



## Chinese wallpaper in Brighton's Royal Pavilion

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### Also in this issue

35 years in conservation • Plowden Medal winners • Exploring Portuguese heritage

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**We've compiled some quick ideas for your CPD - whether you have 5 minutes, 1 hour or 1 day.**

*I've got...*

**5**

*min*

## 5 MINUTES

- Take a virtual coffee break and talk to another conservator about your work
- Join an Icon Group, Network or Icon's online Discord community
- Visit the Icon website to look up potential future CPD activities
- Register for an on-line event or course
- Search for any CPD grants available
- Share an idea or resource with a peer
- Identify a skill or competency you would like to develop
- Ask a colleague for feedback

**60**

*min*

## 1 HOUR

- Fill out your Upgraded Listing on the Conservation Register
- Read relevant articles, newsletters, books, websites
- Attend a webinar or virtual seminar
- Respond to a debate on social media
- Record and reflect on your CPD activities in your CPD learning log
- Carry out online research or study a relevant topic
- Consider writing an academic article
- Write an article for Icon's publications
- Research conferences to submit an abstract to
- Peer review an article or find a book to review
- Write a case study for the Icon website
- Chair an on-line team/committee meeting
- If you are an ACR, consider becoming an Icon mentor
- Listen to a TED Talk
- Practice your IT skills by taking software tutorials
- Teach a colleague something online

**8**

*HOURS*

## 1 DAY

- Participate in an online event or workshop such as the many Icon courses planned for the year
- Virtually shadow someone by sitting in on online meetings
- Take a stress management e-learning course
- Present or network at a conference, e.g. Icon's Twitter Conference
- Plan or run an online course or event
- Plan and pitch a research project
- Volunteer in a related field
- Learn a new craft for pleasure

The Institute of Conservation is a membership organisation and charity which brings together those with a passion for the care of cultural heritage. Icon raises awareness of the cultural, social and economic value of caring for heritage and champions high standards of conservation.

Find out more about CPD at:  
<https://icon.org.uk/training/continuing-professional-development>

## DECEMBER 2021 Issue 97



### From the Editor

Well, the end of a second unusual year and I wish you all a happy Christmas and New Year, hoping - as I write this some weeks beforehand - that we don't have a repeat of last year's chaotic late lockdown.

There is something of a built heritage emphasis in this issue as we join a whistle-stop tour through Portugal, take a closer look at some special wallpaper in Brighton's Royal Pavilion - which gave us our splendid fellow on the cover - and celebrate Liz Hurst ACR's thirty five years in a business she founded to provide a holistic approach to the conservation of objects, buildings and associated surfaces.

The built heritage also features in the work of one of this year's Plowden Medal winners, as Steve Clare ACR is a stained glass specialist. The other winner, Jane Henderson ACR, has such wide-ranging interests that you feel sure she would hold her own in the built heritage field! Read about them both in the People Section.

Finally, do read about Icon's latest Annual General Meeting. We welcomed an update on the thinking that is going on to formulate Icon's next Strategy which will guide the organisation through to 2030. You can get a sense of it in the report on page 10.

### Lynette Gill



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Cover photo  
Detail of 18thC hand-painted Chinese wallpaper in the Adelaide Corridor of the Royal Pavilion in Brighton. See page 24  
© Royal Pavilion and Museums Trust

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#### Deadlines for adverts and editorial

For the June 2022 issue  
Friday 2 April

For the August 2022 issue  
Wednesday 1 June

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# professional update

## From the Chief Executive



### Sara Crofts on celebration, champions and accreditation

A few weeks ago I had the immense privilege of attending a reception for members of the *Royal Warrant Holders Association* held at St James's Palace, Westminster.

This was the one of the first of a handful of invitations to formal engagements that I received over the summer, and is hopefully an indication that the safety protocols that protect us all from the

risk of Coronavirus have reached a stage where it is now possible to look forward to spending time with colleagues and friends once again.

I know that many of us have really missed the face-to-face interaction with friends and colleagues and are keen to enjoy the life-affirming buzz that you get from spending time in the

company of like-minded people. While the various virtual Icon pubs have been busy, and the recent online conferences have had excellent networking facilities (which I know that many members enjoyed), I have personally welcomed the opportunity to connect with new people at in-person events.

The reason for the summons to St James's Palace was the celebratory presentation of the 2021 Plowden Medal. The Plowden Medal was established in 1999 by the *Royal Warrant Holders Association* to commemorate the life and work of the Hon Anna Plowden CBE and 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.

This year the medal committee chose to award two medals, and the recipients' names are likely to be well known to many Icon members – Professor Jane Henderson ACR and Stephen Clare ACR MBE. I give my hearty congratulations to two deserving winners. Both Jane and Steve spoke warmly of their passion for their vocation and also for Icon and accreditation in their moving acceptance speeches. They are a credit to themselves and to the conservation profession. (You can read more about Jane and Steve on page 11.)

Jane Henderson ACR and Steve Clare ACR receive their award from RWHA President Pamela Harper and the Chair of the Plowden Medal Committee Nick Farrow



As you might guess it was a genuine pleasure to be part of such a happy occasion after a very challenging eighteen months for everyone working in the conservation sector, and it made me realise that we probably don't celebrate individual achievement within the conservation profession as much as we should. So, with that in mind, I am proposing that we add a new feature to the Icon website: *Conservation Champions*. I would like to create a gallery of profiles of people who have made a substantial and meaningful contribution to the conservation profession. There are some obvious initial candidates who are already commemorated in a small way through Icon grants, trusts and funds. Fred Bearman, Nigel Williams, Harold Plenderleith and, of course, Anna Plowden spring immediately to mind, but there are many others who could and should be included in the list. So I would like to invite members to propose candidates to join a virtual Conservation Champions hall of fame. Watch out for further details and a link to the nomination form soon!

Celebrating the value of conservation by profiling conservators and their achievements in this way will also help to support the greater visibility and understanding of our profession. As mentioned in the previous edition of *Icon News* it became clear during the exploratory phase of working on the next Icon strategy that recognition should be a key strand of our work over the next few years. As work on drafting the strategy progresses, we are now thinking about the many ways in which the role of conservation within society and its relevance to community wellbeing could be made more visible.

Returning to our Plowden Medal winners, it is interesting to note that they have chosen quite different paths in terms of their conservation careers. Jane is a well-respected academic and teacher, while Steve is a practising stained glass conservator and the director of a successful business. Their working lives are not alike; however they are united by their status as Icon Accredited Conservators, an achievement that

they both value highly. And rightly so. Accreditation is the recognised means by which conservators can demonstrate their professional competence and judgment, as well as their ongoing commitment to maintaining their skills and knowledge through continuing professional development. For clients and commissioners this means that they can be sure that they are appointing a 'Conservator you can trust' – the tagline that we have been successfully promoting in the full-page Conservation Register adverts that we have placed in the high-profile membership magazines of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Decorative Arts Society, Historic Houses, Historic Environment Scotland, and the Churches Conservation Trust.

I was also pleased to take up an invitation from Icon trustee Adam Klups to make a presentation about the benefits of Icon Accreditation to clients and commissioners at the annual Church of England conference for the network of Diocesan Advisory Committees (DACs) for the Care of Churches in late September. Although the committees themselves do not commission conservators they are in a position of considerable influence because they give advice to the Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) who are responsible for finding suitably qualified professionals to help them look after the objects and buildings in their care.

Having outlined how Icon Accreditation benefits commissioners this led into a lively virtual Q&A session chaired by Icon member Janet Berry ACR (Head of Conservation at Churchcare) where the high level of respect for conservators and their work was clearly evidenced. It was greatly encouraging to see the care and attention that DAC committee members and staff devote to supporting the careful stewardship of parish churches and their contents. We will continue to work with Janet, Adam and others to support their efforts.

Share your reflections, comments, and ideas with me via [feedback@icon.org.uk](mailto:feedback@icon.org.uk)

## POLICY UPDATE

Despite the easing of lockdown and the fact that many organisations have been getting back to something like 'business as usual' the number of consultation papers arriving in the Icon inbox has remained surprisingly small. That said, the two papers that were published over the summer were significant and we felt that it was important to respond to both.

In August 2021 Icon was given the opportunity to feed into the development of the upcoming *Heritage Statement* through our membership of the Historic Environment Forum. The new *Heritage Statement* (a successor to the 2017 edition<sup>1</sup>) will set out the Government's vision and strategy for heritage and the historic environment in the short and medium term. As part of the consultation exercise we were

able to take part in two roundtable events; the first was general in its theme but the second one focused on climate change and sustainability. We were then asked to share further feedback, thoughts and case studies in relation to the four topic areas: recovery and resilience; levelling-up and placemaking; climate and environment; and diversity and inclusion. This response benefitted from the input of Icon's Policy Advisory Panel.

The second consultation came from the Scottish Parliament's *Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee* which asked individuals, groups and businesses operating in the creative sector for their views on funding for culture in Scotland. Working with the Icon Scotland Group we submitted a response, which included a call to support the retention of the conservation workforce and a plea to increase training and expand entry routes into the conservation

profession. We also recommended greater investment in collections care; further support for the development of awareness of conservation across the heritage sector; and active support for key sector stakeholders (such as Icon).

Both consultation responses are available on the Icon website at <https://www.icon.org.uk/campaigns/policy-responses.html>

To achieve a sustainable future we all need to be more generous about sharing our hard-won knowledge – both the measures that ensured that our projects were a success, or indeed those that caused them to fail. With this in mind, Icon recently took part in the COP26 Task and Finish Group, set up by the Historic Environment Forum. Over the course of six months the group collaborated to devise and publish *Heritage Responds*<sup>2</sup> a new resource that highlights the positive contribution heritage organisations and their partners are making to the climate change debate and the actions needed to adapt to a changing world. Alongside the new report, the Historic Environment Forum, in collaboration with Historic England, launched the *Heritage Responds Climate Change Story Map*<sup>3</sup>, a geographical mapping of the key case studies referred to in *Heritage Responds*. This

excellent collection demonstrates the power of example, and will be a great resource to help cultural heritage organisations play an active role in addressing the challenges of climate change.

- 1 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-heritage-statement-2017>
- 2 <https://historiconenvironmentforum.org.uk/hef-activities/archive-and-resources/heritage-responds/>
- 3 <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/ecc889fe0294426c94a9e283a5ff7bb7>

## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

### Archaeology Group

The Archaeology Group was sorry to hear about the death of Dr Graham Morgan this past summer. Graham was treasurer of the section in its early years. His life and work are appreciated in an obituary in this issue.

An update on *First Aid for Finds* was given at the AGM. The full text was sent to reviewers in November and the completed text is expected to go to RESCUE, the publishers, in June 2022 with publication aimed for the end of the year. A PowerPoint update was given at the AGM and can be seen on the *First Aid for Finds* update page on our website. A review of our AGM and *A Project I am Proud of* event by Icon Archaeology Group Committee member Hazel Gardiner can be found in the review section of this issue.

Suggestions for future events and workshops are always welcome. Please watch Iconnect, Twitter (@ICON Archaeology) and the website for further announcements including an Archaeology Group Twitter event! We always love to hear about your current archaeological conservation projects big or small, please tag us in your posts and follow us on Twitter to see what everyone else is up to!

*Charlotte Wilkinson*

Icon AG Communications Rep

### Ceramics and Glass Group

The 2021 Nigel Williams Prize Winners were announced at the Ceramics and Glass Group and Stained Glass Group conference in October. We had the pleasure to crown three winners this year. The Main Prize Winner is John Fidler, of John Fidler Preservation Technology Inc., California, USA. John's submission, *Cleaning, Repair and Restoration of 1915 Brick and Terra Cotta Masonry at First Congregational Church of Long Beach, California, USA*, was an excellent and impressive account of the execution of a major building project on an Italian Romanesque revival church involving the mammoth task of assessing, dismantling and repairing the terracotta façade tracery, surrounding a rose stained-glass window and its corroding metal armature, damaged from earthquake activity and weathering.

The standard of submissions this year was incredibly high and the judges awarded a runner-up prize as well. The winners of the prize are Barley Studio, York. Keith Barley ACR, Helen



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Whittaker and Alison Gilchrist ACR submitted a project named *Conserving 'Charity': a masterpiece of Georgian glass-painting restored to its former glory*. The judges were impressed by the high level of conservation skills combined with the impressive craft skills of the team to achieve a convincing restoration of a severely damaged stained glass panel, where 60% of the original was missing or damaged.

Last but not least, our 2021 Student Prize winner is Lauren Burlison, a graduate from Durham University, who submitted *Treatment of Glass Deterioration on Blue Beads in a Rus rGyan Human Bone*, presenting an excellent account of the investigation and treatment of deteriorated blue glass beads adorning Tibetan Buddhist human bone ornaments or *Rus rGyan*, worn for traditional religious rituals.

