



Experiments in gilt leather treatment

Also in this issue

The Overlord Embroidery • Moths under attack • Career advice

ICON membership benefits

- Access to professional development and networking opportunities through Icon's **16 specialist Groups and 8 Networks**
- **Discounted admission to all Icon events** including those delivered by Groups and Networks
- Access to **Accreditation**, supported by mentoring opportunities
- Members' magazine (**Icon News**) containing conservation case studies, interviews, reviews and analysis
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- Monthly **Iconnect e-bulletin** with a roundup of recent stories, news articles and events
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- Members can raise their professional profile through contributing articles for the Icon website, which reach an even broader audience through our thriving social media channels

APRIL 2022 Issue 99



From the Editor

There is a strong Scottish flavour to this issue, starting with our Chief Executive's reminiscences of childhood visits to the Burrell Collection outside Glasgow which underpin a career trajectory that eventually brought her to Icon! We also have contributions from the Head of Collection Care at the National Library of Scotland and from the Head of Conservation at National Galleries of Scotland. The first brings advice for emerging professionals on how to develop their conservation careers; the second brings us an interesting insight into how the European standard-setting process works at the coal face.

Then a tour of English counties takes us from Lincolnshire, where conservation students learn to bring their developing skills to bear in various community settings, on to Norfolk (trials to zap some very pesky moths indeed) and then to the county of Northampton (experiments in gilt leather) and finally south to Hampshire, where a Bayeux Tapestry for our times is a step into modern history which, at present, has a rather dark and poignant resonance.

We'd love to hear from all the home nations and our international members, too. So, if you would like to take the hint: the next deadlines are 4 April, 1 June and 2 August.

And do read about the Icon Conference coming up in May - and then book your place! We need our combined strength, mutual encouragement and some laughs together.

Lynette Gill



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Cover image
Detail of a painted gilt leather panel from the Museum of Leather showing cracking and flaking of the decorative paint layer.

Disclaimer:
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Deadlines for adverts and editorial

For the August 2022 issue
Wednesday 1 June

For the October 2022 issue
Tuesday 2 August

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professional update

From the Chief Executive



Sara Crofts on collections and opportunities

In common with many of you I find that my inbox is constantly overflowing with newsletters from all sorts of organisations both within and beyond the cultural heritage sector. I readily admit that I find keeping up with the latest developments an ongoing challenge. But a couple of recent stories about openings and closings of major museums caught my eye.

Firstly, there was the

announcement that the Burrell Collection, situated in Pollok Country Park in Glasgow, reopens to the public on 29 March after a £68.25m refurbishment that began six years ago, but was slowed down by the pandemic.

Secondly, there was the news that the London Wall site of the Museum of London will close in December, with the institution due to be reborn as the London Museum when it opens in its new home in the redeveloped Smithfield Market in 2025.

Meanwhile in Bloomsbury, details of the impending radical overhaul of the British Museum's building and displays are also emerging. The 'Rosetta Project' will apparently include a comprehensive redisplay of the permanent galleries, as well as the refurbishment of the deteriorating fabric and infrastructure of the 170-year-old building, at an eye-watering cost of £1bn.

There are many reasons to be cheerful about these big news stories. If nothing else they demonstrate that Government and patrons are willing to continue investing in our major institutions, despite the financial challenges of the last couple of years, though one might question how the major schemes in the UK's capital sit against the current Government's ambitions under the banner of 'levelling-up'.

Thinking more specifically about the conservation profession, these major schemes ought to benefit conservators and heritage scientists too, as large teams will be needed to look after the collections and to facilitate their careful migration from their current spaces into storage and onwards to their new homes.

Perhaps this offers a ray of hope for our emerging professionals, who we know face many challenges as they start out in their careers in the cultural heritage sector. Studies have shown that emerging professionals are less likely to gain secure employment than experienced professionals; that they are often employed on precarious contracts; and that they may be exploited through unpaid internships or low rates of pay¹. I know that some of our experienced Icon members cut their teeth on similar capital projects in the past,

and I am optimistic that these new projects will offer positive employment prospects.

On a personal note, I am eagerly looking forward to the re-opening of the Burrell Collection, and not just because I grew up in Ayrshire and therefore think of the Burrell as my local museum. The Burrell Collection has always been one of my favourite museums. I fell in love with the collection as a child when I first visited soon after its opening in 1983, long before it occurred to me that I might set my sights on becoming an architect. As an architecture student I was able to understand and appreciate the subtlety of the architectural concept developed by Barry Gasson, John Meunier and Brit Andresen with its '*sequence of long narrow galleries ensuring that the exterior wooded setting remained intervisible with the museum objects, preserving a sense of immediacy between inside and outside*'.²

But, as a child, it was the objects that captured my imagination. I was in awe of the scale of the Warwick Vase from Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli, which forms the centrepiece of the internal courtyard. I was dazzled by the jewelled colours of the stained-glass panels conveniently set at an accessible child-friendly height along the glazed link leading to the cafeteria. And I gazed reverently at the individual archaeological fragments placed on their solitary pedestals against the rippling background of foliage in the 'walk in the woods' galleries. This heady mix of cultures and objects inspired my imagination and sparked a lifelong interest in museums and their collections. Regular family visits to the Burrell even gave rise to brief flirtation with the idea of becoming a curator, before I realised that building conservation was my real passion.

'One of the greatest gifts ever made to any city in the world' Sir Hector Hetherington, Principal of Glasgow University speaking of William Burrell's gift of his collection of over 8,000 objects

Looking back, I now realise that a career in object conservation never crossed my mind. I would marvel at the beautifully displayed objects, but the people who cared for them were largely invisible, apart from the occasional mysterious label explaining that a missing item had been removed for conservation, presumably somewhere deep in the building and off limits to the public. Happily, the alterations to the layout of the Burrell Collection building will mean that the public will now have access to the storerooms on the lower ground floor and will be able to find out how the objects in the vast collection are cared for while not on display.³

This is not the first time that I have written about the invisibility of conservation and the need to make conservation and the value of conservators' work more evident. As I have previously commented, the imperative to achieve recognition will form the cornerstone of our new *Icon Strategy*, which will be launched in April. As the work of writing the strategy comes to its conclusion, trustees and staff have been starting to shape the strategic outcomes that we want to achieve over the next few years and generating ideas for actions and projects that will help us to deliver our goal of ensuring that conservation is recognised, respected and valued.

A key activity will be to build on our existing partnership with *Inspiring the Future*. *Inspiring the Future* is a charity that works with schools to create opportunities for children to meet a wide range of role models doing interesting, exciting jobs. Using an online match-making platform, they connect schools and colleges with volunteers from a range of sectors and professions in the hope that the young people will be inspired to consider a greater range of career options – including conservation.⁴

Since Icon joined the *Inspiring the Future* programme in July 2020, ten of our members have signed up as volunteers and have participated in thirty-seven events between them. This is a very promising start, and my thanks go to those who have enthusiastically embraced this opportunity for engagement. I personally believe that this is a great opportunity, and I would warmly encourage more Icon members to sign up. *Inspiring the Future* provides an excellent package of resources to help you prepare to give a talk or take part in a careers fair. Talking with young people about the fascinating and rewarding world of conservation is crucial to ensuring we can nurture, encourage and inspire the next generation of professional conservators.

Reaching out to a broader range of people in this way is also an important route to helping to diversify the conservation profession. Find out more at <https://www.inspiringthefuture.org/volunteers/> or register via the Icon website: <https://www.icon.org.uk/impact/current-campaigns/inspiring-the-future.html>

Improving sustainability at the Burrell Collection

Interestingly, the Burrell Collection was strategically located in Glasgow's only country park, to address the stipulation in William Burrell's Deed of Gift that the collection must be permanently housed in a rural setting at least sixteen miles from Glasgow centre, to protect the tapestries and textiles from the damaging air pollution in the city centre.⁵ It is therefore not a surprise that environmental concerns have played a key role in the refurbishment of the building. The design incorporates some impressive features intended to improve the building's energy efficiency – details can be found on this webpage: <https://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/news/the-burrell-collections-home-made-more-sustainable>

- 1 https://pro.europeana.eu/files/europeana_professional/europeana_network/europeana_network_task_forces/final_reports/newprofessionalstaskforcereport.pdf
 - 2 <http://portal.historicenvironment.scot/designation/LB52002,52002>
 - 3 <https://burrellcollection.com/the-burrell-project/about-the-refurbishment/>
 - 4 <https://www.inspiringthefuture.org/about/>
 - 5 <https://www.glasgowlive.co.uk/news/history/everything-you-need-know-glasgows-22149301>
- All websites were accessed on 18 February 2022

POLICY UPDATE

Icon takes part in a carefully chosen range of cultural heritage sector networks as a way to extend our policy influence and ensure that our messages and ideas are heard by policy-makers. Two of the most useful sector bodies are the Heritage Alliance and the Historic Environment Forum. So, although the last few months have been quiet in terms of Government policy consultations, we have been able to support the work of the Historic Environment Forum (HEF) in relation to a proposed Heritage Sector Resilience Plan. This plan is the successor to the Heritage Recovery Plan published by Historic England in February 2021 on behalf of HEF. The new plan will cover the period 2022-24 and looks beyond the issues relating to the ongoing impacts of the Covid pandemic to wider issues that will enhance the resilience of the cultural heritage sector.

The proposed plan has six themes:

- strengthening business plans and governance;
- broadening audiences and workforce (including volunteers);
- skills – addressing skills gaps and preparing the sector for the future;
- climate change – working towards a carbon-neutral heritage sector;
- enhancing wellbeing and participation; and
- embedding heritage within public policy.

All these themes connect with conservation and Icon's work and so we were able to propose potential actions for all areas,

though we focussed most of our attention on the two where we felt we could exert useful influence – skills and climate change. As the Heritage Recovery Plan will set the stage for future collaborations and projects, as well as influencing funding decisions for the next couple of years, it is important that we are able to align our own plans with its broad themes.

We also contributed case studies and updates to the annual *Heritage Counts* publication, which was launched at Heritage Day in March 2022.

Levelling up

In terms of new Government policy, one of the more significant recent events was the publication of the long-awaited Levelling Up White Paper. The White Paper sets out twelve 'National Missions' that will be given legal status in a flagship Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and are to be achieved by 2030. The following three missions are the ones that are potentially most meaningful for conservation and heritage science:

- Research and Development (2): Increase in domestic public investment in research and development outside the Greater Southeast
- Skills (6): Significant increase in the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training
- Pride in Place (9): Rise in people's pride in place in every area of the UK

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policy@icon.org.uk – to share their own ideas about how conservation can help to achieve the missions outlined above.

Scottish heritage at risk

Meanwhile, in Scotland, heritage hit the headlines with the revelation that a planned series of two hundred high-level condition surveys at properties in the care of Historic Environment Scotland (HES) had revealed that the extent of damage and the rate of decay were far worse than imagined. This led to temporary closures to some sites and an acknowledgement that priorities and approaches would need to be re-assessed.

According to Dr David Mitchell, HES Director of Conservation: 'It is inevitable our approach to protecting historic buildings will have to change; we need to reimagine how we manage these historic and much-loved places. A range of solutions is needed, including repairs, investment, and new and innovative interventions. In some cases, reduced physical access and accepting the natural process of decay will need to be considered'. The Vice-Chair of BEFS (Built Environment Forum Scotland) Ian Baxter, who is also Professor of Historic Environment Management at Heriot-Watt University, contributed a thoughtful response under the title of 'A good death for Scotland's heritage'. It seems clear that this is a timely – if difficult – conversation that needs to be faced, and we hope that conservators will be part of the debate.

Illustrated guide to Icon

Lastly, as a result of a thoughtful conversation with Christine Palmer ACR arising from last year's #WeAreCreative campaign lead by Creative UK, we realised that there was a gap in our resources for a user-friendly Introduction to Icon that members could use as an advocacy tool in their own work. We therefore set up a micro-internship for an Oxford University student to research our existing materials and to pull together the key messages in an illustrated guide. Jennifer Zhou did a great job, and you can access the new guide on our website: <https://www.icon.org.uk/resource/introduction-to-icon.html>

REACHING OUT FOR RECOGNITION

The Icon Conference returns for 2022!

When: Tuesday 24 May and Wednesday 25 May 2022

Where: Zoom event 1pm – 5pm BST on both days

Booking is now open for the Icon Conference, coming directly to your home or workplace, connecting you with people based around the world via Zoom. This virtual event will be an online celebration of recognition and collaboration, taking place over the course of two afternoons.

Be inspired by talks from people shaping the future of conservation; learn about positivity and trying out new ideas in times of uncertainty and change; and network in themed breakout sessions. You can also take part in the parallel student-led Twitter conference #ICONReachOut22, held each morning.

We hope you will join us in this open-to-all event held to encourage public debate, spotlight diverse perspectives and support the work of early career and emerging professionals. Take part or just sit back and enjoy.

We might also take heart in the statement that: 'Tackling disparities in access to culture and delivering a truly national cultural offer should be a defining feature of levelling up. The UK Government will make changes to transform the landscape for arts, culture and heritage by significantly increasing cultural investment outside London' (p.218), and the Government's intention 'to explore further collaboration between lottery funders for arts, heritage, sport and community projects within the UK' and ensure that funding from the National Lottery reaches areas where it is most needed. Following its investment in the British Library's Boston Spa Renewed project, the Government also intends to work with other major national institutions to explore how 'cultural excellence' can be supported in towns and cities in the North and Midlands.

As with all new Government policies it will take time before the detail and the real substance emerges, but in the meantime, we now have a clear view of the Government's priorities and areas of interest in England. And while there is more emphasis on arts and culture than directly on heritage there are areas of opportunity for conservation – especially with regards to skills. We will therefore take an active interest in the next stages of this ambitious Government project.

We will also continue to highlight the ways in which our profession can contribute to the levelling-up agenda. As an example we recently contributed to the levelling-up blogsite curated by the Heritage Alliance in support of a virtual debate in November 2021. Wendy Somerville-Woodiwis (Senior Project Conservator) and Ciara Wells (Vision 2025 Project Sponsor) of National Railway Museum wrote an excellent article about 'Levelling Up at NRM and what it means to me' and Sara Crofts contributed a broader piece on 'Supporting community heritage: Caring for collections in local museums', which looks at the value of regional museums. We would be very grateful if members could get in touch with us –



At the 2019 Belfast Conference

As the first conference organised by the Conferences Committee, we will be using this opportunity to try out some new ideas. Your feedback on the format and content of this conference will help enormously as we shape and develop the Icon Conferences of the future. We are grateful to many of you who have shared experiences and ideas over the last few months and have tried to put this learning into practice.

