoton enclosures, but the photos were mainly housed in small acidic boxes made of

Rafai Fakirs





A rehousing glass plate negative in good condition

card, causing the condition of the glass plates to deteriorate. Furthermore, the small boxes were not secured, so they could move about inside the large boxes, creating more risk of damage especially for the loose items.

CONDITION ISSUES

Most of the photos in the Hunt collection were in good condition, with only minor surface dirt, silver mirroring and minimal wear and tear around the edges of some. These required only gentle brushing to remove surface dirt and cleaning of the glass with IMS and cotton swabs. However, a few were severely damaged. Three photographs were in such bad condition that they needed full re-housing in either sink mounts or glass sandwiches.

REHOUSING WITH VIVAK

I decided to try a new technique of rehousing the broken photographs in Vivak sandwiches instead of sink mounts or glass sandwiches. This meant I could store the repaired photographs vertically with the rest of the items, and I could also use pieces of 2mm thick Vivak to replace the missing glass fragments of the same thickness, so the sandwiches were stable and could be made without adhesive for incomplete photographs. Vivak sheets can be cut on a board chopper or by hand, making it a very versatile material.

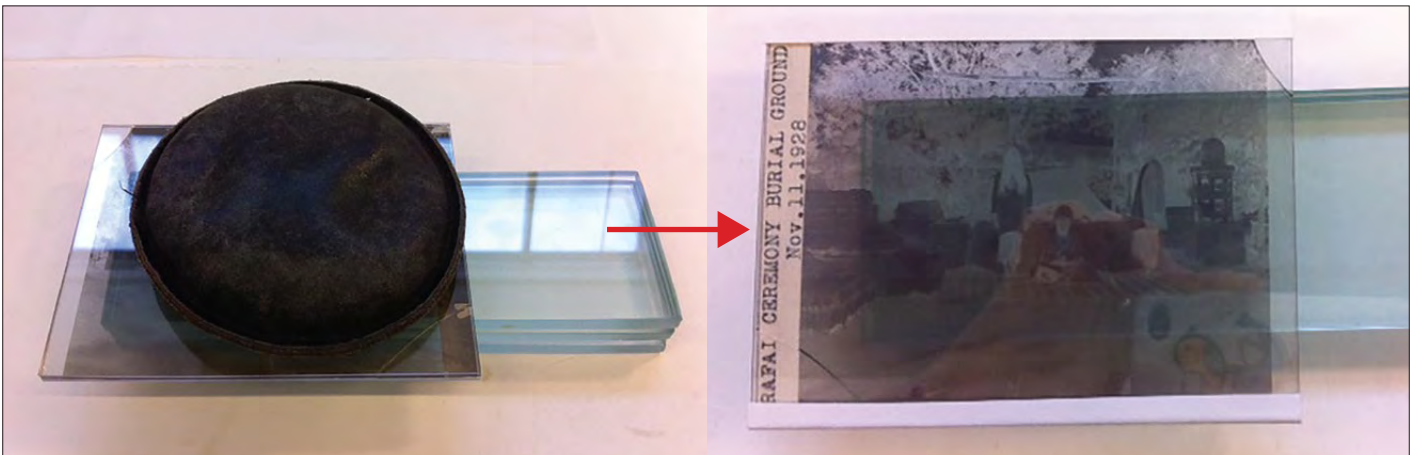
One of the broken glass negatives had a missing corner and two cracks. The missing area was filled with Vivak, and the three other detached pieces were reunited between the sheets of Vivak. No adhesive was used on the photograph itself, so the sandwich can easily be taken apart and Vivak is much lighter than glass.

The glass positive in the worst condition has an image of people standing in front of a waterfall. Possibly from a lantern slide that was abandoned or broken, this positive was in three sharp pieces, with two substantial missing areas that needed to be replaced with Vivak. It presented the biggest challenge.

The Vivak for the missing areas was cut by tracing the area of the infill with a pen onto the protective coating on the Vivak, and then cutting it with a sharp scalpel blade. Once cut, the blue film was removed and any small adjustments were made

The badly damaged glass positive broken in three sharp pieces. See page 35 for pictures of the assembled positive





On the left: the broken glass negative with a missing corner and two cracks in a Vivak sandwich held steady by a leather weight. On the right, strips of Silversafe are being applied to the edges with wheat starch paste

with the scalpel, taking care not to scratch the surface. As the missing areas were larger complex shapes, it was tricky to cut the Vivak to the exact shape. A fresh scalpel blade worked best, and trimming smaller amounts to avoid over-cutting the pieces. However, I also learned that Vivak scratches all too easily, so avoid contact with anything sharp!

After conservation, the photographs were housed in pHoton paper 4-flap enclosures in drop-back buckram boxes with spacers and dividing compartments able to accommodate various plate sizes, as shown on page 36.