Many congratulations to all the winners! The CGG Committee would like to thank all the 2021 entrants for their hard work on the submission and we hope you will apply again. Our heartfelt thanks to the judging panel, Loretta Hogan, Vicky Oakley and Beky Davies ACR, for their continuous commitment and dedication to the Nigel Williams Prize. Our deepest thanks to Nigel's family for their continuous, generous, and pivotal contribution to the Prize. See you in 2023!

### Photographic Materials Group

The Photographic Materials Group recently held a two-day digital print workshop with Ryan Boatright, co-founder of Atelier Boba. Participants learned to identify common chemical-based photographic and inkjet processes, as well as commercial industrial processes that are being re-purposed for use in fine art. Each participant received a set of twenty- nine rare samples curated by Atelier Boba.

Atelier Boba has editioned a further thirty-five sample sets, which can be purchased from 1 February 2022. Further details can be found on their website: <https://www.atelierboba.com/sample-set>

### Call for committee members

Jacqueline Moon ACR is stepping down as chair after more than six years, and we're looking for new committee members. You don't need to be a specialist in photograph conservation to join the committee, and we'd be interested to hear from anyone with a keen interest in photographs who'd like to gain experience running events and sourcing content for our social media channels. If you're interested, get in touch at [phmgicon@gmail.com](mailto:phmgicon@gmail.com) so we can arrange a chat.

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## Textile Group

### Latest News

The Textile Group would like to wish all Icon members a very merry Christmas and a healthy and happy new year; let's hope that 2022 brings nothing but positive changes for all. As the year draws to a close, we look back over the past twelve months and feel proud of all that we have achieved as a committee, despite the challenges that Covid-19 has continued to serve up.

In September, the committee met at Burghley House, Stamford, for our first in-person meeting since early March 2020 (how unaware we were at that time of what was about to unfold, just a week later!). It felt very surreal all sat around a large meeting table again, but so lovely to be able to meet new members in person, and with the new Chair, Ksynia Marko ACR now in charge, bursting with new ideas and positivity for the year ahead!

### Textile Group Events

At the end of September, textile conservators Zenzie Tinker ACR and Sarah Glenn ACR held an online 'in conversation

with' talk on the subject of working in private practice. Many thanks to them both for providing an engaging evening sharing their experiences and knowledge, as well as highs and lows of running their own conservation business.

In October the Textile Group welcomed speaker Chris Foster, who presented '*Fibres Back to Basics – The Science of fibres, accessible to all*'. During his talk, Chris discussed his PhD research into the complexities of cotton and wool fibres and the impact that the environment has on their behaviour. Chris is working on this with Frances Hartog ACR, Senior Textile Conservator at the V&A Museum. More to follow in due course.

The last Textile Group event of the year was by no means the least! In November we were captivated by a talk given by Textile Curator for the National Trust, Emma Slocombe. Her energy and enthusiasm was infectious as we all tuned in online to listen to her talk entitled, '*Identity and Politics in the Needlework of Mary Queen of Scots*'. The talk focused on the beautiful embroideries worked by Mary between 1569 and 1585. The Marian Hanging, which is usually displayed at Oxburgh Hall in Norfolk, was loaned by the V&A Museum to the British Library for their exhibition, '*Elizabeth & Mary: Royal Cousins – Rival Queens*', which runs until 20 February 2022.

All of the above Textile Group talks were followed by question and answers and then a drink down the virtual 'local' Needle & Thread pub (aka a glass of red/cup of tea, sat in front of the computer screen!). We are very grateful to all those who logged on and joined in with these evening events. The talks will be made available to all members who missed out: see the Textile Group section of the Icon website.

The committee are now busy organising events for 2022, both in person and on-line so watch this space.

### Other Events

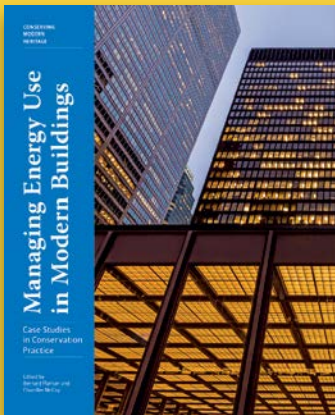
Association of Dress Historians (ADH) held a two-day conference on the topic of '*Conservation & Curation- Dress & Textiles in Museums*' in late October. The conference was held at the Conservation and Restoration Center (CCR) - La Venaria Reale, Turin, Italy as well as broadcasting talks online to others not able to attend in person.

In November the Dress and Textile Specialists (DATS) held their annual conference entitled '*Pandemic Pastimes & Silver Linings*' a two-afternoon long conference presenting papers on good news stories of working throughout the course of the pandemic and the challenges and tribulations it brought about.

The 13th North American Textile Conservation Conference (NATCC), '*Outside Influences*' was held virtually in October. Presentations, round table discussions and virtual tours were all included in this action-packed event.

### Forthcoming Textile Events

Association of Dress Historians (ADH) – 27 May 2022, 'New



**Managing Energy Use in Modern Buildings**  
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Research in Dress History Conference' - National Museums Scotland, Edinburgh. The call for papers deadline for this conference is 31 January 2022.

Fashion & Textile Museum, London - 1 April – 4 September 2022, '150 Years of the Royal School of Needlework: Crown to Catwalk'. This exhibition will explore this historic organisation's contribution to the world of embroidery.

### 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](mailto:Terri.Dewhurst@nationaltrust.org.uk)

### Writing for Icon News

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

## STUDIO SPACE TO RENT

Oak Fine Art Services Ltd run an art handling service in south London, where they have recently reconfigured their secure storage facility to include a purpose-built conservation studio for hire.

### Working in the Oak Studio

Two women are working on a textile artifact in a laboratory. One woman is wearing a green lab coat and blue gloves, and the other is wearing a grey t-shirt and a green apron. They are both smiling and looking at the artifact. The background shows shelves with various containers and equipment.

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There is plenty of information about the Studio on the website: [www.oakfas.com](http://www.oakfas.com). And for further information contact Directors, Orlando Athill (07538797740) and Patrick Hannan (07929606640) or email [info@oakfas.com](mailto:info@oakfas.com)

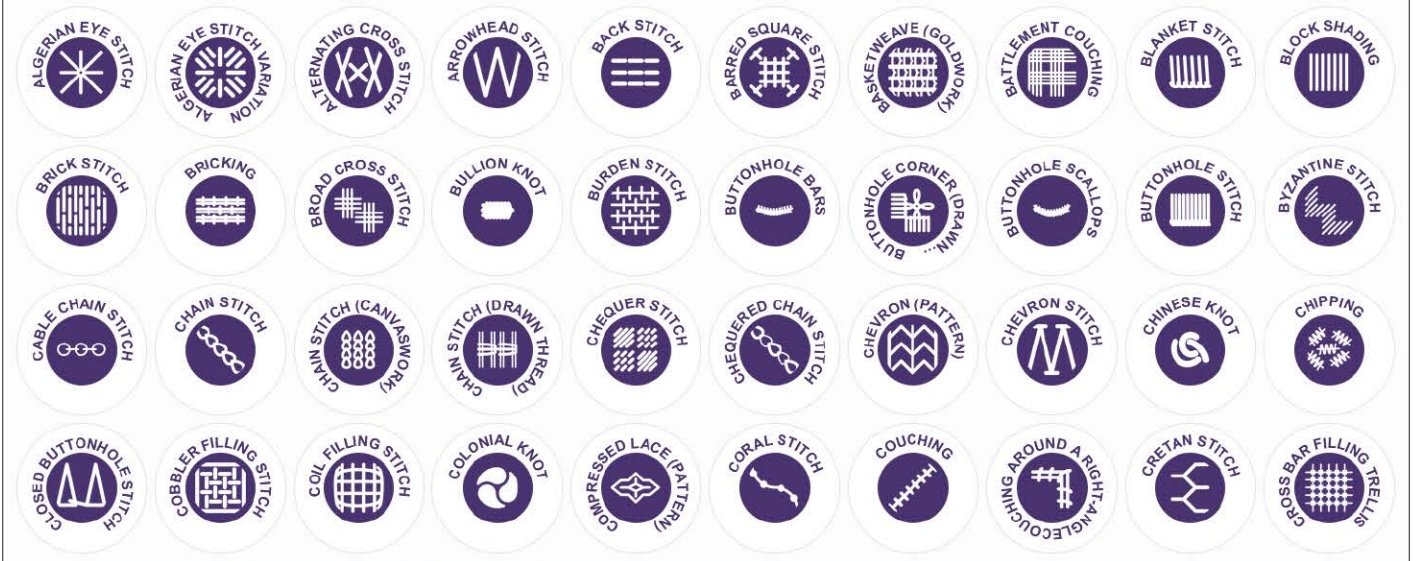
## THE RSN STITCH BANK

The Royal School of Needlework has decided that the time has come to compile a world directory of stitch – and the RSN Stitch Bank was duly launched in September 2021.

The aim of the Stitch Bank is to digitally conserve and showcase the wide variety of the world's embroidery stitches and the ways in which they have been used in different cultures and times. Indeed, the ambition is to preserve every stitch in the world. Stitches are lost over time through the destruction of textiles or because the stitch falls out of use. The discovery of an old embroidered piece may then present curators and conservators with difficulties in recognising the stitches. Underside couching is an example of a now rare stitch, used extensively in the highly prized medieval English embroidery known as *Opus Anglicanum*.

The initiative marks the 150th anniversary of the RSN and it was launched, suitably enough, with an initial one hundred

# STITCH WALL



Screenshot of the RSN Stitch Bank Stitch Wall. Behind each symbol lurks a wealth of information about the stitch it represents.

A personal stitchbank? Detail of a Victorian sampler of stitches and patterns, useful for the embroiderer's reference



and fifty stitches. But the Bank is an ongoing project and more stitches will be added regularly. Stitch has been recognised as intangible cultural heritage in many countries by UNESCO and the RSN will be working with partners around the world to include stitches from different traditions.

The resource is available online at [rsnstitchbank.org](http://rsnstitchbank.org) for the benefit of all stitchers, historians, curators, conservators, students... The website is already a rich resource with sections on embroidery techniques, stitch uses and stitch structures and then the stitch wall, illustrated. Behind each symbol are detailed instructions, complete with video, for executing the stitch, its uses and references for further information and research.

The project has got off the ground with the valuable support of various donors and the RSN is looking for any help, large or small, to extend its reach via contributions or adopting a stitch. For anyone interested in stitching, embroidery and textile, the resource is a delight!

## ICON'S 17TH AGM

Our 17th AGM took place at the end of October and was once again held on-line, something our Chair, James Grierson, hadn't expected to be doing when the first virtual AGM took place last year. Nevertheless he welcomed us warmly, hoping that we were all safe and well in this challenging period.

### Reviewing the year

Once the Minutes of the last AGM had been voted on and passed, our Chief Executive, Sara Crofts, then undertook a review of the year - and a very strange one it had been, she noted. The pandemic had had an impact on everyone, not least with the sadness of job losses and curtailed projects. Icon was not exempt, with projects put on hold and less progress than hoped for in the plans for membership growth. But there had been positive aspects to the year, too, and Sara drew attention to the Impact Report<sup>1</sup>, which provides a dynamic and useful summary of those achievements.

Picking out some notable milestones, Sara first drew attention to the way members had stepped up to the mark with the Conservation Together at Home webinar series; the vast endeavour of finalising the Ethical Guidance and refreshed Professional Standards and the business as usual approach to mentoring and accreditation thanks to the successful move to online assessments. It had even been possible to celebrate Accreditation's twentieth anniversary online. Other developments to celebrate were the successful bid for money from the Culture Recovery Fund which had enabled Icon to commission its new website and membership database. Sara likened this to replacing a rusty old Ford

Fiesta with a Formula 1 sports car – the staff are still learning to drive it! The Environmental Sustainability Network had been set up and made excellent strides; policy and advocacy work had continued, not least the Values of Conservation Report which she commended to us as a brilliant tool and guide for all to use<sup>2</sup>. Finally, we had moved office to share with a fellow charity and in doing so had shed the burden of responsibility for our own premises.

Sara thanked active members for everything that they do to support their professional body and offered a personal thanks to all those who encourage her and the team along the way.

### Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts

A rather more sombre note was then struck by James Grierson as he reported on the year's finances. Finishing the year with a small deficit [of £38.5k] was unwelcome, although perhaps unsurprising given the challenging circumstances of what Sara has taken to describing as 'organisational long covid'. We need to redouble our efforts to increase the membership base, he noted, whilst also commending the concept of 'participatory membership' – contributing as well as consuming services.