The Programme

Day One will explore RECOGNITION: how conservation is recognised and valued by others, and importantly how we value our own work of ourselves and each other. Enjoy an exciting session with a keynote speaker and a series of dynamic shorter presentations. Network in small groups and take part in themed break-out discussions. Topics will be informed on the day by Twitter discussions and your comments throughout the day.

Talks and events on **Day Two** will celebrate how we are REACHING OUT and collaborating with communities, artists and individuals beyond the conservation sector, and the impact that this is having. An inspiring keynote talk on this theme will be complemented by shorter presentations. It is widely acknowledged that this transitional time has been ideal for reflection but also for renewal. As we consider our next collective gathering, we will take this opportunity to look forwards and consider how we can shape the future of conservation and the impact we can have as a profession when we join together.

Why is Reaching out for Recognition happening now?

- 2022 would have been the year of the Triennial Icon Conference
- In a changing world we all need to come together to highlight our collective worth
- We are now in a good place to reflect on the last two years
- We need to celebrate our achievements and resilience as a profession
- We should highlight and recognise our individual and collective learning over the pandemic

Why attend Reaching out for Recognition?

The Icon Conference will be a key moment in the UK

conservation calendar. There will be moments for you to:

- **BE INSPIRED** by and learn from those challenging traditional thinking, championing innovation and supporting the voices of the underrepresented
- **BE EXCITED** by engaging with those shaping the future of our profession- valuing the creativity of both novices to the skill and judgement of experts
- **RECONNECT** if the last two years have left you feeling isolated or out of touch with other people involved in the conservation and heritage sectors
- **BUILD NEW CONNECTIONS** if you are new to the profession or simply have a passion for material heritage

Why is Reaching out for Recognition different?

The Icon Conference will:

- Bring people involved and interested in conservation together
- Provide real cross-sector opportunities to network and make connections
- Help you feel engaged, connected and inspired by fellow conservators and external supporters
- Provide you with positive stories of collaboration and connection following a time when so many of us have struggled with isolation
- Provide a forum for your ideas and experiences

Who is Reaching Out for Recognition for?

This conference is for EVERYONE: those working in conservation or a related role; students of conservation or related subjects; anyone who is impacted by the work that conservators do or anyone curious to find out more.

BOOKING INFORMATION

All information is correct as we go to press. To find up-to-date information about the programme, booking fees and sponsorship please check the Icon website events listing. We will also send information directly to you via Iconnect and on social media.

If you have any comments or queries regarding this event please contact the Conferences Committee iconconferencecommittee@gmail.com

Share the news. We look forward to seeing you all there!

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Archaeology Group

The Archaeology Group was delighted to host two lunchtime lectures which took place in February and March. The conservation of the Galloway Hoard, rescheduled from January, was presented by the conservator, Mary Davis, and the curator, Martin Goldberg, in March. The talk described the hoard and an exhibition on the results of research to date. Currently on tour, this is Scotland's earliest hoard and includes a number of truly remarkable objects.

The 'Gold of the Great Steppe' lecture took place in February and covered the exhibition at the Fitzwilliam Museum. The exhibition was a result of a collaboration between the Regional Museum of Local History (East Kazakhstan) and the Fitzwilliam on analysis of the astounding metal artefacts found on recent excavations of burial sites. Susi Pancaldo, conservator for the exhibition, described the logistics of displaying the finds and Saltanat Amir, PhD student, shared her current analytical work.

We would like to thank all our wonderful speakers and everyone who attends; we hope you enjoy the talks as much as we do! There will be a full review of both events in a future issue of Icon News.

The next stage of work for *First Aid for Finds* was completed in January with reviews by a number of conservators and finds managers; we are grateful to all who have taken the time to comment and make suggestions. These will be taken on board over the next months and the next draft will be prepared. We are also hoping to run a competition for a front cover image in place of the Twitter photography competition as mentioned in issue 98 of Icon News.

You can keep up to date with all the Archaeology Groups events and activities through our Twitter ([@ICONArchaeology](#)), Iconnect and the website.

Charlotte Wilkinson ACR
Icon AG Communications Rep

Heritage Science Group Defining the Group's Strategy

The committee held an extraordinary meeting in December 2021 to define the HSG's strategy and ambitions. After an engaging brainstorming and discussion session, we identified four strategic areas of action:

1: Connecting with members

Ambition: To get to know our membership and their interests, strengthening their participation and mapping the potential for new initiatives

2: 'Bridging the gap': bringing science and conservation together

Ambition: To address the perceived 'gap' between conservation and science, which expresses itself in several ways: scientists seem difficult to reach, science is seen as removed from practice, scientific knowledge is not always accessible.

3. Becoming a meeting point for the heritage science community

Ambition: To offer platforms where the heritage science

community can meet, in particular the groups that work in more isolation, such as early career researchers.

4. Developing scientific skills in conservation

Ambition: To be a source of trusted knowledge and to help the conservation community develop new scientific skills

We will be reporting regularly about the Group's activities related to these four areas. In the meantime, your comments and feedback will be most welcome through our Group's email below!

New committee member

We have welcomed Lucia Noor Melita as the new HSG's committee treasurer. Lucia completed her PhD in Materials Science in UCL in 2017. She then obtained an Andrew Mellon Fellowship at the Scientific Research Department of the British Museum and in January 2022 joined the V&A as Conservation Scientist for Modern Materials.

We will be recruiting new committee members soon, so keep an eye out for our Iconnect with the announcement!

Icon News 'Science bites'

HSG welcomes contributions from Icon members to publish summaries in *Icon News* of your articles with scientific content, with the aim of disseminating Heritage Science, giving visibility to your research projects and connecting with other conservation professionals. The summaries should be up to a thousand words, and you may also include two to three images or diagrams that will help get the message across clearly. They should be written in a simple and engaging language, in the spirit of the [Heritage Bites](#). Please send your summaries to iconhsg@gmail.com and include your name, affiliation, email and details of the full publication.

Events

Icon's HSG and the National Heritage Science Forum have organised a series of informal, virtual short seminars to showcase the research of emerging heritage science researchers and students. The programme began in March 2022 with lunchtime talks of sixty to ninety minutes.

The Group plans to continue offering online CPD and other events in 2022 and beyond, while hopefully having the ability to hold at least some in-person events when the subject matter may benefit from it and if they can be held safely and within regulations and guidelines in place at the time of the event. Future topics in preparation include: Colour science, Lab Practice & Oddy Testing. We always welcome Group members' expressions of interest for future training and events.

Keeping in touch

Finally, keep an eye out for our notices in Iconnect, on our webpage, and on Twitter ([@ICONSci](#)) and get in touch via our Group email address (iconhsg@gmail.com) if you would like to become more involved in the Group's activities.

Lucia Pereira-Pardo

HSG Committee Communications Officer

Textile Group

Latest News

The committee have been working hard, pulling together a series of online and in person events for 2022 and, by the time this edition of *Icon News* drops on your doormat, you will have had the opportunity to listen to our first online talk of the year, by freelance Textile Conservator Howard Sutcliffe, based in the US, on the subject of 'Textiles and the Stories they Tell'. Howard recounted a number of notable and often unsettling histories surrounding some of the textiles he has treated. This was swiftly followed up with 'Yoga for Conservators' (via Zoom!) and, as part of our continuing 'in conversation with' series, we will be hearing discussions on projects and working practices between paper and textile conservators.

Changes to the Committee – WE NEED YOU!

Prior to our AGM in June we would like to announce some changes to the committee and call for new members to apply. After three years of hard graft and enthusiasm we are saying goodbye to two of our Events Co-ordinators, Elizabeth-Anne Haldane ACR and Maria Pardos-Mansilla. Our current Website & Facebook Editor Hannah Joyce is going to fill one of these positions leaving her role, and another Events Co-ordinator post, up for the taking. The role profiles for each of these positions will be sent out in an Iconnect towards the end of April. If you would like to be put forward as a candidate for election onto the committee please send a maximum two hundred word statement of intention, naming the position you would like to apply for to the following email address: icontextilegroup@gmail.com

The list of candidates and their statements will be compiled and circulated to members for an online ballot ahead of the Textile Group AGM, to be held in June 2022 (date tbc).

Forthcoming Textile Group Events

Textile Group AGM – this year's AGM will be themed 'Working with Large Painted Textiles', the meeting will be once again held via Zoom so that the event is accessible to all. Date – TBC in June. Please keep an eye on our social media accounts for updates.

Back to Basics - In-person training on the topic of 'Care of Historic Carpets: Understanding Structure, surveys & cleaning', led by Ksynia Marko ACR & Glyn Charnock at the Museum of Carpet, Kidderminster. Date – July 2022. Price TBC.

Group visit to Heritage Trimmings & the Museum of Making, Derby. Date TBC.

As the year's events are confirmed details will be posted on our Textile Group section of the Icon website, look out for Iconnects and see our Twitter or Facebook page.

In This Issue

Heather Tetley ACR describes the amazing Overlord Embroidery at Portsmouth's The D-Day Story museum and the conservation work which went into it whilst the museum was being redeveloped for the 75th anniversary of the 1944 Normandy Landings in World War II.

Other Textile Related Events

Medieval Dress & Textile Society (MEDATS) – 7 May 2022 13:30, MEDATS Annual Conference, 'Changing Textiles:

Upcycling, Recycling, Remaking, Reimagining & Reusing – to be held online.

Association of Dress Historians (ADH) – 27 May 2022, 'New Research in Dress History Conference' - National Museums Scotland, Edinburgh.

Writing for Icon News

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

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

Textile Group email: icontextilegroup@gmail.com

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AWARDS

Nominations are still open for the Plowden Medal Conservation Award 2022. The final date for receipt of a nomination is **20 May 2022**.

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

Established in 1999 to commemorate the life and work of the late Hon. Anna Plowden CBE (1938 – 1997), the medal was endowed by the Royal Warrant Holders Association, of which she was Vice-President. Last year, unusually, saw joint winners: Steve Clare MBE ACR and Professor Jane Henderson ACR.

GREENER SOLVENTS HANDBOOK

In case you missed the Iconnect or news item on the website, a book was recently launched by the on-line network Sustainability in Conservation entitled 'Greener Solvents Project Handbook: An Introductory Guide'.

The book, which coincides with the launch of the 'Sustainability in Conservation Greener Solvents' project, focusses on organic solvents, their impact on human health and the environment and how they might potentially affect the materials of the artefacts which are worked on by conservators. The aim is to assist in the eradication of the widespread use of the most harmful solvents by providing supporting information to enable their identification and the most straightforward ways of determining the alternatives that may be used in their place.

The publication, along with more information about the ongoing project, can be found on SiC's website – see below. It is also available in hard copy from Archetype Publications.

www.siconserve.org/greener-solvents/greener-solvents-handbook

LINKED CONSERVATION DATA PROJECT

Icon has recently welcomed the publication of the data sharing policy template produced by the Linked Conservation Data Project, in consultation with Icon as well as the International Institute for Conservation (IIC) and the American Institute for Conservation (AIC). More information about the Project can be found on the project website: <https://ligatus.org.uk/lcd/>

The Data Policy Primer and Template are useful for developing strategies and policies surrounding all types of data generated and used in the conservation profession. They have been published on the Linked Conservation Data project website at <https://www.ligatus.org.uk/lcd/content/conservation-data-policy-template-and-primer>. The policy was developed in conjunction with staff in all three organizations as well as through feedback received during and from workshops with members of different groups.

Icon's statement of support for the publication notes that: 'The template is practical and flexible, enabling organisations to

adapt it to suit their needs, and includes a primer to help with this. Icon encourages its members and the wider conservation profession in the UK to consider using the policy template when planning to share data with internal or external collaborators, or publishing open access Datasets. The policy template is a timely contribution to supporting high quality scholarship in our field and its production is an excellent example of collaboration between academics and professional bodies. Icon is pleased to have played a role in the delivery of this project.'

Several principles guided the development of the document:

- Data is shared as openly as possible observing copyright rules, cultural ownership and excluding sensitive data.
- Data is shared after a period specified by the data owner to allow for any publications by the data producer to take place first.
- An attribution to the data producer is included with the shared data.
- Data is shared in an open format, i.e. a file format whose specification is freely available, allowing the use of licence-free software.
- Vocabularies used to produce the data are shared with the data.

Included with the policy primer are FAQs explaining key concepts and terms used throughout the primer, a summary of challenges and opportunities, and the template itself. The template can be modified at several key points to reflect and harmonize with other policies of the adopting institutions and participants.

Examples of ways this will be of use for conservators include:

- A conservation department plans the long-term deposit of treatment documentation to an online repository.
- A conservation department applies for funding to assess and treat a collection. As part of the funding application they are requested to provide a plan for publishing data.

In both cases, the template can be used to specify the kind of records that will be shared and the permissions for further use.

The Linked Conservation Data Consortium welcomes feedback from colleagues and organisations planning to share conservation records and develop a policy based on the template. It also encourages further discussions with professional bodies and groups on improving the template and developing it further.

EUROPEAN STANDARD-SETTING IN ACTION

Introduction

Following on from discussions about some of the recently created European conservation standards in previous issues of *Icon News*, this article summarises the events of the 2021 plenary meeting of CEN TC 346. This is the Technical Committee responsible for creating standards for the Conservation of Cultural Heritage, within the European Committee for Standardisation.

Each country within Europe can have its own mirror committee as part of its National Standards Body (NSB), coordinating the country's contribution to the work of TC CEN 346. Fortunately the UK's involvement in the European Standards Organisation is not contingent upon membership of the European Union,



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and the UK's mirror committee for CEN TC 346, B560, is very active. It is part of the British Standards Institute, with secretariat support from Tom Stack, a BSI employee, and it is chaired by Dr Tim Yates, whose day job is as a Technical Director for the Building Research Establishment. The other members of B560 are a mixture of conservators, archaeologists and building conservation professionals, and although they give their time voluntarily they do not pay a fee to be involved, which is different from the situation in some other countries.

