

**Some of the Chat from
Conservation: Together at Home Webinar Series - Caring for your
Collections on a Shoestring
by Lorraine Finch ACR**

**This has been posted as there are many useful suggestions and tips for UK based and international conservators. Full names have been removed for privacy reasons.
Original Webinar time: Thursday, 28 May, 4pm, BST.**

From LS: if you are a museum or archive in the uk you can register with the chemical supplier Scichem as a education establishment and so pay the same as schools for chemicals. They also do chemical disposal much cheaper than most other places.

From Icon Webinars : if you are a museum or archive in the uk you can register with the chemical supplier Scichem as a education establishment and so pay the same as schools for chemicals. They also do chemical disposal much cheaper than most other places.

From DW: L, that is so helpful. Is there proof required of being educational?

From LS : we didn't have to provide evidence when we registered with them.

From LS: we didn't have to provide proof when we registered with Scichem

From DW: Nice.

From AB: VAT is sales tax, for the non-UK audience!

From TW : Buy 'snake weights' from sewing suppliers, not conservation suppliers. They are the same thing, potentially have a larger range of gramage, and will be cheaper. Also, you can wash these with washing up liquid, just give them a good rinse and allow them to dry.

From TW : Soot sponges can be bought from cleaning suppliers.

From LS : buy unbleached Cotton tying tape from the manufacturer bowmer bond it's a lot cheaper than from the conservation suppliers and you can get it on much bigger drums

From CL : I bought gore tex membrane from a fabric shop (20USD per meter). I did have to do tests to check how to make it work for my use (humidification) but it was much cheaper.

From LW : There is a free extension for buying online called “Honey” which finds discounts and ‘coupons’ automatically for thousands of suppliers. It’s not always a high reward, but it saves you time/money.

From KS: Sometimes the one delivery fee from a conservation supplier is cheaper than several delivery fees from all the other places you can find your materials/tools from. It just takes time to figure that out.

From TW: Huck towels are 100% cotton cloths that are lint free and washable. Better than microfibre as won't release microplastics and last a really long time. Really good for gleaning glass and plexi/acrylic

From HL: Some cheaper sources of commonly used materials are listed in the Appendix to the National Trust Manual of Housekeeping. It is in the process of being updated, and I hope there will be a new edition next year.

From TW: Axminster does the best rulers. Sometimes 'cheap is too expensive'...

From LS: always ask your dentist and dental nurse if they have old tools they are getting rid of. they will often give you them for free

From RP : Why won't my dentist give me tools I have asked on several occasions. I must look dodgy?

From TW: xantham gum from the supermarket makes a great gel for cleaning spines and doesn't soak into the paper as much as MC. This is actually a Kathy Abbott tip.

From EJ: My father loves to ask when he goes to the dentist. I have more than I could ever use!

From Icon Webinars : Get someone else to ask for you @R?!

From LW: I bought chopstick rests from our asian market as a rest for my brushes - they're often fun shapes as well.

From AB: L, a museum near me got that whole unit that the suction thing attaches to, from a dentist - amazing variable-suction micro-vacuum!

From VH: I made some brush rests the other day from Fimo oven bake clay! Also have made my own weights in the past :)

From AB: I had a podiatrist student who gave me files and small scissors that she couldn't clean in her autoclave to reuse - she said she goes through loads of them, and they've been really helpful to me.

From HL: Some cheaper/bulk sources for commonly-used conservation materials are listed in the Appendices to the National Trust Manual of Housekeeping (2011 edition is most recent). The Manual is being updated and I hope there might be a new edition in 2021/22.

From LS: wow A that's impressive to get from a dentists

From EJ: I have a colleague who whittles down the cheap delivery chopsticks in to lovely little bamboo spatulas.

From AB: I think it wasn't directly from a dentist, but it's something I wouldn't have thought to look for! Might've been a second-hand dental tool seller of some kind

From TW: Sew leather scraps into pouches and fill with lead shot to make flexible weights. Good for things that aren't totally flat like parchment, spine edges, etc. Weight, and therefore, pressure can be customised.

From LD: usually buying ready-made PAT envelopes for photographs is more expensive than buying PAT test paper sheets and carefully prepare yourself the envelopes. A little bit time consuming but you can save a lot of money

From LW: In the US it's a common trend to go to Wine/liquor shops and ask to have their used shipping boxes (which otherwise just get recycled). They're extremely durable because of what they hold - typically 6-12 glass bottles. Most of the time the staff are very willing to let them go so they don't have to spend time breaking them down and recycling them

From LW: *For moving house that is

From TW: Love the mini solvent chamber idea! So clever!

From TEM: For those are looking for addressing collection storage issues on a budget - the RE-ORG museum program has a lot of practical information.
<https://www.iccrom.org/section/preventive-conservation/re-org>

From TEM: For Canadians- GC surplus has loads of really cheap furniture (especially things like maps and plans drawers) auctioned off from government buildings. Also I saw a helicopter for sale there once.