Other noteworthy developments in the year were the reports from two Task and Finish Groups with important recommendations from the Board Communications Group and the Diversity and Inclusion Group. A new Conference Committee was then introduced, co-chaired by Rebecca Ellison ACR and Rachel Swift ACR. The Conferences Committee has been created to support Icon's Groups and Networks and to aid the organisation of major conferences. The committee has already

From Sara Crofts' review of the work to develop the Icon Strategy 2030

## Aspirations

Everyone knows what conservators do and understand the value of their work.

Conservators are part of decision-making. We have a voice and a seat at the table.

Conservation is recognised, respected and rewarded for the contribution it makes to creating a better society.

Conservation is visible. Conservators are no longer hidden behind the scenes. We are the ones in the headlines.

decided on the timing and theme of the next Icon Conference, which is going to be a one-day virtual event to be held in June 2022 that will take Icon's new Strategy as its theme.

### Completing the formal business

Resolutions to formally receive the Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts and to appoint auditors were duly put forward and voted on and a new co-opted trustee, Richard Bruce, was welcomed onto the Board. Existing trustees leaving the Board - Hannah Harte ACR, Peter Martindale ACR, Lucie Mascord ACR and Fiona McLees ACR – were thanked for their service and the results of elections to the Board of new trustees were announced. Congratulations were extended to the successful candidates for the unreserved seats - Sophie Rowe ACR, Diana Davis ACR and Michelle Stoddart ACR – and to Louise Davison, who won the new reserved seat for an Emerging Professional.

### Icon Strategy 2030

It was then back to Sara Crofts to round off the afternoon with a lively and interesting preview of the work undertaken to formulate Icon's new Strategy and take the organisation through to 2030. Developed from a series of wide-ranging consultations and still a work in progress, the emerging themes have shown a high degree of consistency. It remains an ongoing challenge to get across the value of what we do and the relevance of conservation both to heritage and to society at large, and so this will be the focus of our next Strategy.

We should ban the phrase "behind the scenes", Sara declared. 'We should be in the spotlights!'

The goal is recognition, so that the relevance of conservation is understood by everyone. Some suggested ideas to support this goal include a bid for chartership, a Fellowship scheme, patrons to act as our ambassadors and achieving the status of an ACE (Arts Council England) Sector Support Organisation in the next funding round.

There is a 'but': the effect of 'organisational long covid' and the current financial position calls for the organisation to be better balanced. 'Participatory membership is needed to get us back on track and on a stable footing. This will only be achieved if we foster greater collaboration between the staff, the Groups and Networks and the members', Sara concluded.

### The Icon Annual Lecture

The AGM was preceded by Icon's third Annual Lecture, delivered by Flora Davidson. In her role as Franklin Conservator at Parks Canada she has led the conservation of artefacts which have been raised from the wrecks of Sir John Franklin's ill-fated 1845 Arctic expedition. The finds have captivated archaeologists, academics and history buffs alike and Flora's lecture was captivating, too. Hundreds tuned in from around the world to catch it, their interest evidenced by the flood of questions at the end. Flora responded to them with aplomb, whether it was a deep dive into the technicalities of a particular treatment or a look at the wider socio-historic and archaeological context. All in all, it was an excellent event. If you missed it be sure to sign in for next year's!

1 <https://www.icon.org.uk/resource/icon-impact-report-2020-2021.html>

2 <https://www.icon.org.uk/resource/values-of-conservation-research-report.html>

Illustrating the need to find a better balance for the organisation



## The 2021 winners of the Plowden Gold Medal

This year there are, uniquely, two winners of the Plowden Medal. One is an academic and the other a conservator in private practice. Established in 1999 to commemorate the life and work of the late Hon. Anna Plowden CBE (1938 – 1997), the gold medal was endowed by the Royal Warrant Holders Association, of which she was Vice-President. It is awarded to recognise the recipient's contribution to the field of conservation.



Congratulations are due to **Jane Henderson ACR**, who received the award 'for her outstanding leadership and development of new generations of conservation professionals, her essential role in the development of the profession and her continuing commitment to bringing leading research and innovations into conservation practice in the UK and internationally'.

Jane is well known to many Icon members, either because they studied under her as students at Cardiff University where she is Professor of Conservation or because they have encountered her in her many contributions to the establishment and development of Icon. Amongst these are her role as an Icon Trustee and representative for Wales from 2008 to 2014; her eleven years as an Assessor for the Icon Accreditation scheme and her service since 2010 on the Editorial panel of Icon's *Journal*.

In other spheres, her activities include serving as Secretary General to the International Institute for Conservation and membership of the European standards body CEN TC 346 WG11 and the BSI standard group B/560 concerned with the conservation of Tangible Cultural heritage. She is a member on the trustee board of the Welsh Federation of Museum and Art Galleries. She is also a regular contributor to the C Word podcast.

Over and above all these activities and more, Jane somehow finds time to reflect on conservation and has published many articles and conference papers.

As her Award citation notes 'As an academic embedded in practice, Jane has consistently brought research-led innovation to conservation theory and practice. Throughout her career she has challenged traditional structures of conservation decision making, supported sustainability practice and worked with conservation professionals on communication and influence in conservation practice.'



Congratulations to our second Medal winner, **Stephen Clare MBE ACR** of Holy Well Glass. His award recognises his outstanding contribution to stained glass conservation and his advocacy for, and support of, student and early career stained glass conservators.

Steve Clare founded Holy Well Glass in the city of Wells in 1995 and now has a team of fourteen employees from apprentice to senior staff, including stonemason experience, to comprise a team aware of other conservation disciplines and philosophies.

The citation for his award notes that 'it is in the area of education and training that Stephen has made a significant contribution, imparting his considerable knowledge and expertise through hosting student placements at the Holy Well Glass workshop over decades, as well as developing bespoke in-house training.....Alongside [his] outstanding conservation

treatment, his commitment to the dissemination of good practice and the professional training of highly skilled conservators is Stephen's long-term legacy to stained glass conservation'.

Steve has led many major conservation schemes on some of the most important buildings in the country, including the cathedrals at Exeter, Gloucester, Wells, Winchester and Worcester. He has acted for some years as consultant to St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, King's College, Cambridge and Winchester cathedral amongst others. In 2018 Holy Well Glass was awarded the Royal Warrant from Her Majesty the Queen, by Royal Appointment for stained glass conservation.

A Fellow of the British Society of Master Glass Painters, a Liveryman of the Glaziers Company, National Stained Glass Advisor to the National Trust, Steve also finds time to act as an external Assessor for Icon Accreditation and as external assessor for AABC, the register of Accredited Architects in Building Conservation.

Nominations for the Plowden Medal 2022 will open in January. For more details visit:

<https://www.royalwarrant.org/>

## Welcome to these new members

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

**Anna Aaltonen**  
Associate

**Cody Alexander**  
Student

**Lilian Baldwin**  
Supporter

**James Bayliss**  
Pathway

**Stephen Bellion**  
Associate

**David Bowman**  
Pathway

**Mhairi Boyle**  
Associate

**Suk Fong Chun**  
Student

**David Clifford**  
Supporter

**Elizabeth Curran**  
Pathway

**June Dalisay**  
Associate

**Rani De Vos**  
Student

**Aparna Dhole**  
Student

**Christian Elwes**  
Supporter

**Scarlet Faro**  
Student

**Elizabeth Finney**  
Associate

**Erin Foster**  
Student

**Rosalind Fraser**  
Supporter

**Kate Garland**  
Supporter

**Jasmine Hadley-Hughes**  
Student

**James Harvie**  
Student

**Lucy Hatch**  
Student

**Amanda Hegarty**  
Associate

**Leona Holmes**  
Associate

**Reed Hudson**  
Student

**Rebekka Katajisto**  
Student

**Rose King**  
Student

**Hilary Kwan**  
Student

**Alice Law**  
Student

**Lucas Marijnissen**  
Supporter

**Terence Moore**  
Supporter

**Caroline Parkin**  
Student

**Gracie Price**  
Student

**Thomas Rees**  
Student

**Loren Rudisuela**  
Associate

**Victoria Shaw**  
Student

**Johan Solberg**  
Associate

**Paul Synan**  
Pathway

**Eleanor Towell**  
Associate

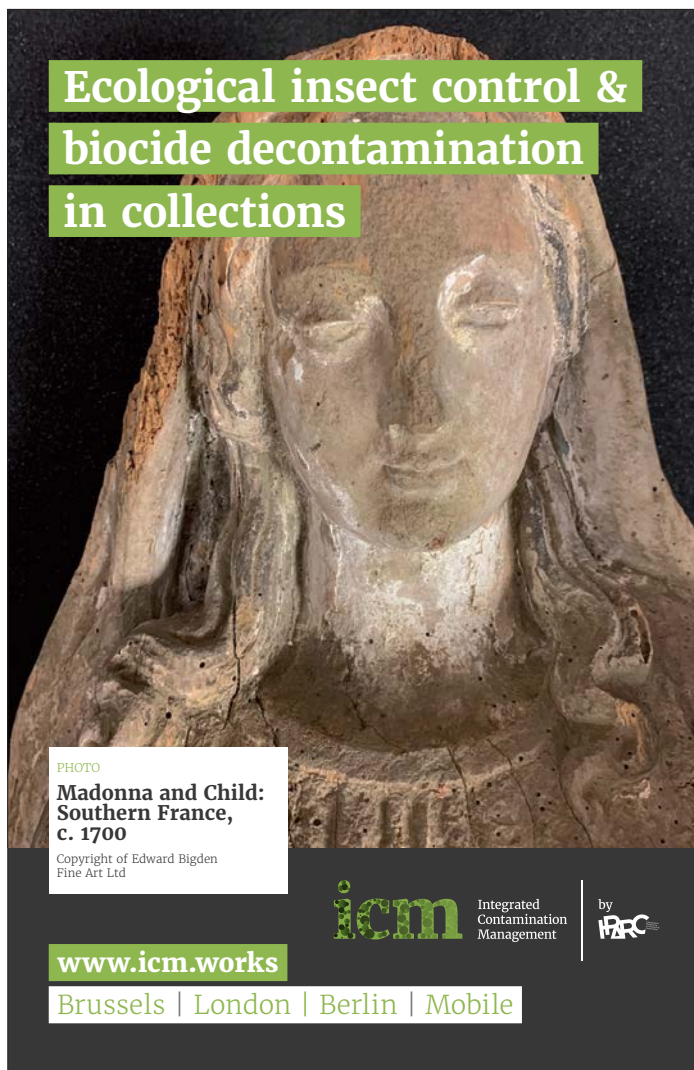
**Rachel Trembath**  
Associate

**Wai Tsang**  
Supporter

**Suzanne Vermunt**  
Student

**Aled Williams**  
Supporter

**Carlos Womack**  
Student



**Ecological insect control & biocide decontamination in collections**

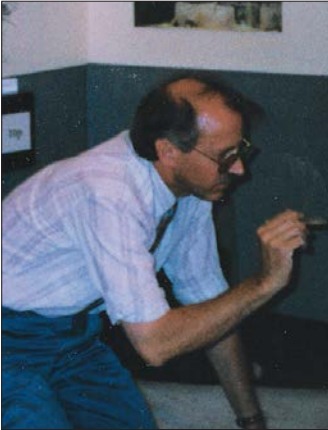
PHOTO  
**Madonna and Child: Southern France, C. 1700**  
Copyright of Edward Bigden Fine Art Ltd

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## In memory



### Graham Morgan ACR

March 1944 – July 2021

We had the sad news this summer that Dr Graham Morgan died after illness following a stroke in 2017. Graham will be remembered as one of the generation of archaeological conservators at the start of the profession who forged new techniques and ideas and could put his talents and skills to a wide variety of materials and situations.

Most of his career was at the University of Leicester as chief conservator for the archaeology service. He also trained many conservators and archaeologists and developed an expertise in materials analysis. He served as treasurer of the Icon Archaeology Group in its early years and up until his death was chair of the Rugby Archaeological Society.

Gathering tributes from friends and colleagues, what has struck me is not only the range of finds he conserved and his areas of research but his generosity in sharing his knowledge and skills with students and colleagues.

Graham was a strong student in a range of subjects, excelling in natural sciences, and his interest in all things mechanical lasted his entire lifetime. After gaining the Diploma in Conservation at the Institute of Archaeology in London in the early 1960s, he joined the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works working on iconic sites such as Mucking, Rudston Villa, and others abroad. He then worked at the conservation lab at the National Museum of Wales before moving on to Leicester in 1974.

During his time there until his retirement in 2009, he conserved finds from local excavations, often of great national importance and complexity. These included lead curse tablets from Vine Street; the Bosworth Boar; the Hallaton hoard and a group of Iron Age cauldrons.

He also had a particular talent for moulding and casting, taking on projects most conservators would find daunting. Right up until his stroke in 2017, he continued conserving finds, some of which will be going on display at the Jewry Wall in Leicester and the British Museum.