The December meeting

The plenary meeting of CEN TC 346 has traditionally been held in person, but in 2020 and then again on 9 December 2021, it was an online affair. Many of the committee members were clearly missing the opportunity for face-to-face interaction with their European counterparts, but an advantage of the online forum was that observers could attend in addition to the usual two three delegates per country. I took this opportunity and found it be an extremely useful way of understanding the process of how European standards are created and revised.

The meeting was the first for the new chair of CEN TC 346, Antonio Sansonetti, and he was greatly assisted in his role by the committee's secretary, Fabrizio Tacca, who is clearly an expert on the intricacies of CEN procedures and regulations. The first half hour of the meeting was taken up with introductions from each delegate, and it was interesting to note that besides the professions mentioned earlier there were also scientists, curators and collections managers in the mix.

The countries represented included Italy, France, the UK, Germany, Sweden, Norway and Malta, and the delegates spoke extremely impressive English and threw in some

wonderful expressions, my favourite (which was typed into the chat) being 'I don't find my cat', meaning 'I can't remember'. Perhaps to avoid such expressions making their way into the CEN records, the UK delegates are often called on when formal text needs to be drafted.

The role of experts

After the introductions we proceeded to the main body of the agenda, beginning with a report from Fabrizio Tacca summarising the current work of the committee. This prompted an interesting discussion about the importance of enabling experts in each country to contribute to standards work. The CEN rules state that the members of a working group must also be members of their National Standards Body, and although in theory it should be easy for a country to add required experts to their NSB, it appears that this doesn't always happen in practice.

Fabrizio noted that an action for each working group to circulate a new call for experts had been agreed at the previous plenary meeting but not implemented yet, and Tim Yates suggested that as part of the committee agreeing a new piece of work (a 'work item'), key stakeholders within each country should be identified and contacted.

Revisiting the business plan

The next item was the revision of the business plan for CEN/TC 346. It covers how the committee came about and the cultural heritage context in Europe; the benefits expected from the committee's work; the rules for participation in the committee; the objectives of the committee and strategies for their achievement; and the factors affecting the delivery of the committee's work programme.



Tim Yates, chair of the UK's mirror committee B560

The Swiss and the French had submitted comments: the Swiss feel strongly that excessive standardisation for conservation is not helpful, and that a balance needs to be struck regarding the number and content of standards. This was accepted by the committee and an addition along the lines of 'The standards will always respect the uniqueness of each cultural heritage object and of the challenges each presents, as well as the expertise of qualified practitioners' was drafted by David Leigh ACR from the UK.

The French had suggested some additions to bring the context section up to date, for example by adding information on the Horizon Europe* and PROCULTHER** programmes. These additions would also need to be drafted, and so although it had been hoped to sign the business plan off in the meeting, it was decided to agree it by ballot at a later date.

Possible need for a vice-chair

The final item before lunch was the debating of a proposal from the UK to create a vice-chair role within TC 346; this had been suggested to bring an element of balance to the committee given that the previous chair and the new chair are both heritage scientists, perhaps by electing a conservator to the vice-chair role.

There had been a strong measure of agreement for this proposal at the previous plenary meeting. However, it became clear during the discussion that neither formally (according to CEN rules) nor even informally would it be possible to create such a role. Having made the point, the UK withdrew that proposal, but hearteningly it was then agreed that there would be an agenda point at the next meeting 'to discuss the balance between all the disciplines involved in the cultural heritage field'.

The standard revision process

After lunch there was a report from each working group, summarising the work in progress. There are sixteen working groups although not all of them are active, since they are disbanded if a time comes when they have no more work to do, and then re-established when necessary, for example if a previously created standard is to be reviewed. The UK is represented on all the groups.

The working group reports prompted discussions regarding the potential revision of several standards which had been in circulation for five years: the NSBs vote on whether these should be retained as they are, reviewed or withdrawn, and the CEN committee then makes the final decisions.

I had assumed that review would be the default option, but in fact it became apparent that the decision to review is never taken lightly, because it represents a large amount of work, and results in a new version of the standard which practitioners must purchase to replace the previous version. Hence if the majority of countries had voted to retain a standard with only one or two suggesting a review, the usual decision was to retain the standard for another five years while those in favour of a review developed their proposals.

The Pest Management standard

The decision-making around EN 16790:2016 Conservation of cultural heritage - Integrated pest management (IPM) for protection of cultural heritage was of particular interest to the UK National Standards Body, because following consultations with the UK's Pest Odyssey group, the UK had voted to review the standard.

France had also voted for a revision and Italy had suggested the standard needed to be withdrawn, although it was willing to agree to a revision. Working group 4 which created the standard had been disbanded, so it was decided that the first step was to circulate a call for a new convenor of the group, after which the decision to revise the standard could be made definitively.

Some concluding thoughts

The reports from the working groups demonstrated the volume and complexity of work being undertaken by CEN TC346, and if the committee sometimes moves quite slowly, it is easy to understand why. Marrying the perspectives from different countries and different types of expert is also far from straightforward. However, against the backdrops of Brexit and the pandemic, it was heartening to witness such genuine commitment to understanding different viewpoints and reaching compromises that were acceptable to all, and the UK's conservation community should feel proud to be part of this process.

Isobel Griffin ACR

Head of Conservation
National Galleries of Scotland

*<https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding>

** <https://www.proculther.eu/>

Antonio Sansonetti (second from left), the new chair of CEN TC 346, alongside the previous chair, Vasco Fassina (far left)



A New Trustee



Diana Davis is an accredited large objects conservator, currently based in Portsmouth. In her new role as a member of Icon's Board of Trustees, she brings a passion for advocacy for conservation, and also for promoting professional standards and creating new pathways into the profession. She believes in the importance of collaborative working across specialisms within conservation and heritage craft skills.

She currently works as Head of Conservation for the National Museum of the Royal Navy, and has previously worked for National Museums Scotland, the Science Museum and English Heritage, as well as the Antarctic Heritage Trust in an ambassadorial role. She has a Masters in Conservation of Archaeological & Museum Objects and a previous career as a professional archaeologist and researcher.

Welcome to these new members

We would like to extend a very warm welcome to all those who joined us in December 2021 and January 2022. We hope to see you at an Icon event soon!

David Adams
Supporter

Francesca Azolini
Student

Barbara Banning
Supporter

Russell Booth
Student

Georgina Castle
Pathway

Jekaterina Cesnokova
Pathway

Maddison Cox
Supporter

Craig Crow
Student

Emma Dadson
Associate

Aparna Dhole
Student

Sophie Downes
Supporter

Annika Erikson
Supporter

Elizabeth Evans
Associate

Anna Forrest
Supporter

Debbie Garton
Student

Sejal Goel
Student

Marceline Graham
Student

Savannah Grieve
Student

Emily Harrison
Supporter

Chloe Hill
Supporter

Kira Hollebon
Student

Anna Holmes
Supporter

Daljeen Jassal
Student

Sophie Kean
Pathway

Nóra Enid Kerényi
Supporter

Maggie L
Supporter

Hanna Ladbrooke
Supporter

Amanda Lancaster
Student

Ginny Lee
Associate

Pei Pei Lee
Student

Elena Leith
Supporter

Michael Macinski
Student

Charles MacKinnon
Student

Duncan McCall
Student

Victoria McCartney
Associate

Bethany Mikelait
Pathway

Paul Mitchell
Supporter

Helen Pecout
Student

Lydia Powell
Student

Catherine Pugh
Student

Anna Rolph
Pathway

Sarah Scaturro
Associate

Kimberly Selvaggi
Associate

Petra Šindlerová
Student

Amy Smith
Pathway

Jason Struthers
Pathway

Elisabeth Subal
Student

Ahmed Tarek
Student

Lauren Van Dessel
Student

Lok Hang Wan
Student

Ellen Whealing
Supporter

Amanda White
Associate

Beth Wimber Dietsch
Supporter

THE OVERLORD EMBROIDERY

Heather Tetley ACR of the Tetley Workshop describes a conservation project for the D-Day Story museum in Portsmouth undertaken by Jonathan Tetley and Sarah Howard ACR between 2015 to 2017 at the Tetley Conservation Facility in Wiltshire



The D-Day Story, Portsmouth

Panel 20 shows the Allied fleet off Normandy on D-Day, as Allied warships open fire against German defences on land

INTRODUCTION

For some conservators their project may be ancient, even prehistoric, or an opening into known history; however small the object, there is that link and contact. The conservation of the Overlord Embroidery was a step into modern history. My first impression of it was of a powerful and beautiful work of art depicting the details of personal experiences, the extraordinary vision of a group of men and the courage of

the many people engaged together in the events leading up to D-Day and on to the end of World War 2.

The Overlord Embroidery consists of thirty-four silk appliqué embroideries each measuring approximately 3m x1m, housed in the purpose-built D-Day Story museum in Portsmouth. It was commissioned by Lord Dulverton of Batsford in 1968 as a tribute to the sacrifice and heroism of those who took part. Inspired by the Bayeux Tapestry, it traces in stunning visual

Panel 28 shows the Allied leaders visiting Normandy after D-Day. It depicts, left to right: King George VI, General Dwight Eisenhower, General Sir Bernard Montgomery, Field Marshal Alan Brooke, prime minister Winston Churchill. In the background the Mulberry Harbours are represented.



The D-Day Story, Portsmouth



The arresting display of the embroidery inside the D-Day Story

form across the thirty-four panels the progress of Operation Overlord, from its beginnings in the dark days of 1940 to victory in Normandy in 1944. The design and artwork for the embroideries was undertaken by Sandra Lawrence and the highly skilled needlework was carried out over five years by the embroiderers of the Royal School of Needlework.

A MAJOR REDEVELOPMENT

It was an ordinary morning in the studio when Katy Ball from the Portsmouth Museum Service phoned to enquire about logistics: 'Would our studio be able to accommodate thirty-four boxed 3 x 1m framed embroideries, and could we undertake the needed conservation work whilst the D-Day Museum was undertaking a major redevelopment ahead of the 75th anniversary of the Normandy landings in 2019?'

The D-Day Story museum had been opened in 1984, in time for the 40th anniversary of this pivotal event in World War II. A key element of it was a purpose-built gallery to display the Overlord Embroidery to the public. The redevelopment involved a complete transformation of the exhibitions at the museum, with a radical new layout and use of the most

up-to-date display methods, intended to fully convey the scale and drama of the event and the human side of the story. As part of the project, the Overlord Embroidery would also receive new interpretation, improving the understanding of the creation of the Embroidery, the sources used and the story told by each panel. Crucially, the embroidery was also to undergo a conservation review and assessment, including any necessary work to conserve and protect it for the future.

SURVEYING THE TASK

We undertook a feasibility study to look at the dynamics of storage in and away from the studio, transport, environment and working space. Sarah Howard ACR joined me for the three-day survey of the condition of the embroideries and to work on the treatment method for the textiles, which required the complete removal of the embroideries during the refurbishment work, any necessary remedial treatment and the updating of preventive measures to the frames, as well as the re-interpretation of the embroideries.

The embroideries are displayed in the round at the museum. The low-level lighting gave even more drama to the work, starting at the panel showing the sense of defeat and disaster of Dunkirk through the depiction of the meetings that took place to the final victory. Designed as a collage from the newspapers of the day, we see Churchill, King George VI, Eisenhower and Montgomery initiating the secret commission, which led to the D-Day invasion. There are Tommies sharing flasks, the massive preparations for the D-Day invasion and operations, and the aftermath of devastation and victory. All of this, during the three days of the survey, gave me a huge and unexpected sense of optimism.

Detail from Panel 2 of British children trying out gas masks, showing some abrasion. The scene on the right shows where the detail originates (bottom centre)





Detail from Panel 24 of a British soldier's knapsack showing fabric distortion

FINDING SUITABLE STORAGE

The estimated value of the Embroidery increased from a guesstimate of very valuable to very, very valuable, which required changes to the estimates on insurance, security and storage facility. We researched different storage locations, sizes (mostly too small) and costs, and Crown Fine Art storage facility near Salisbury was chosen as most suitable for distance and facilities offered.

The store is situated in Ministry of Defence property and is part of the hangars constructed, rather suitably, to house ammunition for the Royal Navy in WW2. It consists of underground areas dug into the chalk of the downs of Salisbury Plain and could well have been used for a Bond film. On our survey visit we arrived through guarded military gates to meet the manager in his Nissan hut office. He took us up the road to huge-arched shuttered doors, once inside we walked down a long very wide vaulted corridor with a rail track at one side. The store is well set up and houses objects from museums and galleries, which can be transported around the maze of hangars suspended on ceiling rail tracks.

Based on the method statement, the tender was drawn up outlining the scope of the project, the key personnel, details of the company tendering, and the four stages of the project, de-installation, transport and storage, survey and treatment and re-installation. The contract was agreed using an open book system which was agreed as the best for the complexity of the project by the Portsmouth City Council Accounts Office. Our proposals and estimates were accepted. As I was rather engaged in chemotherapy by then, Jonathan Tetley and Sarah Howard undertook the further stages of the survey and treatment.

The storage facility appropriately housed ammunition in World War II





Specially designed crate stands were made for storing the crates whilst at the workshop

THE CONDITION OF THE TEXTILES

Overall, the embroidery appeared to be in good condition. Considering that it had been on view for thirty years, it had withstood the potential impact that such long-term display can have on textiles remarkably well, most notably exposure to light and the effects of gravity over time. The cases appeared to have provided a good barrier against environmental factors such as dust and excessive fluctuations in temperature and relative humidity.

The examination of one of the embroidered panels out of its case confirmed this first impression of its overall good

condition. It was noted that there were no obvious signs of fading, one of the most obvious indications of light damage. The embroideries had been mounted by stretching and securing them onto a wooden stretcher frame. The work had been undertaken well and the embroidered panels were still very well secured on their stretchers with no sagging of the fabric in the middle of the panels.

From general observation of all the thirty-four panels, the embroideries did not appear to be dirty. Due to their length of time on display, there was inevitably loose particulate soiling at the base of some of the cases. And some dust had penetrated through the front of the embroidery and through the layer of cream coloured cotton fabric which had been attached to the back of each stretcher, despite the good protection it had provided over thirty years.