From ACD: I just use soft pillows as book supports for treatment work

From TW: Some fabric shops will sell felts. Ray Stitch in Islington used to have it, but I'm not sure how it compared to conservation suppliers in terms of cost.

From TEM: (Also sometimes microscopes) <https://www.gcsurplus.ca/mn-eng.cfm>

From ACD: I use the same!!

From AB : We got our microscope used on Ebay!

From ACD: I use discarded bricks from construction site, I clean them and wrap them in bubble wrap to prevent from scrumb

From EJ: We recently made new humidification boxes from scratched perspex from old display frames.

From LS : at Glamorgan Archives we have a box making machine and can make bespoke boxes from archival buffered card cheaper than the conservation suppliers they start ar £3 and can be delivered all over the UK

From KW : fantastic talk, thank you so much!

From VH: Thank you L! So handy

From LW: @L, where did you purchase the box-making machine?

From EJ: I lover your box making machine L. It's so cool!

From Riya Khanna : thanks

From LS : @lindsay we got ours from conservation by design

From LS : but you can also get them from klug as wel

From FM : I really enjoyed your talk as I really see myself in that situations, I love to reuse materials and find new uses to things. Thank you very much for your tips.

From EC : Fiona, for some reason I did not see all the hints sent through the chat... Would you be able to make your exported list available?

From HH : Is that a vacuum outlet on your cardboard cleaning box?

From TW: Get in touch with Zund if you want a machine. They often have 2nd hand ones that are still excellent, fully refurbished and half the cost. They don't advertise this much, but will put you on a list for when they become available.

From MG: have found box of 1000 nitrile gloves costing buttons in a farm supply shop under "milking gloves". Another was deionised water in a car parts shop instead of lab supplies.

From LW: Thanks so much! I am currently our library's box-making machine :)

From DW: Ring suppliers and talk to them, especially if you are making a very large order. Often they will give you a discount if it is a massive amount. Ask suppliers (such as conservation

suppliers) but also ask manufacturers. Especially true for Plastazote. Look for Plastazote converter. They may also pre cut foam for you if you are fitting out a huge store for example. Saving in staff time can be worth it.

From TW: Vegetable knife, but great for plastazote

https://www.restaurantstore.co.uk/Mercer-6-inch-Produce-Knife-Millenia?source=googlebase&gclid=CjwKCAjwwMn1BRAUEiwAZ_jnEIG03axWqsLmbU6AR1fARRI-YnirY44NdO7CDavCZRplqrMqMeMJJRoCkwoQAvD_BwE

From LW: In the US there is a group called BookArts that has a listserv where people share their products, stories, supplies for sale, and events. Many of them are textiles, type, books, paper, etc related.

From WMP: You may do this, but in various Toronto labs we have used fabric suppliers for cotton twill tape, and plastic suppliers for Melinex and Perspex. Not ideal in a way, but to save material when making 4 flaps I sometimes use 2 pieces of folder stock or board crossed over one another. We find David's Tea sample loose leaf tea tins with clear plastic lids useful for random storage of small items. Great great webinar, thank you!!

From LS: the west midlands ARA conservation group is a very good email group for archive conservator. often have emails saying people are getting rid of stuff.

From LS: acid free tissue can be brought from Cookson gold in the uk

From FM: Thank you, very useful tips and advice. I've found Muji are very good for small tools, and have used their small white cups as mixing bowls. Quite cheap and lovely to use.

From AB: Re: the word-of-mouth question, in Canada, our provincial and national museum service organizations have listservs where all kinds of exchanges take place from surplus materials, to display cases to items being deaccessioned. It's a super easy communication solution at either the national or provincial level. Also gives us a chance to discuss deeper issues or share stories.

From HFT: our local CDO (conservation development officer) does a big group purchase for small museums twice a year which helps us get small amounts of things. It's a really great thing to get sorted in a region or area or between organisations etc

From JH: We got offcuts from a conservator at a larger institution and it was fab - they were too small for them but perfect for us.

From ACD: I use tacky iron from a sewing supply shop, ideal for 5 mn use to remove a piece of pressure sensitive and quite cheap

From RM: thank you for such a wonderful talk

From LS: Glamorgan Archives also sell any of our materials on in small quantities to the public and conservators in the area

From CS: Thank you! That was so useful. I work as a sculpture conservator so I'm not sure I have any tips that are relevant for book and paper conservators, but many thanks once again

From LG: Thank you for the presentation and to everyone for sharing their tips! Will be sharing these ideas with colleagues in Vancouver, Canada

From JH: We tried to do joint purchases locally but too many people were restricted by their organisation's buying policies.