In addition, he carried out decades of analysis on Roman mortar and wall plaster. He was persuaded to turn this into a PhD, awarded in 1992, an achievement he was immensely proud of. His thesis and samples comprise the national archive for recipes and materials used in constructing Romano-British buildings.

In 2007, he published *A Guide to the Identification and Analysis of Archaeological Artefactual Material*. This was beautifully illustrated with photographs, usefully compiling this information in one reference point.

His character and generosity are captured by the following tributes:

'They don't make conservators like Graham anymore; he had a huge range of practical skills combined with a deep understanding of the materials he was working with. Working with him was a joy. He loved mending things; he could make broken lab kit work again, setting to and making new components if needed. His grandchildren knew he would fix their toys; one of his many projects for them was a ride-on train set for them in his back garden after he retired.'

#### Theo Sturge ACR

'In the late 1970s-80s, Graham was the go-to person for help for those puzzled about the chemical aspects of conservation. He could always explain the strange phenomenon and advise on what to do. I remember very well how he would calmly provide the vital information with a friendly satisfied smile and a slow blink of his eyes!' **Suzanne Keene**, retired conservator

'Graham was in his dream job! He could continue myriad conservation projects, including mending anything that didn't work, while also teaching students, in his kind and gentle way, everything from metal-working and wall plaster analysis to the conservation of leather and the identification of charcoal. When teaching small groups, he was in his element and many of us benefited from his knowledge and wisdom over decades. When I finally had to close the Archaeology Certificate Course in 2014, it was Graham who was the longest-serving tutor at nearly forty years!' **Nick Cooper**, University of Leicester

Graham's wife sadly died of cancer in 1996; he is survived by two daughters, both of whom have followed careers in heritage, Amy as a master embroiderer and Elspeth as a stone conservator, and his five grandsons.

#### Helen Ganiaris

Chair, Icon Archaeology Group

# CELEBRATING THIRTY FIVE YEARS

The past year has been difficult for many but 2021 has marked the 35th anniversary of Hirst Conservation Ltd and given the team there something to celebrate. To mark this significant milestone the team has interviewed their founder and co-director Elizabeth Hirst ACR and asked her to look back over her time in the business of Building and Fine Art Conservation and the changes she has seen in the profession since 1986



Image © Hirst Conservation Ltd

## How did it all start?

My interest in conservation, historic building and fine art grew during my time working for my aunt and uncle, Professor Robert and Mrs Eve Baker. Their devotion to this type of work was infectious and I was lucky enough to experience a wide range of issues relating to building and art conservation. Professor Baker tended to focus more on stonework whereas Eve had a love for medieval wall paintings, although this was not the limit of the scope of works undertaken by them.

One of the interests that my aunt and uncle also promoted was a love of books. Inevitably, our work involved travelling around the country to various ecclesiastical buildings and on our travels, we would often be interrupted by a visit to an antiquarian bookshop or to see an element of interesting decoration. This encouraged me to start a library in our offices, which were initially based in a portacabin in the

Elizabeth Hirst in the nave of Ely Cathedral in 1986

Paint sampling from the Crystal Palace dinosaurs in 1996. This illustrates the wide variety of locations and objects our work takes us to



Image © Hirst Conservation Ltd





Senior Stone & Wall Paintings Conservator Sabina van de Bruck ACR laser cleaning the exterior alabaster archivolt at St Mary's Church, Tutbury

garden of our Lincolnshire farmhouse, but has now grown into an extensive complex of offices, laboratories and workshops.

The number of projects that have taken place since 1986 are too many to recall, but during the course of our work we have built up an extensive library of books and archives, with condition records, building surveys, treatment reports and photographic images of an impressive array of churches, cathedrals, stately homes and important buildings across the country and overseas.

Hirst Conservation started in the UK in 1986 and my first project was conservation of the 14th century polychromed and gilded Caen stonework at Prior Crauden's Chapel at Ely Cathedral. The works in the Chapel necessitated a team of half a dozen people, rather than me working as a solitary conservator, and I suppose that put us straight in the deep end. In the search for a suitably qualified team to join me. I formed a lasting partnership with Paul D'Armada, who was not only an extremely talented artist and conservator but also happened to be a chemist and a physicist. At that time outsourcing analysis was very difficult, which led us to set up our own labs that we now rely on heavily.

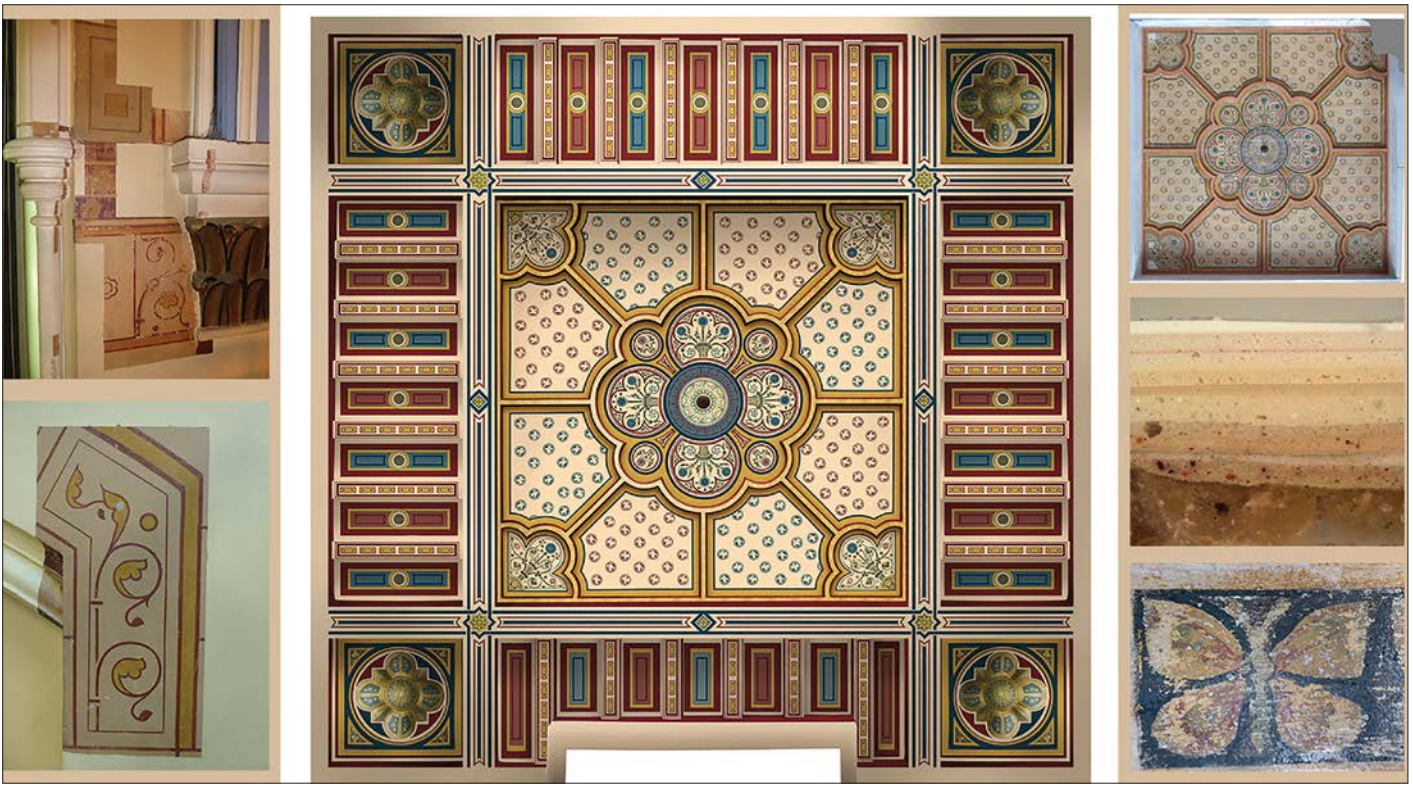
I am thrilled to have created such a fantastic team over the years, people that I not only depend on but who are also my friends. We enjoy working both nationally and internationally on stone, terracotta, plaster, fine art, wall paintings, timber and other applied decoration, as well as mortar analysis and paint research to support this.

### How would you say the conservation profession has changed over the years?

Perceptions of women in building conservation has changed. A woman advising men on a building site thirty five years ago had less impact that we do today! The conservation industry was also at a fledging stage, without any professional

Alabaster stones at St Mary's Tutbury, showing the before and after effect of laser cleaning





Dover Town Hall. A composite image showing: (left) the uncovering of historic decorative schemes; (centre) digital recreations based on paint research, archive information and on-site investigations; and (right, top to bottom) existing exposed ceiling centre, paint sample cross section and exposed decoration

organisations such as Icon or IHBC (Institute of Historic Building Conservation) or regulatory bodies.

As the industry has developed, so has the need to source a higher level of qualified staff in order to maintain the level of service required. This is not just about conservators, but the infrastructure that supports our work, including laboratory and analytical services, health and safety and regulatory compliance to name but a few.

There is now much more competition as this is a mature and established industry. The effort to secure work, which is often tendered for, is huge and often includes extensive documentation in order to comply with funding guidelines or to satisfy requirements for faculty and listed building consent. More time can be spent on this than client liaison now.

To move forward in the profession, I developed a multi-disciplined team, with strong underpinning support from chemists and physicists with analytical facilities which allowed us to better justify our treatment approach and methodology. A simple proposal offered thirty five years ago now extends into a detailed condition survey backed up by analysis and various recording and illustrative techniques. It is wonderful to see how professional standards have elevated.

Whereas the business began with the state-of-the-art daisy wheel typewriter, we now embrace the full range of digital recording and communications. The importance of this has been heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic when Hirst relied on internet communication, using Teams and Zoom for example. We have a major project running from our Ottawa branch and many hours a week are spent progressing this project remotely.

The next big challenge for us as part of the larger conservation profession is to turn towards sustainability - reducing the

number of solvents and disposable products, better recycling options, addressing how conservation can continue to support adaptation of buildings to encourage development rather than demolition.

### Do you have any particular projects that stick in your mind?

After all this time there are obviously too many to recall but the chapel at Ely is where it all started, closely followed by the conservation of the nave ceiling in the Cathedral. Whilst there I had the privilege to work with the Surveyor to the Fabric, Peter Miller, one of the founding partners of what is now Purcell. I asked his advice about fax machines when they first came out and he assured me I wouldn't need one! I think he would be rather surprised by the data produced today.

The fire at Uppark House in 1989 drew conservators from many disciplines, and the importance of the work raised the profile of conservation. The steep learning curve also assisted in subsequent major projects such as the fire at Windsor Castle in 1992. In the case of Uppark they wanted the building to look like the day before the fire and we were asked to produce a pre-aged lead oil paint, which was achieved (but that's a long story...) I recently revisited the Saloon and Dining Room, which we restored. These areas required sensitive retouching instead of redecoration, and we used a casein paint to simulate the degraded original lead paint and there hasn't been any colour change and it still looks great.

I enjoy visiting our archives and reading some of the numerous conservation reports, which bring back great memories and satisfaction. I always look to see how we might have changed our approach to treatments over the years. I'm pleased to say I am generally happy with those past decisions.



Drapers Hall, London 2021 showing careful filling to one of the marouflage ceiling panels prior to retouching and revarnish

It is inspiring to work in different places and cultures. Many happy hours have been spent working on a wide selection of projects and locations. They have included magnificent ecclesiastical and other high-profile buildings across the UK, to less glamorous locations like lighthouses, air raid shelters and burial grounds. We have also enjoyed working internationally and have fond memories of working on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, a Palladian Villa in Italy, ornate interiors in Paris, as well as a number of other destinations, including the UAE and Hong Kong.

Every project is special particularly those where we develop a lasting rapport with clients. Our projects are often very diverse and draw on different disciplines. Conservation of a painted surface in a church will be a very different to the approach used on a painted object in a museum. We need to understand the environmental conditions and their impact, as well as looking at the whole building envelope and its use, in order to guide the approach and, where possible, offer advice on how the conditions may be improved.

We continue to research materials and have undertaken numerous trials over the years, such as assessing the behaviours of specific linseed oil paint in internal and external conditions. Lasting products that are compatible with the historic structures mean less frequent maintenance and less environmental impact, so it is beneficial to have a good practical understanding of material performance.

### **You have said before that you never stop learning. How significant is this?**

As our projects are so diverse there isn't a textbook treatment available and there are many factors to consider prior to making any conservation decisions. I love the challenge of resolving complex issues to allow us to provide a justified methodology. In addition, my team has a wide range of experience in different disciplines, so we like to join forces to come up with appropriate solutions. One never stops learning, utilising new materials and techniques alongside traditional materials unchanged for centuries, which makes our work so special.