EMBROIDERY DETAILS

Overall, the various fabrics used to create the Embroidery were also sound. Some of the appliqué fabric pieces (most notably the plain coloured fabric used for the flesh highlights and much of the brown fabrics used for clothing) appeared crinkled. This was probably due to the way in which the various appliqué fabrics had been applied to the backing fabric and the tensions placed on the weave over time by the way they had been stitched in place. Also, there were other layers of fabric underneath each appliquéd piece (the purple background fabric as well as the edges of other fabric pieces) which contributed to the uneven surface of some of the fabrics.

The effects of gravity over time may have exacerbated the crinkling of the appliqué patches but it was not extensive or

For the decant from the museum the embroideries were wrapped in acid-free tissue before being enveloped in Tyvek with cotton ties and then put into their crates





Over a period of six weeks, Jonathan Tetley and Sarah Howard surface-cleaned all the panels using low powered suction vacuum cleaners and a soft bristle brush. A layer of nylon net over the face of the panel prevented damage to the appliqué embroidery and couched braiding

causing structural problems. On some of the appliqué patches very small regular, round holes and/or marks could be seen, often in clusters. These were a result of pin holes and/or pricking out undertaken at the time of the construction of the embroidery. They were not the signs of past or present insect infestation.

TREATMENT

The museum still had in store the original travelling packing cases that had been made for the Embroidery when it was sent on touring exhibition early in its life. (The full set of design cartoons are still displayed at the Pentagon in Washington, where for a while the embroideries had also been displayed in the Pension building.) On arrival at the Tetley Workshop the panels were treated in sequence. The detailed condition of each panel prior to work starting was assessed and any concerns that might affect the treatment were noted and discussed with the D-Day project team.

Purpose-built shelving was constructed in the studio and it needed two people to bring each (heavy) box out of the shelving, unscrew the lid, remove the embroidery from its plastozote padding and acid-free tissue wrapping, and transfer it to the purpose-built A-frame for inspection and treatment.

Detail photos were taken of any damage as well as any interesting features. All the panels were surface cleaned using a low powered suction vacuum cleaner and a soft bristle brush. A layer of nylon net was applied over the nozzle of the cleaner to prevent damage to the appliqué embroidery and couched braiding. The loose edges of some of the net patches were secured in place. After treatment each embroidery was returned to its crate.

Several crates were labelled specially for a planned visit by the Press, so that relevant boxes could be brought out for display and also for the visit by Trustees, who oversee and approve what happens to The Overlord Embroidery. Jonathan Tetley and Sarah Howard gave a presentation on the condition of and treatments to the panels, which we understand was appreciated by the Trustees, along with the tea provided.

After completion of the treatment, the crates were collected and transported to the fine art store for storage until reinstatement. We made two monitoring visits to the store.

RE-INSTALLATION

In 2017 the embroidered panels were returned to the newly refurbished museum and installed in their new display gallery. Each panel was unwrapped from its crate in sequence according to the direction in which they were best re-installed. Jonathan Tetley and Sarah Howard worked on unpacking and carrying the pieces to the D-Day museum project staff who installed the panels back into their display cases.

The museum had a celebratory re-opening, with Princess Anne as the honoured guest. It was good to see the panels reinstalled - another pleasure shared by conservators. I had not visited the rest of the museum on the survey visits, and I found it interesting, especially to see the work that Sarah Howard had undertaken with the other textiles in the display. But for me the highlight, apart from meeting Her Royal Highness, was meeting the ladies from the Royal School of Needlework who had worked on the embroideries in the 1970s, to hear their stories and to reflect on their fantastic skills and attention to detail. It is these talented craftspeople, as well as the staff at the museum, who have ensured that the embroidery is still in such good condition and it is a satisfying reminder that the tradition of very fine craftsmanship is still alive in this country.

www.tetleyworkshop.co.uk

<https://thedaystory.com/discover/overlord-embroidery/>

<http://www.sandalawrence.co.uk/Overlord%20Embroideries.htm>

See <https://youtu.be/4R7TEUt6YXc> for Women in the D-Day Museum: The Overlord Embroidery

The loose edges of some of the net patches and threads were couched down where appropriate



MOVING ON UP!

In the first of a two-part series, Julie Bon ACR offers advice for emerging conservation professionals on how to set about building their careers



Julie Bon ACR

As a conservation professional I know how competitive and challenging our sector can be. You've spent a fortune on your education, and you've worked hard to achieve great results. You have a solid grounding in the theory of your specialism and you're ready to develop your practical skills further and enter the world of work. Completing a conservation qualification is a huge achievement, and it's what you've been focussed on for the last few years. The end is in

sight, but what are your next steps? Where can you find the road map to success and how do you even get started on that journey?

It maybe doesn't help to say that we've all been there. Everyone starts somewhere and everyone needs to take that first step on the career ladder. For me it's the summer of 2004 and I have just completed an MA in Conservation of Historic Objects (now Conservation of Cultural Heritage) at the University of Lincoln. Dido is singing about a 'White Flag', Pink is talking about 'Trouble' and Maroon 5 are finding it 'Harder to Breathe'. These are not good signs. However, I was young and keen and determined to find work and build a successful career so, not for the first time, I looked to the inspiration that is Christina Aguilera and decided to become a 'Fighter'.

The first step for me was to get involved in SSCR (the Scottish Society for Conservation and Restoration). This group, a forerunner of Icon before it was created through convergence of several organisations in 2005, brought together conservators working across Scotland. This was the perfect way for me to meet people and network. I threw myself into SSCR and became their Administrator during that heady summer of 2004. Although the work wasn't quite what I was looking for, the access to the committee and other members of the society was exactly what I needed to get my name known and to demonstrate what I was capable of.

From that came a number of project jobs, particularly with the National Trust for Scotland. I still owe a huge debt of gratitude to Lisa Nilsen, then Conservator West for NTS, who gave me my first project job at Geilston House in Cardross.

The challenge of packing up most of the contents of the house, in preparation for building works, was compounded by a particularly cold winter in the West of Scotland. The only heat in the place came from the Aga so I did most of the work in the Kitchen!

I share these memories to illustrate that although the future might seem uncertain, there are always opportunities out there if you are willing to work hard, go where the work is and are doggedly persistent. However, I know more than I did back then and there are some insights that I would have appreciated knowing as a new graduate. In this series of articles, I hope to be able to share some top tips about applying for jobs and internships to help those emerging conservators looking to take their first steps on the career ladder.

A lot of this is based on a lecture that I deliver annually to the Kelvin Centre for Conservation and Cultural Heritage Research at the University of Glasgow. Much of that lecture is based on original research by Carol Brown ACR which she kindly passed on to me and I am much indebted to her. I met Carol back in my SSCR days which goes to show that all the connections that you make throughout your career are just as important as the theory and practice that you learn. Surround yourself with brilliant colleagues and professionals and some of it is bound to wear off!

TAKING STOCK

It's important, as students, to recognise that during your course your studies must be your main focus. Squeezing as much as you can out of the educational opportunities presented to you is what you are there to do. Applying yourself to the challenges that your practical projects present and developing your analytical and problem-solving skills to address those challenges, is what will set you up for a successful career in conservation.

When you are single-mindedly focussed on achieving the goal in front of you, it can be hard to look up and see the bigger picture. However, it is always good to keep in mind where you are headed and what your ambitions are; what do you hope to achieve and how will you do it? At this stage of your career, it can be hugely beneficial to develop your skills of self-reflection. Where are the gaps in your knowledge and experience and how do you plan to fill them? Do you plan to focus on a specialism and research or are you planning a more generalist approach to a conservation career? What are your real areas of interest and what do you think your strengths are?

For me I knew early on that I wanted to move into preventive conservation as soon as I could after graduation. I knew that

bench work was not for me and that I was better suited to taking a more holistic view of collections care. I also knew that I was interested in working with historic interiors, so I needed to build up my practical experience of that sector. I was lucky enough to be able to volunteer in the heritage sector during my holidays from university so was building up a good body of experience. That volunteering also introduced me to people working in the sector and solidified my ambition to work in preventive conservation. Knowing where you want your career to take you, and what you need to do to get there, are important questions to ask yourself at this stage.

SELF-REFLECTION

A tangible way that you can take stock and understand where you are, and what you need to work on, is to use the Icon Professional Standards: <https://www.icon.org.uk/resources/standards-and-ethics/icon-professional-standards.html>. These professional standards guide the profession of conservation, and you can use the included Dreyfus scale to assess where you sit, in the novice to expert range, against each of the standards:

Standards	Novice	Beginner	Competent	Proficient	Expert
1 Assessment of cultural heritage					
2 Conservation options and strategies					
3 Conservation measures					
4 Organisation and management					
5 Professional development					
6 Judgement and Ethics					

In the 1970s Stuart E. Dreyfus, an applied mathematician, and Hubert L. Dreyfus, a philosopher, developed a model of skill acquisition based on the study of chess players, air force pilots, and army tank drivers and commanders. They published their research in 1980 and the Dreyfus scale has been used and adapted across a variety of professions including nursing and teaching.

The Dreyfus model of skill acquisition is a model that can be used to assess the level of development of competencies and skills of people who are learning something new. According to the model, people learn from direct instructions and practice¹. It assumes that the longer we practise by following rules and procedures, the more experienced and more competent we become in a job or task. Eventually, as we become more experienced, we no longer rely on the

direct rules and procedures but instinctively know how best to approach a task and may even innovate to create new and improved approaches.

To achieve Accreditation, which is the standard that we should all be aiming for, you need to be assessed as proficient across the standards. The general advice is that you may reach this level four or five years after training; but everyone is different and there is no clear path to proficiency. It is worth considering that when you graduate from a conservation training course you can expect your knowledge and skills to be at this sort of level – this would be typical, depending on the course taken and any previous experience:

Standards	Novice	Beginner	Competent	Proficient	Expert
1 Assessment of cultural heritage					
2 Conservation options and strategies					
3 Conservation measures					
4 Organisation and management					
5 Professional development					
6 Judgement and Ethics					

It is clear that, upon graduation, we all have a way to go to achieve proficiency. Finding ways to boost your practical experience, to complement your training and theoretical knowledge, is a key first step. One possible route that may be on offer is an internship. On completion of a practical, hands-on internship you may find yourself here:

Standards	Novice	Beginner	Competent	Proficient	Expert
1 Assessment of cultural heritage					
2 Conservation options and strategies					
3 Conservation measures					
4 Organisation and management					
5 Professional development					
6 Judgement and Ethics					

It might be worth taking some time to consider where you feel you sit on this scale at the moment. If you are honest with yourself, it may help you to identify where some of the gaps are for you and give you the opportunity to consider how you might fill those gaps.

NEXT STEPS

It may be a luxury to be able to choose the next steps, but it is worth considering what your options are. Following graduation will you be looking for employment or will you seek out an internship or further educational opportunity? In either scenario you will need to start to think about how you are going to market yourself for what comes next. At this point it is worth considering the differences between what employers and internship hosts are looking for from candidates.

In general, employers are looking for:

- A match with the job description
- 'Fit' in the team and organisation
- A reasonable degree of autonomy
- Enthusiasm and interest
- Someone who can deliver the goods

When it comes to internship hosts, they are often looking for:

- A match with the placement description
- 'Fit' in the team and organisation

- Enthusiasm and interest
- The applicant who will get the most out of the opportunity and really apply themselves
- Someone with clear ideas about what they want to learn during the placement and an understanding of how it fits into their career path

To summarise, you may not be able to choose your next step, but it is worth stopping to think about the level of job that you should be aiming for and what you might need to do to get it.

In the next article in this series, I will go into more detail and share my top tips for writing an effective CV, completing an outstanding job application, and making a great impression at a job interview.

1. <https://www.toolshero.com/human-resources/dreyfus-model-of-skill-acquisition/> Accessed 06.01.21

Julie Bon is Head of Collections Care at the National Library of Scotland.

Julie also contributed to the February issue of Icon News (p.35) where Icon News inadvertently changed her surname to Le Bon. Julie denies any connection to a well-known 1980s band. We apologise for giving this impression. (We were convinced she had Old French ancestry.)

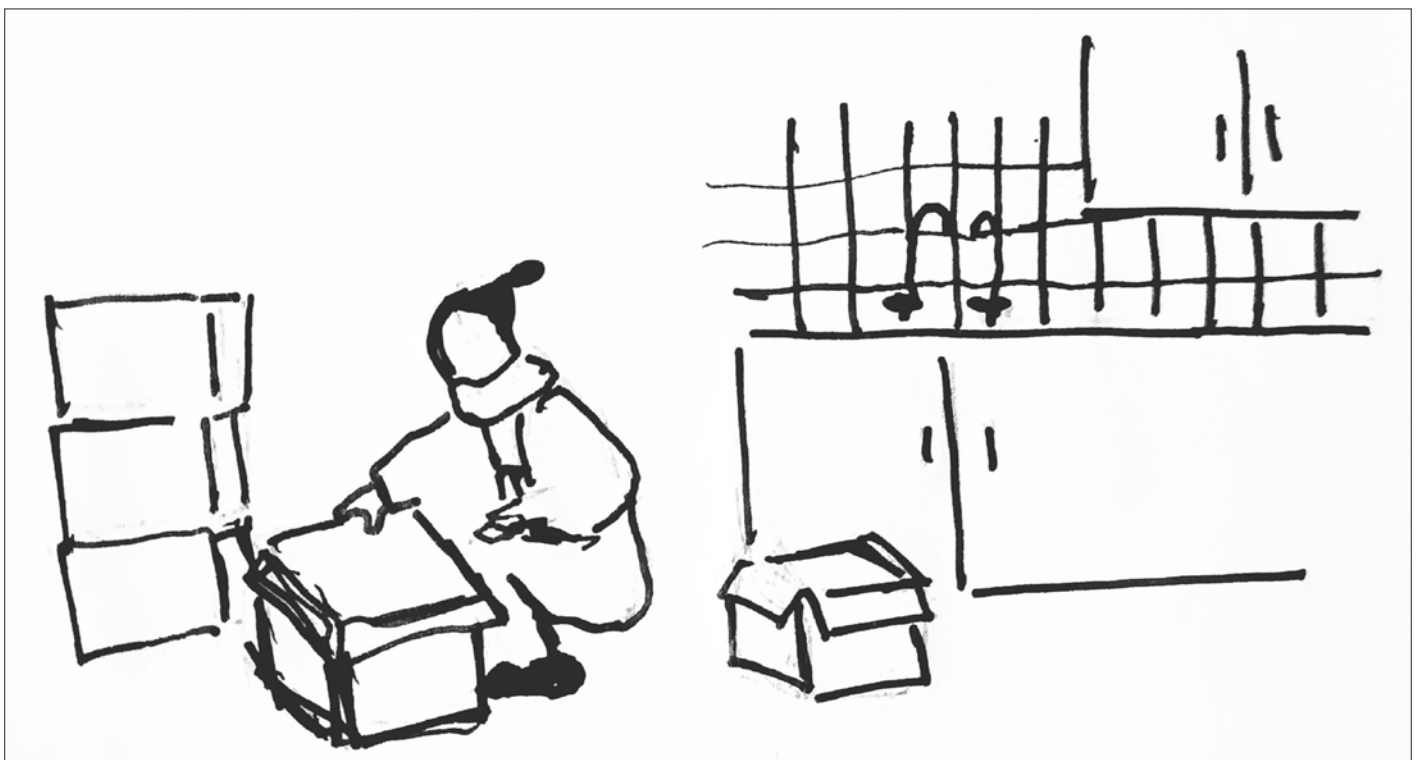


Illustration © Amy Kerr

BANISHING BISSELLIELLA BY BIOLOGICAL MEANS

Hilary Jarvis reports on the latest results of a ground-breaking trial to combat stubborn clothes moth infestations at the National Trust's Blickling Hall in Norfolk



© National Trust Images/John Millar

Blickling Hall, Norfolk

In March 2020, the National Trust (NT) launched an innovative two-year trial at Blickling Hall which was designed to explore the efficacy of two biological solutions in eradicating a particularly entrenched infestation of *Tineola bisselliella*, the webbing or common clothes moth. Early results are promising and NT conservators are hopeful that they will lead to a revised protocol where moth problems are proving resistant to traditional treatments.