VIVAK: ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Disadvantages of Vivak

- Scratches very easily, even from blunt tools or objects if pressure is applied. Keep the protective blue layer on until the last minute
- Tricky to make sandwiches because it has to be raised up to apply paper edging, but can move on the glass weights. Worked best by using a leather weight on top of the sandwich to stop the three layers from rotating
- Also important to use a thick, fairly dry wheat starch paste for Silversafe edges, otherwise they will not stick properly to the Vivak. I have since repeated this method using archival Filmoplast P90 tape to seal the edges, which was a successful and much faster method.
- Sometimes the Vivak sandwich can produce slight visual distortion similar to Newton's rings, which results in an interference pattern created by the reflection of light between two surfaces - a spherical surface and an adjacent touching flat surface. In order to prevent this, small strips of Silversafe can be added at the edges between the photograph and Vivak layer to act as spacers. These strips would be hidden by the outer edging strips
- As Vivak is a fairly new material, and not often used in conservation, there is not much information about it and especially its ageing properties. I wanted to make sure that this new technique was safe, so several tests were performed in conjunction with the project. In addition, ongoing monitoring of Vivak will continue to assess its suitability for rehousing photographs over time.

Advantages of Vivak

- Fully reversible method, with no adhesive applied to the photograph
- Can be stored vertically with the rest of the items in a collection, without adding the excess weight of glass

- Can be cut to size, so no need to wait for an order of glass to arrive, and fragments can be cut in all shapes and sizes to infill missing areas of glass plates
- Comes in a variety of thicknesses (0.5–12mm), with 2,3 and 5mm being most useful. (2mm was used for both sandwiches and missing areas in this project.)
- Can be stored vertically in large sheets until needed, with almost no waste if used carefully
- Multi-purpose material, also used for temporary framing and display of objects, so good to have around in a studio

TESTING AND WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR

Oddy tests: Vivak passed for all three materials (Copper tests for volatile oxidants, Lead for volatile acids, Silver for volatile sulphur compounds) with a pass indicating no corrosion or tarnishing, performed at the British Library (2012).

PAT test (Photographic Activity Test) : Vivak passed, indicating that it will not have a chemical reaction with gelatin dry plate photographs. The test was performed at The Image Permanence Institute on behalf of The National Archives.

Ageing tests: there is little information about how Vivak might age in a conservation context, so with the help of my colleague Paul Garside (Conservation Scientist at the British Library), we did some basic ageing tests.

Silversafe covered edges completed and the negative rehoused





The severely damaged glass positive depicting a waterfall: in its three pieces on the left and with the missing areas cut from Vivak on the right

We decided to make our glass slide/Vivak sandwiches the same dimensions as a microscope slide for ease of testing. As gelatin is very sensitive to higher temperatures (softening from 25 degrees C) we did not use heat in our ageing oven, but the samples were tested at 80%R.H. for six months.

Two types of slides were created, one with a 6% gelatin (bovine) coating, and the other with a colloid coating to simulate collodion photos. The colloid was a commercially available type used for making scientific slides, in an acetone solution. In addition, both open and closed sandwiches were made to imitate single layer glass plate photographs and double layer lantern slides, which have their own cover glass limiting potential contact with the Vivak. And, finally, we used Silversafe or Japanese paper strips around the edges, attached with wheat starch paste, for further variation to show how the papers might react.

To construct the sandwiches, the Vivak was easily cut to size using a board chopper. Sandwiches were numbered to distinguish which were open or closed, and those that had Silversafe or Japanese paper strips around the edges.

Analysis was undertaken after ageing for six months. As we were limited in our testing conditions and the time we could age the slides, our results were also restricted, but we did gain some valuable insights along the way.

When opening the sandwiches after the six months, the gelatin slides stuck strongly to the Vivak; whereas the colloid slides were much easier to take apart. The colloid was mixed with acetone in a solution, so it would have off gassed fully in the two days of drying time before the sandwiches were sealed. However the gelatin slides would have still had some residual moisture, causing them to stick to the Vivak. (This would be much less likely to happen with a collection item.) In order to prevent this, small invisible strips of Silversafe which would act as spacers, could be added at the edges between the glass and Vivak as mentioned above.

FTIR analysis of the Vivak sandwiches: in the initial FTIR analysis performed on the samples after ageing, there were no obvious chemical changes for either the gelatin or colloid coated slides.

The Vivak sandwich under construction for the glass positive of the waterfall





After conservation the photos were housed in gold tooled drop-back buckram boxes

CONCLUSIONS

While the Vivak sandwich method may not be right for housing all types of photographs, it's certainly a technique worth considering for some, especially for rehousing lantern slides and gelatin dry plate photographs.

Vivak is a convenient, versatile material and used in this way is a fast, efficient, and relatively low cost solution.

However, it is a new material and more testing is needed to assess its long term suitability for rehousing photographs. I would encourage people to share results, especially those from larger institutions that may be able to carry out these tests more easily. I would be interested to see other test results, particularly XRF or SEM-EDS analysis in the future.

With special thanks to the British Library Conservation Department and Holly Smith at The National Archives.

In the new boxes Plastazote spacers and dividing compartments safely house different size photographs in their pHoton paper 4-flap enclosures