The antiquarian books have been a source of reference for historic paint formulations which has enabled us to produce bespoke materials where redecoration is required. Whilst conservators know what paint is essentially made of – actually making it is another learning curve. We all like to buy a product ready to use but this does not always work where conservation projects require elements of unique finishes. We still make and use lead oil paints for grade I and II\* listed buildings as they offer great protection and longevity. However, where possible we make linseed oil-based paints without lead and have replicated highly significant interiors using zinc oil paints. Other special formulations are designed when specific porosity, reversibility, visual properties, etc. are required.

The continual professional development (CPD) of the team throughout their careers is hugely important to me with staff encouraged to attend and present at conferences and lectures. It has the added benefit of improving the public perception of conservation and illustrating that it is a significant professional industry in its own right, with work based on surveys, scientific analysis and informed proposals/specifications, underpinned by dialogue and good working relationships across the project team.

The Hirst team on the first visit to Ottawa in March 2019 at the start of a project

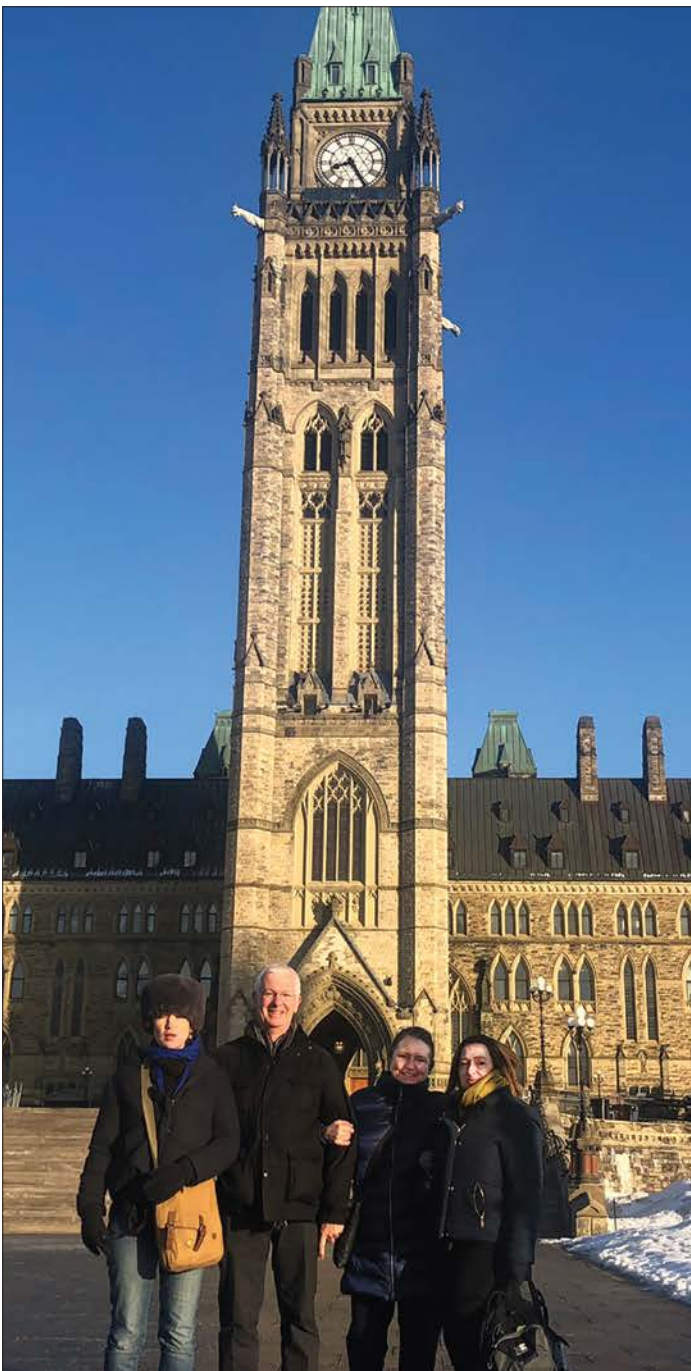


Image © Hirst Conservation Ltd

We support senior conservators in the process to gain Icon Accreditation and my colleagues and I are also mentors for the accreditation scheme, helping peers through the process. Through Accreditation conservators feel empowered, they are aware of best practice and practical and ethical advancements within the profession. Our senior stone and wall paintings conservator has also been recruited as an Accreditation assessor.

As conferences and lectures have also been available online since COVID-19, this has enabled more people to attend national and international events as travel is not required. I really hope to see a combination of virtual and live events in the future.

### **What advice might you give to someone thinking of joining the profession?**

One needs to be committed and passionate about the work; be open minded and try to understand a wide range of specialisms. Many conservators start their careers with a determination to major in a specific subject to then change their roles completely as time goes on. Building conservation needs a wide variety of skills not just applied decoration, for example, but an understanding of construction, substrates and environmental factors. Not to mention the interaction of materials and past interventions. Buildings need to remain functional. They are not an object to be put in a display case or placed in storage but need to remain relevant to survive.

Over the years, Hirst Conservation has supported a number of work placements for students at all levels, ranging from Year 11 school children to post-graduate students, giving them vital practical experience to boost employment opportunities. We have hosted short-term traditional lime-plaster internships sponsored by the Traditional Building Skills Bursary Scheme. During the conservation of Gorton Monastery, we supported easel paintings conservation students from Northumbria University. In addition, we have hosted twelve-month Icon/HLF funded internships, for post-graduate students wishing to gain vocational educational training and practical experience.

For anyone interested in building conservation there are many avenues into the industry that offer fantastic opportunities for development. I am always happy to be approached by anyone in the conservation industry if I can offer help or advise in any way.

[hirst@hirst-conservation.com](mailto:hirst@hirst-conservation.com)

#### **About Elizabeth Hirst**

Trained in medieval wall painting and stone conservation, Elizabeth became a senior conservator within the Eve Baker Trust. She subsequently went on to found Hirst Conservation in 1986 and is its Director and Principal Conservator. As well as Icon Accredited she is a fully accredited member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

# THREE GO TO PORTUGAL

Graham Voce describes a heritage project criss-crossing Portugal – part travelogue, part explanation and part exploration



Image © Adam Klups 2021

In the ceramics conservation studio of Nova University Conservation Department: (l to r) Márcia Gomes Vilarigues (Head of Dept), Susana Coentro, Maria J. Melo, Graham Voce, Dan Longman

Three of us were in Portugal for a week of heritage research under the auspices of Grampus Heritage & Training Ltd ([www.grampusheritage.co.uk](http://www.grampusheritage.co.uk)) and generously funded by the European Union's *Erasmus +* programme. The three were Adam Klups, Daniel Longman and me. Adam, as well as being a Trustee of Icon is also Senior Church Buildings Officer and Gloucester Diocese's Care of Churches Team Leader and Dan is Planning (Conservation / Heritage at Risk) Officer for Sefton Metropolitan Borough as well as the author of a series of heritage and history publications and a newspaper columnist on heritage matters.

We were in Portugal from September 6 – 13 and our rather heroic driver was Adam, who took us from Lisbon to Oporto then all the way down south to the Algarve and then back to Lisbon, with several diversions, all in seven days.

## THE WHYS AND WHEREFORES

Why were we there? Grampus Heritage & Training has a long and honourable tradition of supporting heritage, archaeological,

crafts and ecological projects, educational visits and explorations which has grown out of founder Martin Clark's commitment to heritage and sustainability, based on four pillars of sustainability (cultural, environmental, social and economic) and on the understanding that heritage - and so the conservation of that heritage - is central to that sustainability. In addition, Grampus emphasises that enhancing the awareness and appreciation of heritage arenas other than one's own is an essential learning path for heritage conservation professionals. So, we were there to be part of that initiative and practical yet philosophical project.

## CONSERVATION AT NOVA UNIVERSITY, LISBON

We were also in Portugal to meet colleagues at the Department of Conservation and Restoration of the Nova University of Lisbon (School of Science & Technology). The department there, led by Márcia Gomes Vilarigues, operates and supports an impressive range of research and conservation research

and outreach activities, with particular emphases on glass, stained-glass, ceramics, book and paper conservation, photographic and cinema image conservation. Other interests include an innovative programme focussing on the conservation of modern and earlier plastics; this has proved to be an area of great interest outside the department and is one to watch for future developments.

### Student conference

We were able to meet most of the departmental heads at the Department, as well as a number of the students, and were given a comprehensive tour of the conservation studios and the work being undertaken on site. We also met the students who are the organising committee for the 2021 Student & Emerging Conservator Conference to be hosted at the University in October – part of an ongoing series that was originally established by Adam and myself in 2011 at IIC (the International Institute for Conservation).

### Research and new directions

We found that much of their work on the conservation of glass and ceramics could be applied to the church / religious and general built heritage in Portugal, where the degradation of architectural tiling and stained glass are major issues, in particular, with reference to damage caused by a marine environment as well as climatic extremes of hot and cold, allied to some intense humidity.

This is a classic case of being able to relate detailed scientific conservation research to specific elements of the heritage environment; it was therefore interesting to learn that, in Portugal, much decision-making about conservation of the built heritage is directed by surveying professionals rather than conservation or heritage professionals. This is an aspect of the heritage scene in Portugal that we would like to investigate further with the University.

An additional and interesting element that came into our discussions was the awareness of Icon and its Accreditation process. Despite the smaller size of the conservation profession in Portugal (with its population of just over ten million against the UK's sixty seven million), there was a strong appreciation of the way that Icon works for the heritage conservation profession in the UK and this dialogue between two national conservation professions is certainly something to be taken forward.

## LISBON AND DIVERSIONS

As well as visiting the University we also took in the urban townscape of Lisbon where the various built environment experiences of the three of us were bought to bear. Visits included the UNESCO World Heritage sites of the Monastery of St Jerome and its church and the neighbouring Tower of Belém. The monastery's fabulous fusion of Gothic and Baroque architecture as well as the associated church with its extraordinary stained-glass and contents, invoked a wonderful sense of spirit of place.

As well as discovering the historic urban streetscapes and landscapes in Lisbon (the city centre itself a World Heritage

site) there was also the Archaeological Museum and the Ruins of Carmo - a fascinating example of how the introduction of the notion of 'romantic ruins' in the early 19th century transformed the way that Portugal regarded its built heritage, from that of 'rebuild and replace' to the celebration of the past imperfect. And, of course, there was the heritage of Portugal's food and wine; much is made of these in Portugal as part of the country's living heritage and indeed current way of living and this was gratefully sampled and shared!

Monastery of St Jerome, Belém, Lisbon: the cloisters of this large monastery dating from 1495 in the Manueline style of late Gothic mannerist design



Image © Graham Voce 2021



Image © Graham Voce 2021

Carmo Archaeological Museum and ruins, Lisbon: a former monastery that was badly damaged in the 1755 Lisbon earthquake. During its slow reconstruction the Romantic notion of ruins came to Portugal and since then it has been conserved in its current state. In 1864 the site was taken over by the Association of Portuguese Archaeologists, which converted it into a museum

## ONWARDS: NORTH TO CINTRA

From Lisbon we drove up to Cintra (another World Heritage site) with its wonderful palaces and great houses dating back to the 15th century as well as a historic town centre. The one palace we had time to visit was the Palacio de Monserrat where much conservation work has recently been carried out, to bring this grand Venetian Gothic-style mansion back to life. It was encouraging to see how the conservation and restoration process there was fully documented and explained.

It was also good to see that attention was paid to the historic landscape that gave context, meaning and a sense of place to the palace itself, very much in the way that we see houses in their landscapes treated in the UK. With only time to visit this one of many palaces, a return trip is definitely on the cards.

## ONWARDS AGAIN: FATIMA AND OPORTO

After Cintra we visited Fatima, a large Roman Catholic pilgrimage site - and a relatively recent one - which brought another thread to our project, that of the heritage of pilgrimages. For me at least there was the new experience of a popular and current culture of devotional objects, something that illuminated earlier heritage buildings, contexts and objects at home.

We then reached Oporto and again enjoyed the heritage of its urban landscape and specific structures within it such as the cathedral and the road / rail / pedestrian Dom Luis I bridge, designed by Theophile Seyrig, a disciple of Gustave Eiffel. There was also time to experience the fado – a traditional Portuguese musical style that is kept very much alive as a continuing part of their cultural heritage.

## THEN SOUTH: SILVES VIA TOMAR

Adam then heroically drove us all the way down to Silves in the south, over 500 km in one day. En route we visited Tomar – an extraordinary 'architectural gem' of a monastery cum castle built by the Knights Templar and then enlarged and adapted. With its outstanding architectural features – especially those in the ebullient Manueline style – it is a site that definitely deserves to be better known.

Near to the tourist hotspots of the Algarve, Silves is a small city with a castle/citadel, a cathedral and a small network of historic streets which all work together not only to recall and record the city's 15th -18th century built heritage but also to reflect the heritage of the different faiths that have played roles in Portugal's history. In this case the reference is to the Arab settlement of this part of Iberia, where the Moorish state of Al Andalus existed until 1492.