MOTH MAYHEM

Despite a robust and long-standing housekeeping regime at the Hall, the problem had reached a level, in terms of exponential increase, range and extent, where Trust staff concluded the time had come for a more interventive approach.

Adult moths caught at Blickling as part of the Trust's standard monitoring regime tripled from 2015 to 2020. The nearly 2,500 adult males caught at the house in 2020 amounted to

15% of all *Tineola bisselliella* identified across all Trust sites. This was of particular concern at Blickling, known for its lavish interiors and some fine, internationally significant textiles, which are unique to the house and its story.

A MULTI-PRONGED ATTACK

Modern-day damage from moth larvae is rare, but is occasionally reported by the house team, who recently discovered larvae, eggs and frass in the woollen pleats of a ladies' sedan chair in the Great Hall. Moths are also regularly reported in the two apartments situated within the Mansion building. They bring the additional complexity of comfort heating and other modern-day requirements which have to be accommodated within care regimes designed for historic collections.

It is not clear what is sustaining such a persistent moth population, if not the textiles and taxidermy on display at Blickling, and our suspicion has long been that the larvae are



Webbing clothes moth adults caught on a trap at Blickling Hall, Norfolk in August 2017

mostly feeding on dust and detritus beneath floorboards, behind voids and hidden in the complex roof structure. But who can afford to be complacent in the face of this kind of infestation profile in a location with such an at-risk collection?

FROM TOMATOES TO TAPESTRIES

In 2019 we turned to David Loughlin for advice. Owner of Historyonics, a leading UK supplier of insect treatments and supplies, David proposed a more assertive, multi-pronged attack designed to tackle all stages of the moth life-cycle simultaneously. This represents a notable step up from the

Trust's non-interventive strategy, which posits limited treatments against moth, within a museum-standard preventive Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach.

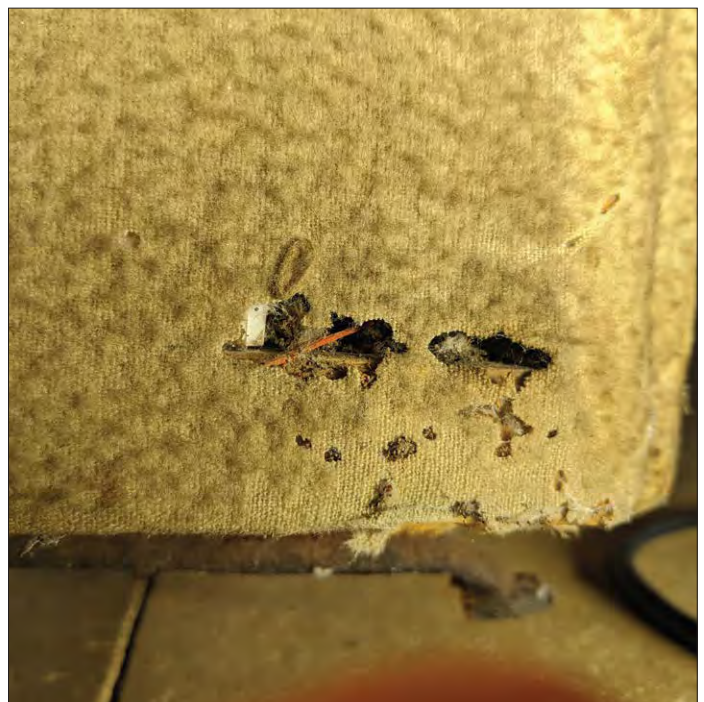
David spent nearly twenty years working to prevent caterpillar attack in Mediterranean fruit orchards, using a mix of disruptive pheromones to deter mating, and microwasps to parasitize any viable eggs that may still be fertilised. Despite the very different environments, he was convinced this regime would transfer effectively to a historic-house setting. Both treatments have been tried in the heritage field before, albeit as solo options and with some limited success.

In order to fully target all stages of the life cycle, David also suggested that we not only maintain, but also increase and regularise, use of chemical treatments in certain areas. As with horticulture, we are actively moving away from chemical use in conservation at the Trust. But the complexities of Blickling Hall were felt to warrant it in the very particular circumstances outlined.

PROJECT PLAN

Treatment approach in hand, we decided to refine the aim of the project - to eradicate the infestation - by further seeking to establish whether pheromone disruption alone would be more or less effective than combined use with parasitoids. We did this by keeping the ground floor purely for pheromone disruption, limiting chemicals mostly to the attic floor and only combining the wasps with the pheromones on the first floor.

Webbing clothes moth damage to wool interior of Westminster sedan chair, c. 1760





The CL pheromone tab in bespoke cardboard holder on a large mantelpiece

Past experience and anecdotal advice suggested that pheromones alone can take at least five years to gain traction – not an option here. Using parasitoids did seem a drastic step, however, and we were keen to establish whether they were absolutely necessary, and if so, what our parameters for their future use might reasonably be.

LOCKDOWN DISRUPTION

The project plan was disrupted by the first UK pandemic lockdown which came into effect in March 2020. No one was comfortable delaying or deferring however, so we refined the strategy, based on analysis which showed that 80% of the adult moths caught in 2020 were in fact limited to just thirteen of the sixty or so rooms, corridors and spaces encompassed by the property's IPM monitoring regime. With limited staff on site we were nevertheless confident that we

Trichogramma evenescens next to some 12-point type, for scale



could devise a plan which was practicable and targeted the known 'hot spots'

Beginning in March, the treatments were delivered in batches such that the sixty-nine pheromone tabs could be replaced every twelve weeks, and the forty wasp cards could be refreshed fortnightly. The idea was to ensure a constant supply of wasps to target any eggs that were laid, albeit the disruptive pheromones should have had a dramatic effect on mating encounters.

With lockdown prohibiting the kind of onsite visits from specialists and consultants that would normally have underpinned such a project, advice and support was mostly given virtually. The placement of the tabs and wasp cards required considered planning and an excellent knowledge and understanding of the building. Thankfully this was not a problem, as Ellie Hobbs, Blickling's Collections & House Officer, was among the non-furloughed staff and could take responsibility for onsite oversight of the trial and has detailed knowledge of adult moth behaviour at the Hall. She also kept detailed records and plans of placements, so changeover days were relatively efficient.

EARLY LESSONS

Interestingly, Ellie quickly ascertained that the microwasps rarely fly, tending to scuttle or crawl (remarkably quickly), until they meet an obstacle, which they will either move around or attempt to scale, just as they do within tomato or

Signs of dead microwasps near a card dispenser



fruit vines. We had read of this in one horticulturist paper encountered as part of our literature review and heritage entomologist David Pinniger had also flagged that *Trichogramma evenescens* 'aren't great fliers', and that this might be a barrier to their use in the lofty environs of a 17thC manor. To our surprise, early data suggest this wasn't necessarily an issue in the end.

We were also aware of the short *Trichogramma* lifespan -- broadly two weeks -- and had been concerned about what would happen to the ultimately millions of dead wasp bodies, which suppliers tend to suggest merely 'disappear' naturally within standard dust deposits. Thankfully, Ellie did not find it necessary to significantly increase vacuuming in the rooms where the wasps were deployed, though occasionally found evidence of dead wasps around some of the egg-dispensers, which did require special measures.

We are continuing to investigate whether these instances reflect something in the immediate environment of the card that might have killed these adults prematurely (for example, legacy residues from past chemical treatments to the book shelves illustrated) or whether localised temperatures might have caused them undue stress (they are known to be very sensitive). Another theory is that the males, after mating, may die sooner than the females, which still need to locate the moth eggs and oviposit.

The absence of substantial numbers of dead wasps, coupled with evidence of their lack of flight, has alleviated concerns that tapestries, silk wall coverings and other vulnerable, vertical

surfaces might be at risk from using *Trichogramma*, which is a valuable outcome for the collections on open display.

THE FIRST YEAR DATA

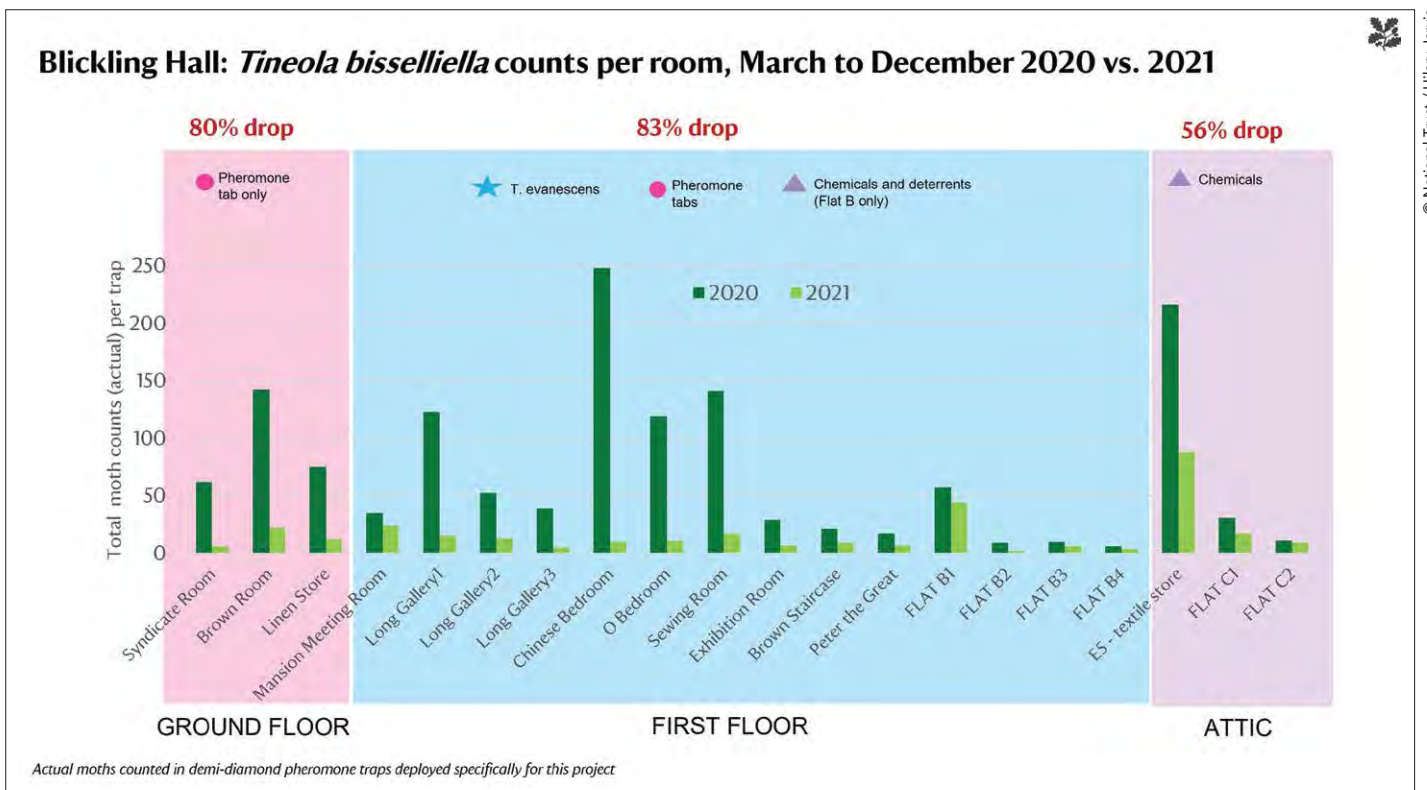
Although we still do not have twelve months of moth counts at the time of writing, there is evidence of a substantial drop in the number caught, both on the pheromone traps deployed specifically for monthly checks during this trial and on the existing blunder and pheromone traps used in the normal quarterly IPM monitoring.