The cathedral in Silves is built on the site of the Moorish mosque and the town's citadel was previously a Moorish stronghold. Again, past heritage was reflected in the food we found at some of the restaurants and here, unlike Lisbon and Oporto, there was a very strong note of Arabic culinary heritage – and delicious it was too!

## LISBON AGAIN – URBAN LANDSCAPES

Finally, we returned to Lisbon for a last tour before returning to the UK. One of the city's remarkable aspects is the contrast between its very grand classical avenues and landscaped parks against the apparently endless warren-like streets that follow the contours of Lisbon's hills up, down and round, leading to sudden surprising panoramas over the city.

In Lisbon (and indeed Oporto) many deteriorating buildings await their 'second chance' but there are visible attempts to rejuvenate neighbourhoods – deriving from the inhabitants' pride in their local area. And it was fascinating to meet people from different countries who are now calling Lisbon home and

hear how their numbers seem, perhaps oddly, to have increased during the pandemic. It will be interesting to see how this influx of people and ideas will make a mark on this beautiful city.

## CONCLUSIONS

So what did we learn? As the three of us are not conservators but are still very much conservation professionals, it was important to see the web of relationships that exists between the various conservation arenas: the moveable heritage, built heritage, the applied and decorative arts, and intangible heritage. There is so much potential for dialogue between the conservation communities of our two countries, not only at individual professional level, but also between institutions such as universities and conservation training institutions and with heritage conservation bodies such as Icon. We found that international sharing in heritage conservation remains strong, and, with so much heritage in common, that we have much to learn from each other.

Palácio de Monserrate: the recently conserved summer palace built in the neo-Moorish style by the Cook family in the 1860s and situated in its extensive landscape gardens







Sympathetic adaptive re-use in Oporto: retaining the façade facing the UNESCO World Heritage San Bento (St Benedict) railway station and integrating 21stC new build to re-purpose the site

We very much look forward to going back to Portugal - there are more palaces to explore, more sites to visit and definitely more of the culinary heritage to consume! Again our thanks to Grampus for making this possible and also to the Nova University of Lisbon for being such generous hosts to us.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Graham Voce was IIC's Executive Secretary from 2004 to 2020. Having studied both Landscape Architecture and English literature to BA (hons) degree level, and been involved in Television's Grand Designs series, Graham is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London and of IIC and continues to work and volunteer in heritage-related fields.

**LINKS**

The Department of Conservation and Restoration (DCR) of the NOVA School of Science and Technology:

<https://www.fct.unl.pt/en/faculty/departamentos/departament-conservation-and-restoration>

2021 Student & Emerging Conservator Conference:

<https://eventos.fct.unl.pt/secc2021-the-faces-of-conservation/home>

Grampus: <https://www.grampusheritage.co.uk/>

One of the larger examples of the historic buildings in the centre of Oporto that are waiting their second chance of being lived in and enjoyed



# TAKING A CLOSER LOOK AT THE ROYAL PAVILLION'S WALLPAPER

Putting a positive spin on the last year and a half, the lockdowns and closures have given paper conservator, Amy Junker Heslip ACR, a chance to put in some long term planning and research into the Chinese wallpaper collections at the Royal Pavilion and Museums Trust (RPMT).

## THE PROJECT

In May 2020 I successfully applied to the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, in what has now become Part I of the Chinese wallpaper project.

Part I was a great opportunity for me to take a closer look at

our wonderful Adelaide corridor at the Royal Pavilion but, with Covid restrictions in mind, the project was initially about how to make this wallpaper more accessible online to reach a wider audience. Online content will be available later this year but here is a sneak preview of the work so far.

The Adelaide corridor - a difficult space



## THE PAPER

This fantastic 18th century hand-painted wallpaper, produced in China for export to Europe, is remarkable for its longevity as much as its spectacular scenes, and also for having survived in its original location since being hung there two hundred years ago - one of very few items in the Royal Pavilion which have remained undisturbed in this way.

We refer to this wallpaper (which depicts a hunting scene, lantern festival and Dragon Boat festival) as the Adelaide Corridor paper, since the passageway where it is located links the Queen Adelaide tearooms, and the suite was used by Adelaide when she became Queen on William IV's accession in 1830.

The Adelaide corridor and the rooms leading from it were part of the so-called 'New North Building', the last major portion of the Royal Pavilion to be built. It was completed in 1821. Senior members of the royal household had apartments there and some rooms were occupied by Lady Conyngham, mistress to the King.

Wallpaper, especially hand-painted paper, was expensive and highly valued. It was often attached to linen or canvas so that it could be moved, stored and replaced elsewhere. However, the Adelaide Corridor paper was pasted directly to the walls without such a fabric lining. The corridor ceiling height is quite low and, as this export paper was made to a standard height, it was shortened in such a way that the tops and bottoms were retained. All the 'cutting and pasting' needed to make this wallpaper fit the space may account for its very firm attachment to the wall and consequently to its survival in situ: a rare example, as almost all the interior decorations of the Pavilion were removed prior to the 1850 sale of the building by Queen Victoria.

## THE CONDITION

The wallpaper was varnished at some time in the late 19th century and while this may have protected it from some types of damage it has certainly resulted in the brown staining that can be seen today. In the 1960s the paper was cleaned but some of the varnish seems to have sunk into the paper, leaving local staining as well as brittleness.

The paper also suffered damage through rainwater leaks and the effects of oil and candle lighting.

During the 20thC a bamboo trellis pattern paper was hung over some of the damaged areas, which are still there, waiting to be revealed.

Between 1914 and 1916 when the Pavilion served as a military hospital this part of the building housed Indian Officers' quarters. Between the 1920s and 1960s it became family accommodation for the Director of the Pavilion. It is recorded that the children of the last Director to occupy these rooms, Clifford Musgrave, would ride bicycles up and down the corridor. Given such uses over the years the wallpaper has

been scraped and bashed about quite a bit; at less than two metres wide (5' 4") that isn't too surprising.

More surprising are some of the pencil additions to the wallpaper, noticed during the recent examination. Which past guest might have been responsible?

The wallpaper was glazed with perspex in the mid 1970s and in the late 1980s this was replaced with the more robust glazing system you see today, and has remained undisturbed since that time.

Photographer and conservator setting up photography in a difficult space

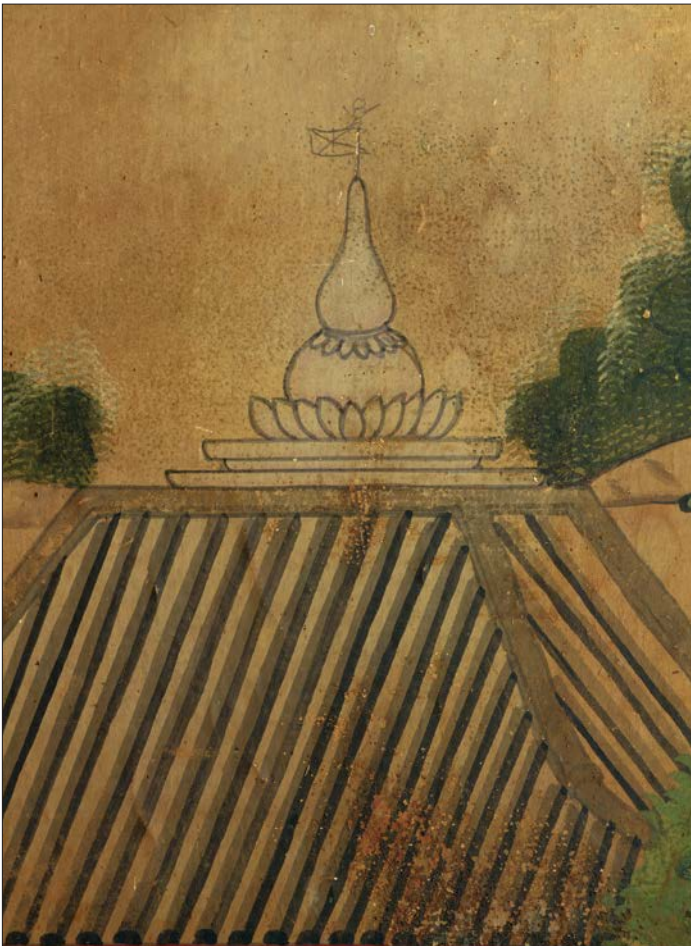


Image © Royal Pavilion & Museums Trust



The long wall of the Adelaide Corridor, depicting the Dragon Boat Race, a scene of mythology. Note the brown stains, especially the square radiator-shaped stain (bottom right over page) where the wallpaper was varnished beneath

Later 'additions' to the paper in the shape of a stick man and a flag



## METHODOLOGY

The large portion of this project was to enable the wallpaper to become more accessible through online content. The Adelaide wallpaper can be found in a long narrow corridor in an area with reflective glazing and low lighting and is difficult to view when onsite.

The first step was to remove the glazing to enable full photography to take place. This step was seemingly so simple but, predictably, Covid delayed it multiple times and it was not until May 2021 when I was able to get colleagues to help with the unenviable process of removing the glazing.

As well as carrying out photography I was able to use the time to carry out a full condition survey of the paper and also to clean the glazing on the inside and out, which was last done during the glazing installation in the late 1980s.

This work, and the images produced, and the research I have carried out have generated a large amount of renewed interest in this paper. The images will enable the viewer to zoom in on the details and also to enjoy the larger panoramic scenes in the paper.

Blogs and talks have been given to make available progress on the project and the research. The online content is still being finalised and will be available later this year.

Back on site, the lighting and interpretation for the wallpaper in situ, is being reviewed. The condition of the wallpaper is stable but an upgrade on the glazing case design would be desirable should there be funds available.



Image © Royal Pavilion & Museums Trust

A detail from the roll of Chinese wallpaper

## NEXT STEPS

With further application to the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art I received another grant in June 2021. For Part II, I am now planning to continue the research into all of the Chinese export wallpapers kept in the archives of the RPMT, outside those in the Adelaide corridor. The funding will enable these to be imaged, with this content available online later this year. The papers will also be rehoused, and fully catalogued on Mimsy.

On searching the archives, two uncatalogued rolls of wallpapers were located. With a small patch investigated, these are confirmed to have been also from the Adelaide corridor - removed at some point in the last hundred years. Treatment of these rolls will also be carried out under Part II of the Chinese wallpaper project.

## CONCLUSION

It is nice to have a bright side to consider from the past year. I am grateful for the Paul Mellon Grant as it has enabled me to have a focus and conduct some meaningful research in the collections at the RMPT at a time when I felt a little adrift and getting close to the collections was not possible.

This was my first attempt at applying for one, and then a second, grant and I would encourage everyone to give it a go. We all have treasures in our collections which are often overlooked due to other working pressures and priorities. It has felt a privilege to shine the light on this wallpaper collection and to enable it to become accessible to all.

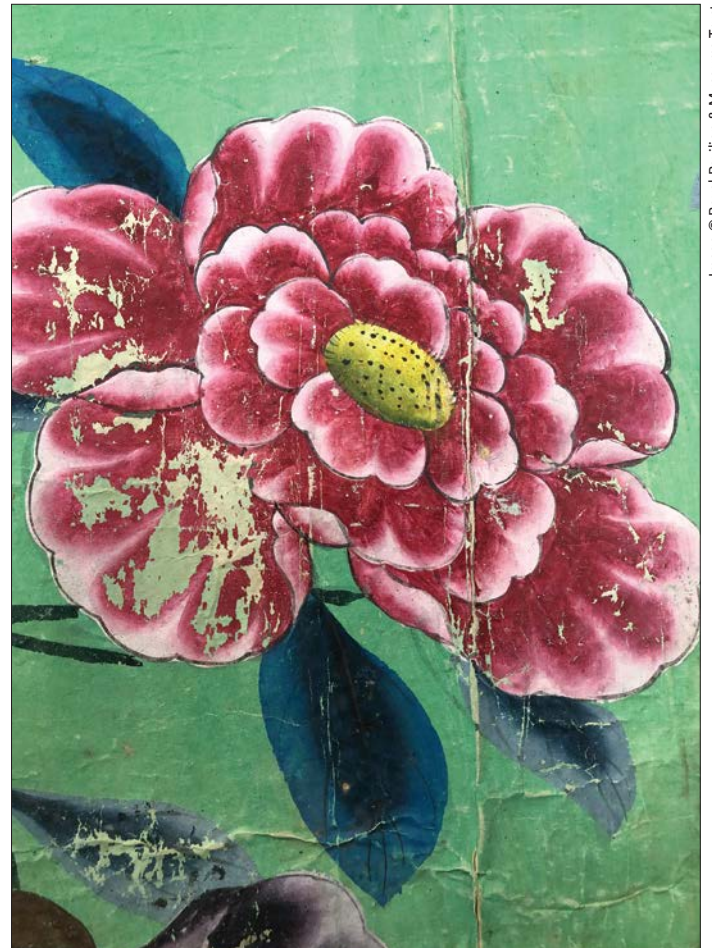


Image © Royal Pavilion & Museums Trust



The discovery of an uncatalogued roll of wallpaper

With thanks to the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art. And grateful thanks also go to Heather Woods, previous paper conservator at the Royal Pavilion, for her meticulous and invaluable documentation and research.