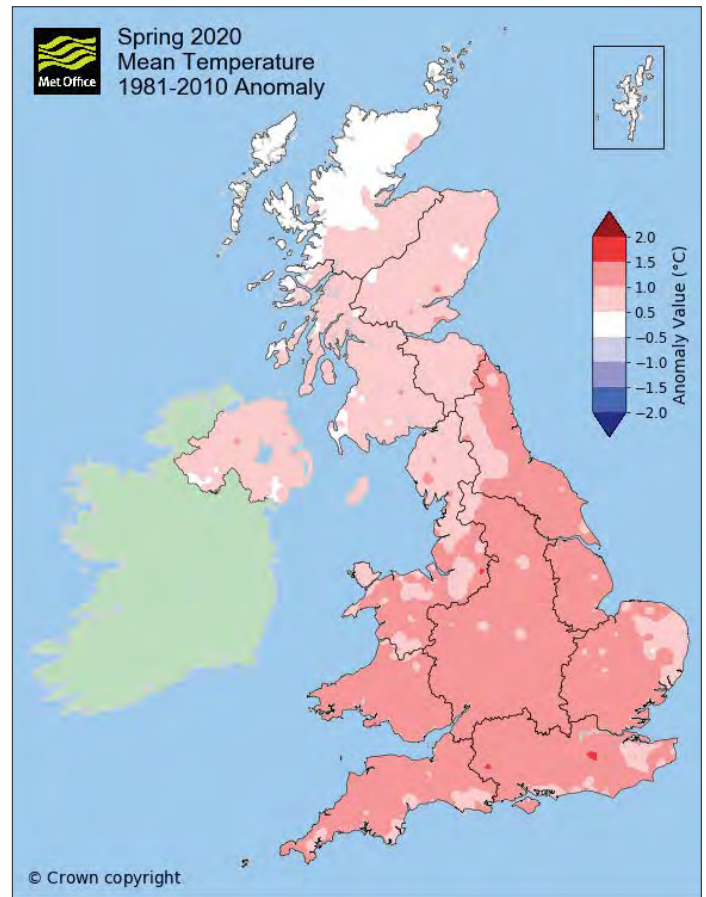
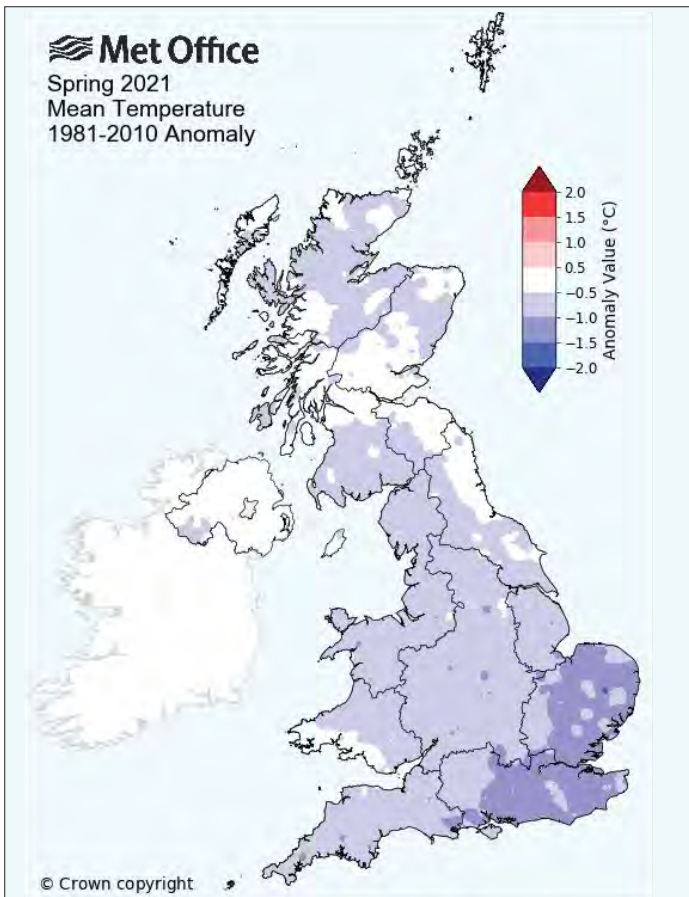
We contained any excitement at what appeared to be 80% overall declines in early spring counts, not least because we remembered that the Easter period of 2020 had been conspicuously warm almost everywhere in the UK, but certainly in Norfolk, compared to a particularly chilly Spring 2021.

We also knew that, one year into the project, the ground and first floors of the Mansion should theoretically (at least) have been awash with synthetic pheromone from the tabs, meaning the males would no longer be drawn to our pheromone monitoring traps as they would historically have done.

The 80% drops have continued for the rest of the year, however, which certainly bodes well, though the difference in efficacy on the ground floor (restricted purely to pheromone treatment) compared with the first floor (pheromones and microwasps combined) was not substantial; and the chemical treatments produced disappointing results, certainly in comparison.

Blickling Hall: *Tineola bisselliella* counts per room, March to December 2020 vs. 2021





Charts showing substantially warmer spring 2020 vs. 2021, particularly in Norfolk

SECOND YEAR CHANGES

So we have decided to adapt the programme to offer more clarity in year two. From March 2022 we are taking away the pheromone tabs from rooms on the east façade of the ground floor, whilst also removing wasps and pheromones from four of the rooms on the west façade of the first floor. We anticipate less of a drop in numbers of adult moths caught on traps in both of the non-treated areas, and any difference between the two may yet indicate that the combined treatments are more effective than the solo pheromone disruption, or not. And indeed that chemical treatments really are less effective.

We will increase the concentration and regularity of chemical use on the attic floor and in the first-floor apartment and re-deploy the now redundant pheromone tabs in one space in the attic which is used as a textile store. As well as running a research trial, we must not forget that we are also treating a serious moth problem and the relatively smaller decline in this area is of concern.

LOOKING AHEAD

And that's where the project neatly ties together what are ultimately two different aims. For the Hall itself we are obviously aiming to eradicate an entrenched and potentially risky infestation, or, more likely, define thresholds below which residual insect activity could perhaps be considered 'acceptable' in a Historic House context. However, for collection managers, the aim is to establish a tiered treatment approach for *Tineola Bisselliella*.

Currently the Trust relies on well-documented preventive measures, with some treatments on sighting of insect frass or damage. When numbers reach a certain threshold, and depending on the outcomes of this trial, we would like to be able to suggest a certain treatment approach, perhaps the solo use of pheromone tabs, beyond which we would then potentially advocate the move to combined use of pheromone disruption with microwasps, for a limited period.

Though pricing strategies with suppliers haven't been tied down, we do know the wasps are more expensive than the tabs. They are also clearly sufficiently interventive that our use of them should always be cautious and proportionate to the need. Thresholds will therefore need to be defined, and treatment efficacy clearly established. But it is heartening to know that while the wasps and pheromone tabs continue to do their work, moth numbers do seem to be significantly reduced after a year, and we have within our grasp a more robust, but at the same time balanced, practicable and sustainable response to a threat that shows no sign of receding and will continue to put many invaluable objects at risk in collections at the National Trust and beyond.

About the author

Hilary Jarvis is Assistant National Conservator for the National Trust and a Pathway member of Icon. She is lead author of the paper 'Infestation Stations! A novel full-cycle approach to webbing clothes moth (*Tineola bisselliella*) eradication at Blickling Hall, Norfolk' in *Integrated Pest Management for Collections* published in 2022 by Archetype Publications Ltd in association with Icon. This article updates the paper which was delivered at last year's Pest Odyssey Conference.

LECTURES

PORTRAIT OR PREDELLA? The conservation treatment and reframing of two panel paintings by Andrea del Sarto

Icon Paintings Group
Online 29 November 2021

This online presentation was given by **Elizabeth Wigfield**, Associate Paintings Conservator from the Art Institute of Chicago. Also present were Dr Clare Finn ACR, Donatella Banit (conservator and scientist), and Patrick Whife (Head of Skills at Icon).

After a short introduction including the art-historical background, provenance and past restorations, Elizabeth Wigfield focused on the newly discovered information regarding the function and framing of the two small panels by Andrea del Sarto.

These two rondel portraits of Beccuccio Bichierai and his wife originally belonged to the predella of the main panel titled 'Virgin and Child in Glory with Six Saints', exhibited in the *Galleria Palatina (Palazzo Pitti)* in Florence. Not only were they removed from the original predella, but the two small panels were also separated.

In the past they were exhibited as double portraits, each in a dark brown wooden frame. The most recent cleaning tests revealed that this brown paint was overpainting that had been applied by previous conservator-restorers. Under this layer they discovered further overpainting, first with red, second with light green and then a yellow paint layer. Lastly, the cleaning process revealed another much lighter red-brown painted frame beneath the overpaint. This newly exposed painted frame is part of a continuous decorative frame with a yellowish filling in between the images.

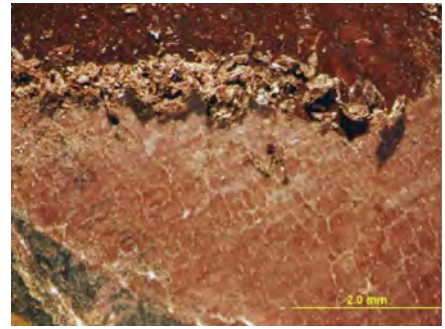
Elizabeth Wigfield surmised that, based on this new research, the two panels were not placed next to each other but were further apart and were both part of a bigger decorated frame. These new findings gave rise to questions about past exhibition displays of a double portrait, but more importantly how to display these two panels going forward.

The well-presented, detailed, and clear lecture ended with an open Q & A, which addressed these newly raised issues. Although the subsequent discussion was based more on questions relating to the objects and less about finding a solution to the framing, it ended the presentation nicely. A more personal insight and perspective on the framing question by the speaker herself would have been interesting.

The Art Institute of Chicago



Removal of overpaint in central section using a scalpel.



During the cleaning process

From my perspective, the original artistic idea and purpose must be considered in deciding the new type of display. Preserving the original artistic intention as well as the provenance of the panels is vital. In conclusion, this question does not only apply to the two small panels but also to the main panel, as they were originally intended together, the rondel as a part of its predella. This would need to be a discussion and collaboration with the conservator-restorers and art historians of the *Palazzo Pitti*.

All in all, the incredible conservation work recovering the original painted frame should be celebrated! This has led to a new understanding of how the two portrait panels relate and belong to each other. It has showcased once more how necessary art scientific examination is and the essential role a conservator-restorer plays in understanding an artwork in its entirety.

Lea Kämpf

MA Painting Conservator & Restorer
Basel, Switzerland

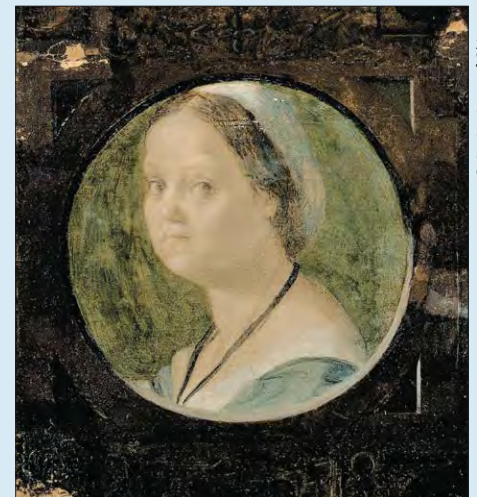
STAIN REDUCTION OF CERAMICS

Icon Ceramics & Glass Group
Online 11 November 2021

In the treatment of ceramic objects, conservators are often faced with the necessity of stain reduction, as the presence of stains limits a full aesthetic appreciation of the object. However, the decision to reduce stains, as well as the choice of materials and methods, can often be challenging.

To help conservators make informed decisions, this online lecture was delivered by **Lauren Fair**, Head of Objects Conservation at Winterthur Museum, Garden, & Library. The talk was based on the latest research on stain reduction of ceramics at Winterthur Museum at the University of Delaware (USA) that was led by Bruno Pouliot (1957-2018), the late senior objects conservator at Winterthur Museum, Garden, & Library, and affiliated professor at Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Arts Conservation.

Before treatment: the portraits of Domenico Gambassi (Beccuccio Bichierai) and his wife, 1525/28, by Andrea del Sarto





The portraits after cleaning

First and foremost, Lauren introduced the nature of stains in ceramic objects and their formation mechanism. She summarised four types of stains: organic stains, inorganic stains, oil-based stains, and stains from adhesives. Each type of stain responds to different reduction methods, and most stains are a mixture of two or more components. Thus, a proper understanding of their nature is essential as the first step for conservators to develop a customised course of action for each object.

Based on years of research and testing, a protocol for stain reduction has been developed at Winterthur Museum and the University of Delaware, which was explained in detail by Lauren. The protocol proposed a sequence of steps, which start with using a chelator, followed with oxidizing bleach, and finished by rinsing thoroughly. Throughout the process, it is essential to control the pH level, choose the right poultice, and minimise residues. Lauren also explained the basic scientific theories behind the protocol and provided tips for the choice of materials.

To improve the audience's understanding of the protocol, Lauren further presented three case studies with different levels of difficulty in stain reduction, including extensive stains with easy access, extensive stains with limited access, and stubborn stains with a mixture of components. She not only explained in detail the choice of materials and the steps used in the treatment at the time, but also reflected on potential new options and approaches that would be considered today.

Lauren also emphasised that the decision-making on the course of action should be context-based. While the methods used at Winterthur might not necessarily be the right approach in other contexts, the case studies have great referential value for the audience by putting theories into practice and showing the effects of the stain reduction methods.

Overall, it was a very exciting lecture with lots of useful information, followed by a lively discussion in the Q&A session. The key message of this lecture is that stain reduction of ceramic objects can be achieved safely and successfully with a sequential and logical selection of materials and methods. As is often the case in conservation, each stained ceramic needs to be assessed individually to develop a customised treatment protocol to aim for a successful outcome while minimising risks.

While this online lecture was an alternative

plan during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ceramics & Glass Group is hoping to revisit the original plan of organising a Stain Reduction Workshop in London this year if the situation allows, where the content of this lecture can be practised and more ideas can be shared.

Han Zhou (Rose)

Ceramics & Glass Group Committee

Stained ceramics: sugar bowl, England, c. 1800-1850, lead-glazed earthenware (pearlware) with underglaze blue 'willow pattern' decoration. Part of the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation study collection



TREATING GILT LEATHER

At the Leather Conservation Centre, Conservator Shannon Campbell and Senior Conservator Arianne Panton have been investigating methods and materials for consolidating flaking paint on gilt leather

SETTING THE SCENE

Gilt leather commonly refers to vegetable tanned leather that has been decorated with a thin layer of silver leaf topped with a coat of yellow resin varnish, producing a 'gilt' effect. The leather is commonly embossed, and paint selectively applied over the top to create the design, followed in most cases by a varnish topcoat.

For those conservators working with gilt leather, you will be aware of the commonly exhibited deterioration phenomena of cracking and flaking of the decorated surface where the topcoat has either not been applied or was removed or damaged in the past. This is largely due to the flexible leather substrate imparting movement to the relatively inflexible paint layers above. Historically, various materials have been employed to stabilise these areas, often borrowing techniques from traditional paintings conservation. However, little research has been published on the specifics of gilt leather.



Detail from two Museum of Leather gilt panels, suffering from cracking and flaking of the decorative paint layer

The Museum of Leathercraft in Northampton has a significant collection of over two hundred examples of gilt leather panels ranging from the 14th to 20th centuries, some of which show signs of paint flaking. A generous grant from the Worshipful Company of Saddlers provided an opportunity for the Leather Conservation Centre (LCC) to initiate a multi-stage research project looking into suitable methods and techniques of consolidation to secure the paint in place, preventing future flaking and subsequent loss. This article briefly outlines the methodology and findings so far.

CONSOLIDANT REQUIREMENTS

We began by considering what characteristics are of most importance when consolidating paint on leather. Our first thought was the ability of the consolidant to penetrate the layers of surface decoration and stabilise lifting paint whilst not constricting movement of the leather. The impact of the consolidant on the appearance of the surface was also of concern, as application can often cause darkening and/or an increase in surface gloss; so having nil to minimal visual impact was the goal.

Good long-term stability was prioritised, as it is unlikely that the consolidant will ever be removed from the panels. We also wanted to limit the use of water in consolidant preparation, because of the presence of various water-sensitive components, including the silver metal leaf, likely (yet unknown) presence of size and the leather itself. Being of low toxicity to ensure the consolidant is useable within in-situ circumstances (and safer for us!), and readily available in the UK were also of importance.

With these requirements in mind, we reviewed literature from a wide variety of conservation specialisms to identify suitable consolidants. We are also reviewing recent and historic treatment records to gilt leather and intend to examine accessible objects in the next stage of research. This part of the project is on-going and one we look forward to disseminating





Analysing a gilt leather panel

in the future, with the hope that this will allow for greater understanding of ageing characteristics of historic treatments and further inform present day practices.

TESTING METHODOLOGY

Following the literature review, three consolidants were chosen:

- Methyl cellulose
- Klucel G (hydroxypropyl cellulose)
- Aquazol 200 (Poly(2-ethyl-2-oxazoline))

To better understand which consolidant was the best for use, we undertook practical tests, assessing the following characteristics:

1. Preparation and practical application
2. Ability to stabilise surface
3. Penetration
4. Visual impact
5. Interaction with heightened relative humidity (RH). The behaviour of Aquazol 200 within high RH (>70%RH) was flagged as an issue during the literature review (Arslanoglu 2005; Muros 2012).

Several concentrations of each consolidant were included in preliminary tests, and those that performed extremely poorly during preparation and practical application were excluded from further stages of testing. Consolidants that were taken forward included:

- 1.5% (w/v) Klucel G in isopropyl alcohol
- 2% (w/v) Klucel G in isopropyl alcohol
- 5% (w/v) Aquazol 200 in isopropyl alcohol
- 1% (w/v) methyl cellulose in 2:1 (isopropyl alcohol: deionised water)
- 1% (w/v) methyl cellulose in 3:1 (isopropyl alcohol: deionised water)

Tests were carried out on sample leather to assess the properties outlined above, before applying onto the panels.

1. Preparation and practical application

Notable observations were recorded during preparation, for example if there was loss of material and length of time to go into solution. The easier the preparation, the better.

We identified a sample leather with heavy surface finish that was experiencing cracking and lifting similar to that of the panels, and selected consolidants were applied by brush. We recorded our observations of their application, such as the ease of control and their behaviour during application.

2. Penetration

Each consolidant was mixed with a couple of drops of red Selladerm dye and applied to the surface of chrome tanned goat samples. While the tannage is different to that of the panels, this sample was chosen for its pale colour, and used to only observe penetration rather than realistically imitate the panels. If time and financial limits had not been a concern, we would have liked to reproduce a piece of gilt leather to conduct tests on. Penetration was observed at the cross section of samples. The tests were then repeated, this time wetting the surface with IPA first, to note any impact. This was measured on a scale of 1-4 where 1=good and 4=poor.

3. Visual impact

Photographs and micrographs were taken before, during and after application to monitor any visual changes.

4. Ability to stabilise surface

Following application of each consolidant, and once it was dry, we mechanically investigated the surface of the sample leather to see if the consolidants had improved the cohesion of the lifting surface to the substrate below.

5. Relative Humidity

Solid forms of each consolidant were placed on watch glasses and subjected to a high RH environment (>70%RH) by being placed in a sealed container with cotton wool dampened with water for twenty-four hours before observing changes in texture and consistency. The same was carried out using the chosen consolidants, which we applied to the sample leather and any changes in colour or surface tack noted in comparison to a control area. As with the penetration test, this test was undertaken purely to provide an indication of behaviour within a high RH environment and mainly to see if Aquazol 200 would cause issues when applied as a consolidant to leather.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

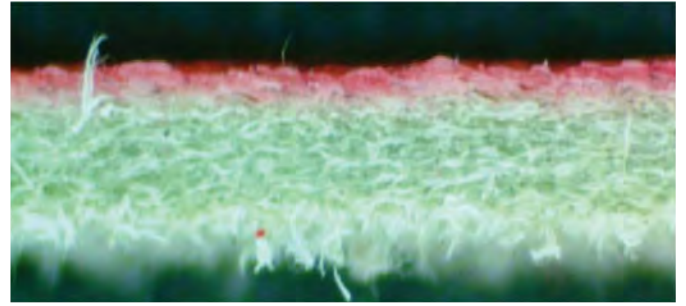
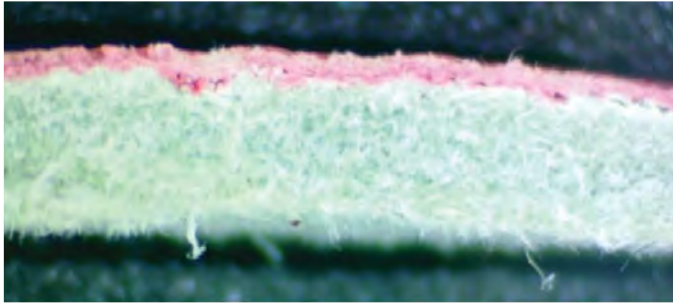
The results following testing are summarised in the table below and the images overleaf.

Tests showed that all consolidants were able to improve the cohesion of lifting surfaces to the substrate, reducing the

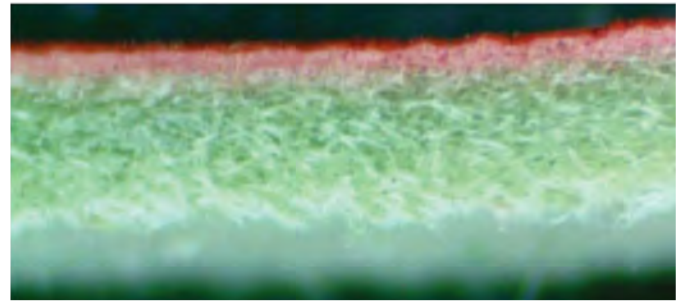
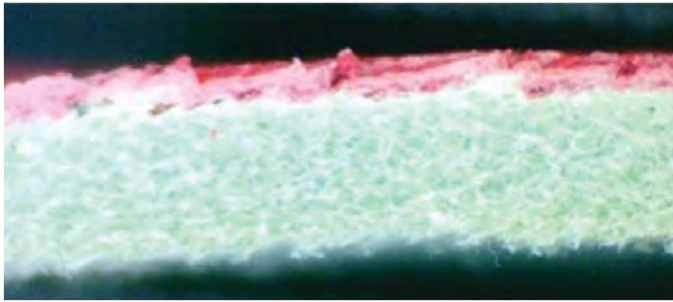
threat of loss. No consolidant tested at this stage caused an increase in gloss. Minimal darkening was noted with Klucel G and Aquazol 200. Although no darkening was noted with methyl cellulose, the presence of water did appear to cause the movement of dirt - after application, one area of the leather appeared dirtied.

Observations from testing as described in the methodology

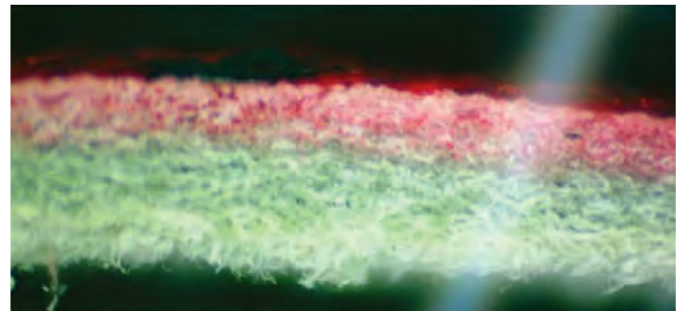
Consolidant	Ease of prep (1-4)	Practical application (applied by brush)	Darkening/tidelines	Gloss change	Behaviour when exposed to high RH (70%>RH)		Penetration (1-4)	
					Solid form	Applied as consolidant to leather	No prewet	with prewet
1.5% (w/v) Klucel G in isopropyl alcohol	2 Requires time to go into solution but much easier prep compared to 2% (w/v)	Good application, easy to control, is drawn in by leather surface, can pose risk to loosely attached flakes due to viscosity.	Minimal	No	No change	No change	2	3
2% (w/v) Klucel G in isopropyl alcohol	3 Time consuming, multiple steps, loss of material, difficult to repeat.	Good application, the low tack makes it difficult to lay lifting flakes down.	Minimal	No	No change	No change	2	2
5% (w/v) Aquazol 200 in isopropyl alcohol	1 Readily goes into solution	Readily drawn under flakes, easy to control application.	Minimal	No	Turned clear, partially solubilised, became tacky, soft & slumped	Slight tackiness felt when compressed by hand.	4	4
1% (w/v) methyl cellulose in 2:1 (isopropyl alcohol: deionised water)	3 Requires initial application in d.i water and further dilution with alcohol	Good - is readily drawn into material, water acts to relax flaking surface making it very easy to lay it down.	No darkening. Under microscope it did seem like the edge where the consolidant was applied looked dirty so there is the possibility these could be tidelines.	No	No change	No. change	2	2-3
1% (w/v) methyl cellulose in 3:1 (isopropyl alcohol: deionised water)	3 Requires initial application in d.i water and further dilution with alcohol	Easy to control application to only under flakes, flakes readily lay down. There is a long evaporation time.	No darkening. Under microscope it did seem like the edge where the consolidant was applied looked dirty so there is the possibility these could be tidelines.	No	No change	No. change	4	3



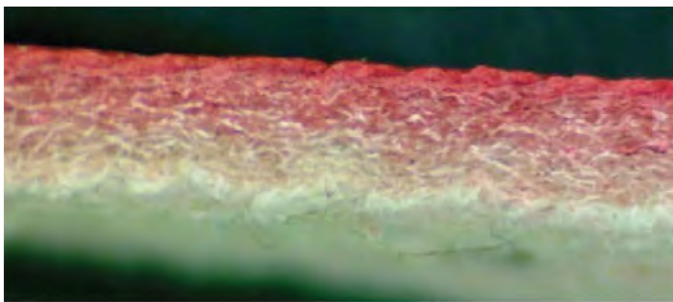
(left) 1% (w/v) methyl cellulose in 2:1 (isopropyl alcohol: deionised water) without prewetting surface. (right) 1% (w/v) methyl cellulose in 2:1 isopropyl alcohol: deionised water applied after prewetting surface.



(left) 2% (w/v) Klucel G in isopropyl alcohol without prewetting surface. (right) 2% (w/v) Klucel G in isopropyl alcohol applied after prewetting surface.



(left) 1.5% (w/v) Klucel G in isopropyl alcohol without prewetting surface. (right) 1.5% (w/v) Klucel G in isopropyl alcohol applied after prewetting surface.

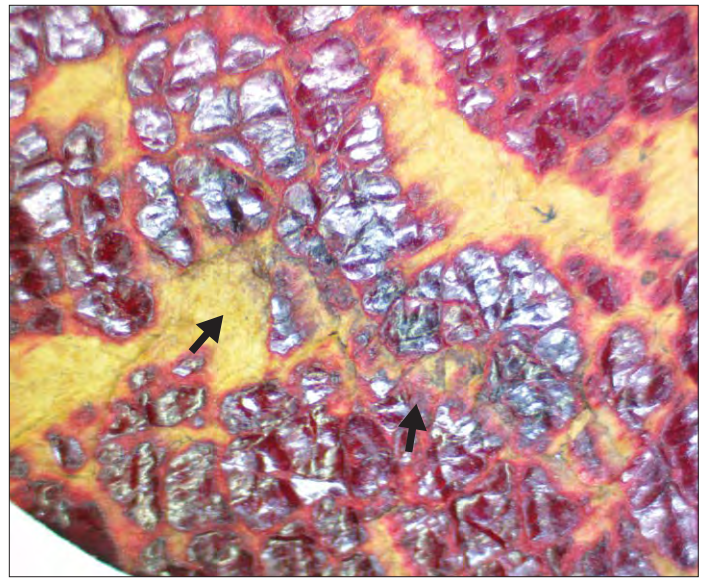
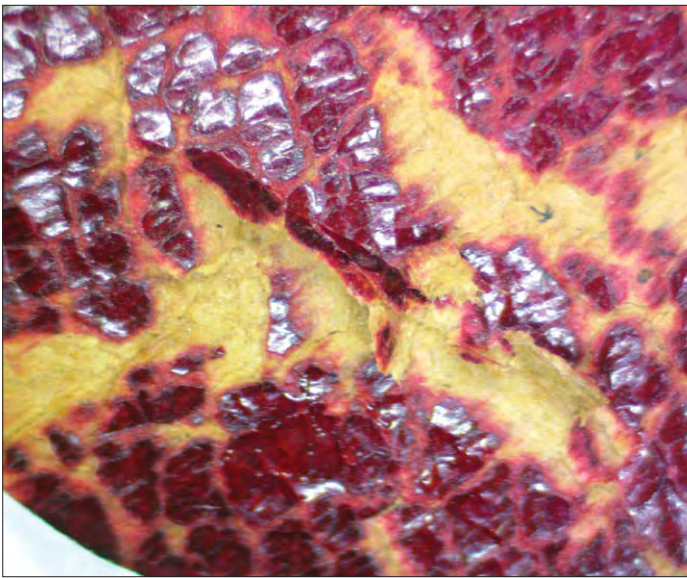


(left) 1% (w/v) methyl cellulose in 3:1 without prewetting surface (isopropyl alcohol: deionised water). (right) after prewetting.