Supported by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art

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Investigating this area of newly discovered wallpaper showed that it is part of the Adelaide Corridor paper



## WORKSHOP

### HISTORY, TECHNOLOGY, IDENTIFICATION & PRESERVATION OF DIGITAL PRINTS

Photographic Materials Group  
30 September to 1 October 2021

The Photographic Materials Group held a two-day digital print workshop with **Ryan Boatright**, co-founder of Atelier Boba, former scientist at the Image Permanence Institute and expert in digital printmaking. Drawing on his experience as an artist, printmaker and researcher, Ryan spoke about the evolution of today's digital print media, including not only common chemical-based photographic and inkjet processes but also the commercial industrial processes that are being re-purposed for use in fine art.

Digital prints are increasingly common in our cultural institutions, but it can be difficult to find an expert to consult in this complex field and opportunities for study in the UK are limited. Ryan talked us through the methods and terminology used in his studio as well as processes, materials and techniques for mounting and framing, and explained how these have changed over time.

We spent several hours examining samples with hand-held microscopes and considering their sensitivities to light,

pollutants, abrasion and humidity. We thought about methods of ink application including the anatomy of the dot, and examined sharpness, regularity, randomness, dustiness in inkjet prints, and differential gloss to tell the difference between lambda and inkjet prints.

Presenting a complex topic in manageable sections, Ryan discussed the most common digital processes including pigment inkjet, UV inkjet, latex inkjet, lambda (digitally exposed) and ChomoLuxe®, as well as laser printing and risography for making artists' books and small publications. He also spoke about paper and coatings; highlighting their multi-layered structures, material composition, ink absorbency and compatibility with inks. We thought about storage materials and the effects of poor handling - including fingerprints and scuffing - as well as planar distortion, bleeding and blocking, chemical deterioration (including yellowing) and biological effects of mould and insects.

I really enjoyed the experience and the sample sets have helped enormously to demystify the identification process.

#### Jacqueline Moon

Chair Icon Photographic Materials Group  
Conservation manager paper and photographs, Tate

## CONFERENCES

### THE POWER OF MUSEUMS

International Symposium ICOM 2021  
Prague 25-27 August 2021

The International Symposium ICOM 2021 outlined preparations for the 26th ICOM General Conference - ICOM Prague 2022 and the main topic *The Power of Museums*. Part of the preparations for this Conference is the International Symposium that takes place a year before the conference itself and which acquaints ICOM members with the preparations, the site, the topics and the programme and form of the event. This was also the case in August, when we presented the form of the 26th ICOM General Conference Prague 2022, which will be the first ever in a hybrid format. This year's International Symposium also took this form.

The event began with a gala evening at the Mayor's Residence. The City of Prague is an important partner in the preparations and this reception numbered among the largest that took place here following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Attention was mainly focused on the conference day, which took place at the National Museum. We presented the most important thing, which was the central theme of the conference *The Power of Museums*. Museums have the power to change the world for the better and are an indispensable ingredient of society's development. Both remote and attendant speakers presented the individual sub-topics: *Purpose: Museums and Civil Society*, *Sustainability: Museums and the Ability to Overcome Crises*, *Vision: Museums and Leadership* and *Recommendation: Museums and New Technology*.

We also presented the form of the hybrid format and the conference's online platform gCon, via which the International Symposium was also being transmitted to remote participants. Speaking about the current state of the search for a new definition of museums in the Czech Republic were colleagues from the Department of Archaeology and Museology of Masaryk University in Brno, while the co-chairs of the ICOM Define working group provided an international perspective.

Attendees at *History, technology, identification and care of digital prints* with Ryan Boatright, Tate Britain (Ryan back row, fourth from left).





A taste of Prague before next year's ICOM conferecer

Attention was given to the current state and revision of the ICOM Code of Ethics and ICOM's work on sustainable development. At the end of the professional programme, the ICOM 2022–2028 Strategic Development Plan was presented, as were the celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the International Council of Museums.

The main part of the programme will take place at the Prague Congress Centre, which we did a physical tour of, also presenting it to remote participants, as well as the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, the Jewish Museum in Prague, and the National Gallery Prague, where the meetings of many international committees, the 'off-site meetings', will take place, and the National Technical Museum and National Museum of Agriculture, which aside from off-site meetings will also host the opening of the conference.

The ICOM 2021 International Symposium had a high attendance and an enthusiastic positive response. A total of two hundred and thirty three guests came in person, while over eight hundred participants connected remotely. The International Council of Museums and Czech ICOM Committee would like to hereby thank all those who attended or took part in and who will also participate in the General Conference.

For anyone interested, a recording of the symposium can be seen with registration here:

[icomprague2021.gcom.me/page/home](https://icomprague2021.gcom.me/page/home)

You can find more information on the upcoming general conference in Prague at: [prague2022.icom.museum](https://prague2022.icom.museum)

We look forward to seeing you at the 26th ICOM General Conference Prague 2022!

**Alžběta Horáčková,**

Office of the ICOM Czech Republic for

Planning the ICOM General Conference - ICOM Prague 2022

### A PROJECT I AM PROUD OF Icon Archaeology Group

Online 6 August 2021

This online event followed the Archaeology Group AGM. Contributors were invited to give short presentations about significant projects that they had initiated or been involved with and of which they were, quite rightly, proud!

The event was chaired by Archaeology Group committee member, **Claire Woodhead ACR** and the first speaker was Laura Mountford (English Heritage), on *Waste Free and Economical Conservation Storage of Medieval Glass in the National Trust*. Laura was responsible in 2019–20 for creating appropriate and safe

storage for a collection of medieval glass from Lacock Abbey. Working to a tiny budget and restricted timescale and inspired by advice and suggestions from Sustainability in Conservation (SiC), Laura succeeded in creating accessible storage using reusable and recyclable materials. Card clamshell boxes housed the fragments which were mounted on Plastazote and held in place by pinned Plastazote offcuts. This was an exemplar of effective, economical and sustainable conservation practice.

**Seren Kitchener, Martha Jones and Heather Wilson** (Cardiff University) spoke on *Investigating the Readability of Humidity Indicator Card Types for the Management of Archaeological Metal Storage*. The project formed part of their investigations for the BSc Conservation of Objects in Museums and Archaeology at Cardiff University. The project investigated the use of humidity indicator cards, one of the most popular and cost-effective

Slide from Laura Mountford's presentation on *Waste Free and Economical Conservation Storage of Medieval Glass in the National Trust*

**Specifications of the Project**

- Economical
- Time Efficient
- Easily accessed
- Easy to maintain



methods for monitoring RH within storage micro-environments. The Sud-Chemie gradient card is usually the preferred type.

Through their investigations, including a survey created in collaboration with the Icon Metals Group, the team demonstrated that the Sud-Chemie Gradient card (which reads from 10-100% RH), was frequently misread, and highlighted a more reliable alternative. An interesting and commendable piece of research – and one which may well prompt a reconsideration of the types of RH indicator card used in monitoring stored archaeological metals.

In part two, the first speaker was **Eleanor Evans** (Cardiff University) who discussed *The Conservation of an Iron Artefact Assemblage from Ferrycarrig*. The work was carried out at Cardiff University in conjunction with the Irish Archaeology Field School as part of the MSc in Conservation Practice.

The project was a good example of a contained conservation project, through which an understanding of iron corrosion and the investigative conservation of corroded iron artefacts was developed. Fifty two corroded iron artefacts from a site in Co.Wexford, Ireland were X-radiographed and a selection cleaned for identification using air abrasion with aluminium oxide powder. Some questions relating to sustainability were raised, including an interesting exchange on how to clean and reuse contaminated aluminium oxide powder.

Next, **Marta Pilarska** of AOC Archaeology presented a project on *3D replicas of Clachtoll Broch Assemblage*. Since 2017 archaeologists have been working at Clachtoll Broch in Scotland to investigate and stabilise the site. Buried under and preserved by the ashy deposits from an ancient fire were more than two hundred and fifty artefacts including stone tools, worked antler and bone, pottery and metal objects. AOC have introduced new recording protocols into their work including photogrammetry, which they used as part of the investigation and recording of this site.

Digital 3D renditions were created of several important finds. Using 3D printing, convincing replicas of some finds were made, infusing the standard polymer material with stone, metal or composite powders. Some discussion



From the presentation by Eleanor Evans of Cardiff University on *The Conservation of an Iron Artefact Assemblage from Ferrycarrig*

was held about the life expectancy of such models, and no doubt their conservation will feature in future discussions. The difficulties of inpainting 3D printed plastic-like models was also discussed, although this was managed with great success in this project.

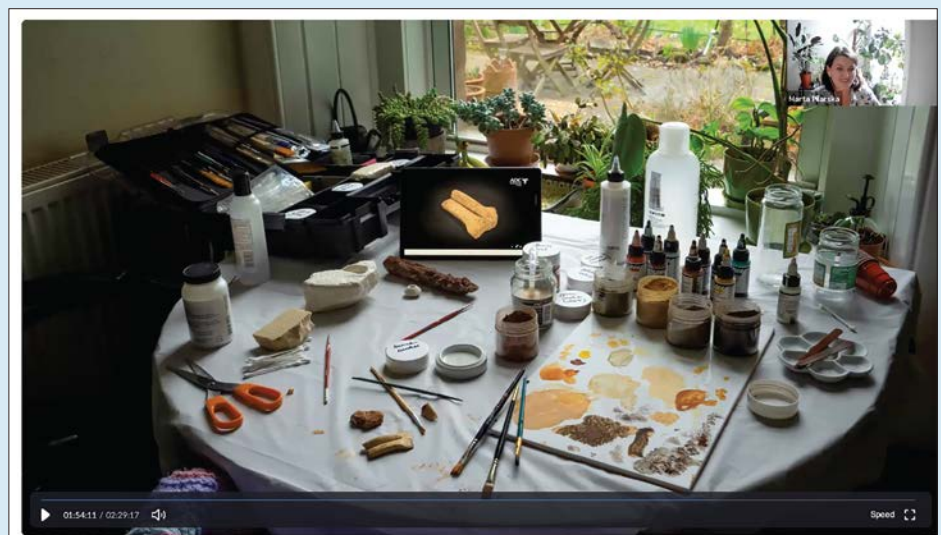
The last presentation, *Roman Insects also Like Eating Nice Objects: the investigation of ancient pest damage on a Roman leather object* was given by **Luisa Duarte** (Museum of London). The presentation focused on an intriguing object comprising multiple layers of stitched leather from the site of the London Mithraeum (excavated 2011–13). An interesting outcome of the meticulous conservation of this object was the investigation of insect damage through the leather layers. The damage was mapped, allowing the layers of leather to be matched and for conjectures to be made about the original structure of the object. As the

damage was caused by a wood-boring insect this added further to the investigation, suggesting that the leather layers sandwiched a wooden component. Although the identity of the object remains unclear, the action of the pests played an important role in providing evidence of its composition and structure.

This was an excellent and varied series of talks ranging from sustainable conservation methods to pests as aids to research! The event was recorded and is available online via the Archaeology Group Recent Events page on the Icon website. If you would like to find out more about our activities, or if you have suggestions for an event do get in touch with us on [archgroup.icon@gmail.com](mailto:archgroup.icon@gmail.com).

**Hazel Gardiner**  
Communications Officer, Archaeology Group

From Marta Pilarska's on *3D replicas of Clachtoll Broch Assemblage*



## TALK

### MOVING MAGNIFICENCE

#### Icon Paintings Group

Online 30 September 2021

.....  
'Art is at its most vulnerable when it travels. Yet it has always travelled and despite this a fair amount has survived. Is this due to luck or care?' Thus **Clare Finn ACR** set out her stall in this talk: *Moving magnificence. An Introduction to Packing and Transporting Art in Centuries Past*. As she noted, the talk was the outcome of a lifetime of curiosity rather than an in-depth study, because by its very nature there is not a lot of readily available information on the topic. The documentation is scattered; not much survives directly from the packers and shippers themselves and the information we have is often second- or third-hand.