Cross sections of leather during penetration test

Doubts over Aquazol 200 were raised by the yellow colour of pellets and the inconsistency in colour noted between batches (Arslanoglu 2005; Muros 2012). However, its hygroscopicity was the biggest issue, within a high RH (>70%RH) environment the solid pellets became almost completely solubilised – a tacky mass – whilst Klucel G and methyl

cellulose remained solid. Similarly, when applied to the test leather as a solution and exposed to similar conditions, the surface became tacky. In practice, this would attract dust and water to the surface. Ultimately it was deemed inappropriate and withdrawn.



Methyl cellulose test before application (l) and after (r): The arrow shows where darkening has been caused by the movement of dirt



Aquazol 200 before exposure to high relative humidity. Right: after exposure to high RH

Methyl cellulose performed well in all tests and the widespread support of its long-term stability did make it an attractive choice, however, the presence of tidelines and inability to reduce the water content of the solution below 25% deemed it unsuitable for use.

Klucel G performed well in all tests, in particular 1.5% (w/v) exhibited very good penetration. Research into its long-term stability revealed concerning results, most notably within the 1990 Feller & Wilt study which highlighted concerning changes in appearance following twenty years artificial ageing. More recent research has revisited the question of Klucel G's long-term stability with encouraging results (Pataki-Hundt & Borngen 2021; Mahony 2014). While supported by this recent research, we plan to carry out further inquiry by revisiting past applications of Klucel G on leather objects,

to assess its realistic ageing properties within varying environmental conditions.

Moving forward, Klucel G (1.5% (w/v) & 2% (w/v) in IPA) was tested on a gilt leather panel exhibiting an unstable paint layer. This was applied by brush and testing undertaken to mimic handling and treatment (dry cleaning):

- Flexing the corner of the panel
- Gently rubbing surface with gloved finger
- Brushing surface



On the left, panel before application of 1.5% Klucel G in IPA and on the right the panel after application. There is minimal change to appearance but the lower right corner does exhibit very slight darkening

The control corner experienced surface loss in all tests; the consolidated areas did not! The 1.5% (w/v) in IPA performed better in the penetration test when prewet (compared to 2% solution) and it was also found that preparing the solution was easier with less loss of material – given this, 1.5% was found to be the most suitable following testing.

FURTHER RESEARCH AND APPLICATION

The next stage of this project will be revisiting items that historically received treatment using Klucel G to assess aging characteristics in a 'real-world' context. Further to this, with our growing historic survey in hand, we intend to move forward with research into past treatment materials and techniques on gilt leather, creating a meaningful database. Supported by the findings and further research, our aim is to progress to the application phase where select panels requiring surface consolidation will receive treatment and undergo further scrutiny.

This article provides a very brief overview of an on-going project, one which we intend to publish in greater detail in the future. If you have any questions or insights to share, please get in touch via email at info@leatherconservation.org

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This article is also featured in the ICOM-CC Leather and Related Materials newsletter

the emerging professional

EMBEDDING COMMUNITY INTO CONSERVATION TRAINING

Leah Warriner-Wood, Lecturer in Conservation at the University of Lincoln, discusses collaboration between organisations and its impact on students at the University. Roksana Drobinoga, studying at Lincoln for an MA in Conservation of Cultural Heritage, contributes a student perspective

Most of us have probably said it at some stage: 'Conservation is a small world, isn't it?' And it is. Students form close communities of friendship and shared experience that transcend the university campus. Emerging and seasoned professionals alike band together through conferences, events, and – never more so than in 2020 – in the virtual world. And colleagues usually know of someone, somewhere, who might have some insight into the tricky or interesting question posed by an object or collection. Community is our sector's strength – community among conservators and allied professionals, but also between us and the people who share responsibility for, or have some other stake in, our shared cultural heritage.

The conservation subject area at the University of Lincoln offers opportunities within the curriculum for students to work

A student excavating and lifting a ceramic vessel in a simulated archaeological conservation exercise



with and for heritage professionals and stakeholders and, perhaps most valuably, to begin building those all-important networks, and the sense of belonging and contributing to a community. Which is why I was so thrilled to be approached to contribute this article. As well as being a Lecturer in Conservation at Lincoln, I'm tremendously proud to be a graduate of our programmes, and have myself benefitted from the opportunities that staff can introduce students to from their own networks and communities. Rather than write about my own experiences though, here I'm joined by current postgraduate student and former undergraduate, Roksana Drobinoga, to reflect on how sector- and community-engagement is embedded into our courses and experienced by our students.

BACKGROUND

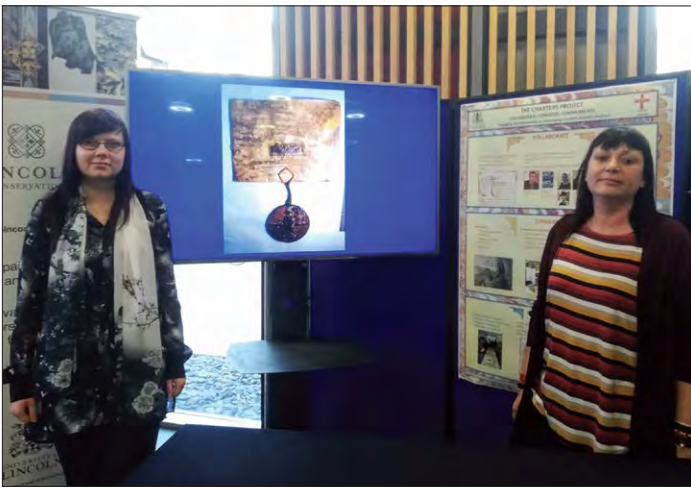
Conservators have been trained in Lincoln since 1974, first by the Lincoln College of Art and then De Montfort University, before the subject was embraced by the University of Lincoln (UoL) in around 2001. There are currently four taught pathways for budding conservators here: an undergraduate BA(Hons), a Graduate Diploma, and a Master of Arts programme have recently been joined by a new MA degree apprenticeship, with the very first conservation apprentices in the UK joining the Lincoln community in October 2021.

In addition, two research pathways (a Masters by Research and an MPhil/PhD) allow experienced conservators to take a research route to deepening their skills and knowledge. Teaching and research take place in and around purpose-built laboratories in the centre of the historic city, delivered through a combination of lectures and seminars, applied practical classes, and experiential learning. In-curriculum and extra-curricular activities also take learning off campus, for example to local heritage sites for surveying agents of deterioration and applying preventive conservation, or to local allotments for simulated lifting of archaeological objects!

The principle of 'Student as Producer' (in which students and staff are co-producers in research-engaged teaching) is embedded across our programmes, and embraces collaboration with external partners. Here, Roksana and I will describe and reflect on three collaborative elements of our curricula in particular: the student work placement and student-led volunteer training on the BA programme, and research-driven learning on the postgraduate programmes.

STUDENT WORK PLACEMENT

From the first time that new students work on an object at UoL – typically a loan from a museum or private owner – they are connected perceptibly to the wider heritage sector. In their second year, students have an opportunity to deepen that connection through a twelve-week work placement at a museum, historic house, private practice or other host organisation of their choice. Through arranging and executing the placement, students develop not only a range of skills and experiences, and a contextual understanding of conservation activity within the wider sector, but also independence, a sense of self-awareness and, often, a renewed confidence to



Roksana Drobinoga (left) and Louise Wood, publicising their placement work with the historic Lincoln charters at a public engagement event

enter the final year of their studies. Here, Roksana reflects on her own placement experience.

'My placement was a collaboration between three different host institutions: Lincoln Guildhall, Lincolnshire Archives, and the University of Lincoln. It was freshly established, and I had the unique opportunity of negotiating the arrangements with the support and guidance of my tutors. The placement aims were focused on establishing a new cataloguing system; condition assessment of Lincoln mayoral and civic regalia and documents relating to the city's history; conservation of paper and parchment; preventive conservation; and public engagement.

'My week was divided between work in three different institutions, with three different settings and three different organisational structures. This gave me a chance to learn

about contrasting organisations and their management functions. Acting as an intermediary between my supervisors from each workplace, I also had the opportunity to develop my communication skills.

'This was my first experience of being the one providing conservation advice and suggestions for improvement for a heritage organisation. It gave me a chance to demonstrate application of the theoretical learning I had acquired over a year and a half in practice-based situations at university. I was able to grow the professionalism and conservation skills required in a workplace environment, while receiving constructive feedback for further development.

'I consider myself fortunate to have been able to take part in a collaborative placement across different institutions. It gave me the opportunity to learn from experience and guidance from staff from many distinct backgrounds, and broadened my understanding of collaborative heritage work, which is so often the norm today.

'On returning to Lincoln, students submit a reflective account of their experience, encouraging them to engage in CPD practice, and deliver a seminar presentation to peers and staff so that learning is shared.'

STUDENT-LED VOLUNTEER TRAINING

In the third and final year of the undergraduate programme, the confidence, independence, and self-direction gained through the placement is consolidated, with students given

A collage of images representing Roksana's placement, which was co-hosted by Lincoln Guildhall, Lincolnshire Archives (left), and the University of Lincoln





Mrs Smith's Cottage in the village of Navenby, Lincolnshire, where she lived until she was 102

greater responsibility for their development through an independent research project (dissertation), and a group exhibition showcasing the cohort's work from the past three years. Additionally, in the module 'Applied Preventive Conservation', students devise and deliver training on that topic to volunteers from a local heritage site, giving them an invaluable opportunity to develop the public-facing elements of their portfolios, grow networks, and contribute to collections care in the East Midlands. Roksana's cohort trained volunteers from Mrs Smith's Cottage (www.mrssmithscottage.com), a small historic house on the outskirts of Lincoln, that is preserved as a 'time capsule' of rural life in Lincolnshire during the early twentieth century. Roksana takes up the story.

Mrs Smith's kitchen; she cooked all her meals on the stove.



'The project was group-based, allowing for the development of teamwork alongside personal responsibility for individual tasks. Each person could choose their topic preferences; my team was responsible for providing training about emergency planning.

'Before developing the training materials, students were given an option to visit the site, which of course I took. As students, we often work on imaginary scenarios or discuss situations over secondary sources. Having the chance to see the property and chat with the volunteers about their experiences and daily work made this project a unique opportunity to apply preventive conservation techniques in an actual heritage setting.

'Mrs Smith's Cottage is a small site, where volunteers find the perfect balance between limited resource availability and effective action. On my Guildhall placement I had expected limited resources – it was newly established, after all. However, observing the limited supplies at Mrs Smith's Cottage and comparing them to the fully stocked drawers and high-tech equipment at the University was a humbling experience, and helped me to provide recommendations for the care of the Cottage's collections that were based on relevant yet feasible preventive conservation standards. In this way, the university curriculum helped to prepare me for the realities of working as a heritage professional.

'After the training, the volunteers provided us with feedback on their experience, giving us an opportunity to reflect on the training course and evaluate future development and

improvements. I think waiting to read their feedback was even more suspenseful than the wait to receive the assessment grade from our tutors. Of course, I wanted to know if I had passed the assessment, but this was my first time of having the professional responsibility of training someone else, and “handing on the torch”.

‘The involvement of an outside organisation allowed for the development of professionalism commensurate with a work environment, as well as skills and attributes required by employers, which would not be possible to recreate in a mock-training situation.’

RESEARCH-DRIVEN LEARNING

The Lincoln Charters project

Students and Apprentices taking the MA Conservation programmes at UoL follow a curriculum that blends theoretical knowledge with practical application, and where sector-involvement is central to learning and development. Two modules have been designed to operate in tandem, offering students opportunities to develop their analytical and digital heritage skills, alongside gaining experience of important transferable skills such as project management. Teaching and learning is based around an object-based investigative research project, where new knowledge is co-produced by students, tutors, technicians, and an external partner who takes the role of the students’ client.

Since 2018 we have been privileged to partner with Lincoln City Council and Lincoln’s Historic Guildhall, custodians of an important collection of historic royal charters that span nearly four hundred years of history and the reigns of twenty-five monarchs. These precious documents record the privileges granted to Lincoln, and thus breathe life into the history and development of the city. Having completed her second-year placement among the charters, Roksana was uniquely placed to contribute to this project in her MA year, as she reflects here.

‘Having worked on the charters before, I was excited to uncover more about them and to provide further support to one of my placement host institutions. This project required students to develop a research question and present the findings of the investigation via a digital resource. Having been previously involved with public engagement at Lincoln’s Guildhall, I decided to complete my assessment in the form of a website, to use as a resource for communicating conservation to visitors. The independence to specify the particulars of our work allowed me to develop my understanding of the ethical aspects of heritage research, and prepared me for deciding what course of action to take for an object without specific requirements.

‘I was lucky to be able to continue working on the same project two years after first encountering it; having gained more experience in the conservation field I was able to see the same objects in a new light, allowing me to reflect on my growth in examining them and utilising scientific techniques for recording cultural heritage materials. It was an experience made possible due to a long collaboration between the institutions.’

Roksana is now working on her dissertation project, which will examine the value of collaborating with educators, to embed conservation themes within primary education. Her aim is to suggest how this might contribute to long-term sustainability in our sector, by inspiring and informing the heritage custodians of the future.

We are grateful to all our hosts, partners, and students – past and present – for their roles in nurturing the experiences, skills, and portfolios of our emerging professionals. Our community – our sector – is stronger because of the parts you have played. Thank you.

Two MA students prepare to record one of Lincoln’s historic charters using Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI)



Peter The Great Room at Blickling Hall with the tapestry of Peter the Great triumphing over the Swedes in 1709. In 1762 the Empress of Russia, Catherine the Great, gifted it to the then owner of Blickling Hall, John Hobart 2nd Earl of Buckinghamshire. Hobart was UK ambassador to Russia in 1792-6 and had an entire room at Blickling re-modelled to house the tapestry, including a bespoke carpet to mirror the design of the ceiling. The tapestry is still revered in Russia, as evidenced by the arrival of a Russian TV news crew keen to film it when news of the moth project reached Moscow.
© National Trust Images/Nadia Mackenzie





Detail of Panel 30 of the *Overlord Embroidery* shows the city of Caen, which was held by German forces at the start of the Battle of Normandy and was devastated in the fighting. The dark shapes in the sky are Allied bomber aircraft bombing the city as part of Allied attempts to capture it. Image: The D-Day Story, Portsmouth