Against this background Clare then threw light on the subject by way of such examples we do have and from which it might be reasonable to extrapolate a sense of what did happen in practice. She focussed largely on the 16th and 17th centuries and started by dispelling the myth the packers and shippers might be illiterate, then moving on to the primary reasons for art to travel: the movements of royal courts, the trade in art and war. The famous meeting between Henry VIII and Francois 1 of France in 1520, known as the Field of the Cloth of Gold provided an example of the first category. Six thousand workers were required to build the massive wood and canvas tents with their huge, luxurious hangings that were erected for Henry and the English Court. This led on to the size of objects that were transported, illustrated by the examples of a set of tapestries, measuring five by eight and a half metres, being moved from the Netherlands to London to Antwerp and then to Spain; and a library of eight and a half thousand books and manuscripts being moved over two years from 1622 across the Alps from Heidelberg to the Vatican using two hundred mules. By the 17thC smaller, precious things were protected by custom-made boxes and the treasures of Louis the Grand Dauphin of France now in the Prado Museum in their beautiful

and sturdily made boxes survived attack in the Spanish Civil War.

A painting by Rogier van der Weyden surviving shipwreck on route to Spain provided a great case study on the importance of sources. Whilst later information suggests it floated in its packing case and was unscathed, the earliest report of 1604 says it went down with the ship but 'since it was well and tightly packed; it wasn't really ruined, just a little de-glued'.

Another valuable case study was provided by contemporary information about the transport of some Rubens' paintings, which he packed himself in the presence of the client, with tin casing and double oil cloth in a wooden crate. Alas, despite this evidence of what was regarded at the time as good practice, the canvases were rotten on arrival. A happier example from the same painter concerned the transport to London of the nine large pictures which still decorate the Banqueting Hall in Whitehall.

Clare also covered the subject of insurance, which did exist but seems not to have been greatly used for land transport (as distinct from marine cargo) and she spent some time on the state of the roads, about which a great deal is known for the 18thC from travellers' reports.

Her last topic was war with reference to the considerable looting and moving of art under Napoleon, whose efforts were then dwarfed by the seizure and movement of art and artefacts in the 20thC by the Nazis.

The talk was both interesting and informative. The lesson appears to be that art has always travelled and not uncommonly in massive loads and that great care could be taken in circumstances that might make today's handlers quail!

**Lynette Gill**

First-hand evidence of packing techniques from Rubens.

Report from Peter Paul Rubens to Annibale Chieppio, secretary of the Duke of Mantua, 24 May 1603, M. Rooses & C. Ruelens, *Correspondance de Rubens et documents épistolaires concernant sa vie et son oeuvre*, Antwerp, 1887- 1909, Vol 1, 31, p. 144-145 in Nico Van Hout & Arnout Balis, *Rubens Unveiled; Notes on the Master's Painting Technique*, Ludion, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerp, 2012, pp. 124-125 & 176.

24th May 1603

"Thus the pictures that were packed with all possible care **by my own hand, in the presence of my Lord the Duke**; then inspected at Alicante, at the demand of the customs officials, and found unharmed, were discovered today, in the house of Signor Hannibal Iberti, to be so damaged and spoilt that I almost despair of being able to restore them. For the injury is not an accident surface mould or stain, which can be removed; but the canvas itself is entirely rotten and destroyed even though it was protected by tin casing and a double oil-cloth and packed in a wooden chest."

# the emerging conservator

## Conserving an XVIII Century Binding

Dealing with fragile original leather taught book and paper conservator Yolanda Bustamante Sampedro how to manage her own expectations, plan her treatments, and the importance of taking every opportunity along the road

### INTRODUCTION

As an emerging conservator, I am constantly looking for new challenges. Last June I was delighted to be selected for a two-week book conservation placement at the private studio Sussex Conservation Consortium Ltd, situated in the charming West Sussex village of Amberley. The placement was focused on the treatment of an XVIII century leather binding, and also included the creation of a conservation binding model, as well as experience of working in a private studio in the heritage sector. The training was supervised by Ian Watson ACR and Ruth Stevens ACR, founders of the studio.

As an early career conservator, there are gaps in my skill set that I am determined to fill in. The placement represented the opportunity to be involved for the first time in private practice and to increase my knowledge in book conservation treatments and bookbinding. Prior to my experience at SCC Ltd, my background in the conservation of books and their bindings was limited; so far most of my projects had centred on other kinds of paper formats.

This did not stop books from being my great passion within the book and paper conservation discipline. So I consider that benefiting from this immersive training has been a breakthrough in my professional development that has given me indispensable skills to walk the career path that I aim to pursue.

Before treatment. The leather of the spine was particularly thin and fragile. It was affected by red rot, making it powdery and extremely delicate to work with. The endcaps and endbands were completely lost on both sides



The right board of the volume before treatment. Some of the lost leather can be seen, as well as wear and abrasion. The corners of the boards were soft and exposed

### THE PROJECT

The placement was centred on the conservation treatment of a 1722 edition of Dugdale's '*Monasticon Anglicanum*'. It involved the assessment, treatment proposal and practical treatment of the book, including of course a full photographic treatment report of the project for the client, Westminster Cathedral Library.

The volume was a full leather binding with a very fragile calfskin as covering material. The leather was worn and abraded, and material had been lost in some areas. The spine was also quite damaged, with lost endcaps and endbands. Besides that, both boards were detached and delaminating in the corners. The treatment was focused on the structural aspect of the book and its binding rather than on the text block, since that only had some minor issues but was otherwise in good condition.

The book was fully cleaned, the leather consolidated, and the original spine removed. A new front flyleaf and a frontispiece leaf were added to the original sewing in replacement for the missing leaves, and the original back flyleaf was also reattached. The boards were consolidated and repaired before their re-attachment.



Embroidering the silk endbands in neutral tones

Sanding the spine paper linings so the surface was smooth and prepared to receive the new leather during the re-backing



One of my favourite parts of the work was the embroidery of silk endbands, for which neutral toned threads were used since there was evidence of the book having endbands but not of their original colours. The final step was the re-backing of the volume using conservation grade calfskin, which I dyed to match, and the repair of the inner joints, finally returning to the book its integrity and allowing for its handling.

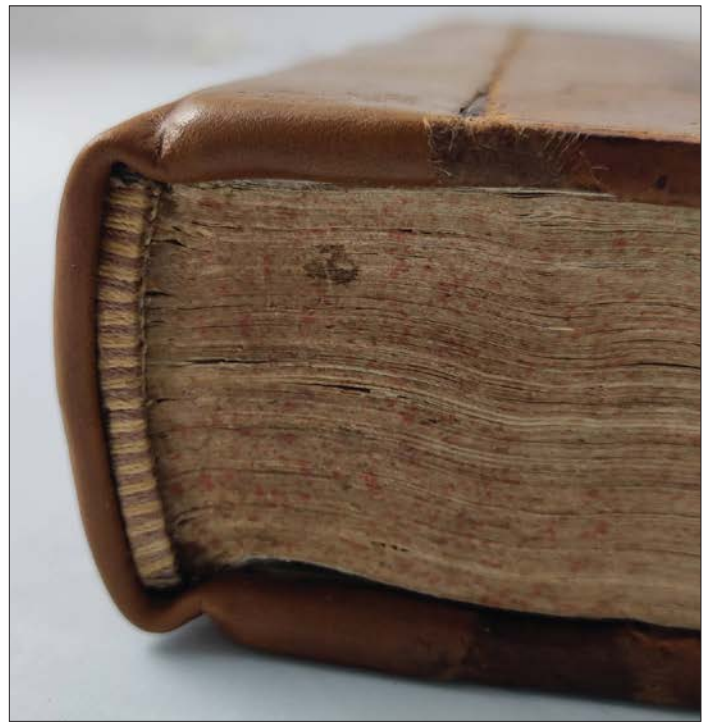
### LESSONS LEARNED

The most challenging part of the treatment was working with the original leather since its fragility made it necessary to think and plan carefully and justify every step, due to the potential loss of material. This ended up being an incredibly useful aspect of the experience, since I learnt how to manage my own expectations according to my skills and the object's characteristics and condition. I greatly appreciate the way my placement was conducted, since I was encouraged to try new methods and materials, to make my own treatment choices as long as they were justified, and all of it while feeling incredibly supported.

Besides that, I attended a book-shoe workshop with Ruth and produced a working model of a conservation binding with Ian, which has been a great addition to my portfolio. The kind of binding reproduced was the K-118, based upon the study of a binding with that catalogue number by American conservator Bruce Levy in 1987. The K-118 structure has some characteristics that translate into advantages for conservation, making it an ideal candidate for binding fragile or highly infilled text



The left board of the volume after completing treatment



The new endbands and endcaps

blocks, or for books where the access to the text right into the gutter is required.

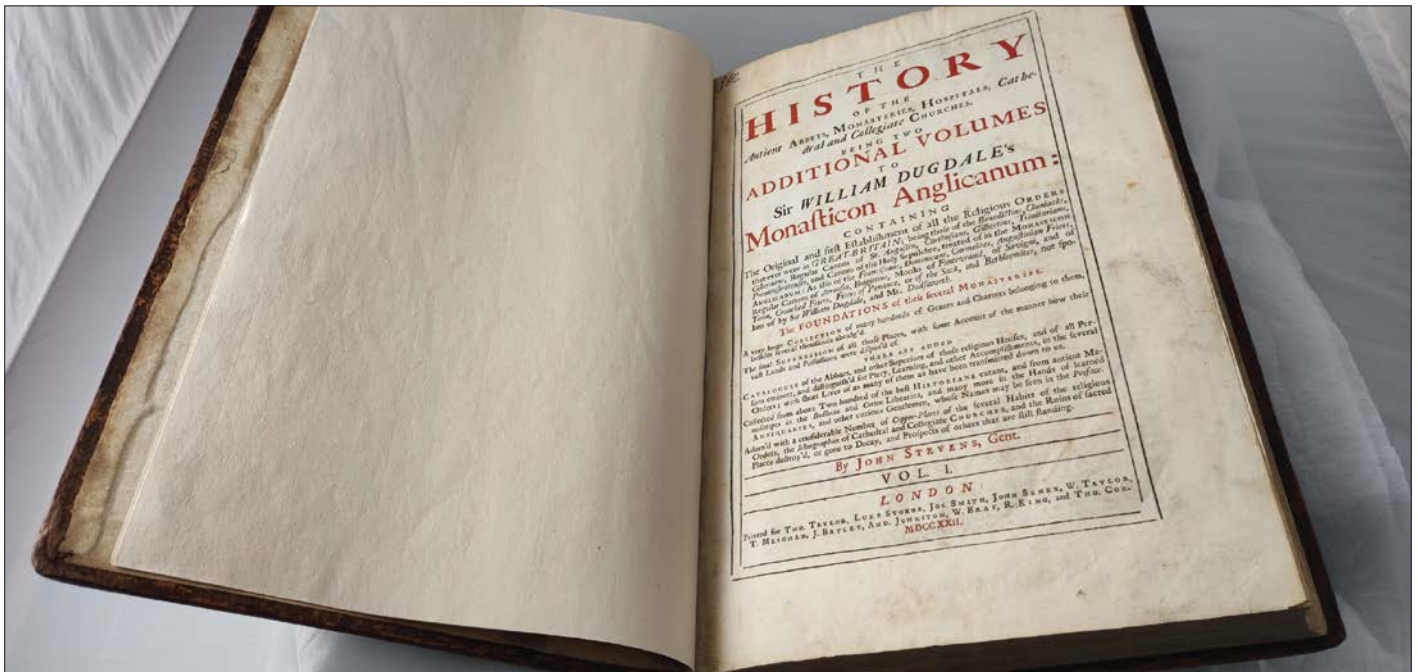
Having the opportunity to know first-hand the ins and outs of a private conservation studio was an added bonus, since all my previous experiences had been in public organizations. I got the opportunity to follow the processes of a real commission, learning through it how to deal with clients' requests while working to the highest conservation standards.

### IN CONCLUSION

I would like to express my gratitude to Ian Watson and Ruth Stevens for being the most welcoming hosts during my stay at SCC Ltd. and for being incredibly generous with their expertise and knowledge.

After the re-backing, a new leather label was created and applied onto the spine





The book is now stable and can be consulted. The binding has recovered its integrity and the text is again protected

I am also grateful to the UK Government's Cultural Recovery Fund, the Anna Plowden Trust and the Clothworker's Foundation for their financial assistance.

Benefiting from this training placement has been a milestone in my professional development, and it would not have been possible without the Grant or conservators willing to give the next generation the invaluable opportunity of learning from them.

**About the author**

Yolanda Bustamante Sampedro fell in love with books during her BA(Hons) in Heritage Conservation. Last year she graduated from a MA in Book and Paper conservation at the Upper School of Conservation of Madrid (Spain) and moved to the UK after being selected as the Fragile Formats conservation intern of the National Library of Scotland. She is constantly looking for new opportunities for development



Lacing the boards of the K-118 binding model

Book shoes produced during a workshop



**A clarification**  
 Part 2 of the article *On the move* about the relocation of Lambeth Palace Library (Emerging Conservator in issue 95 August 2021) was written and co-ordinated by Arianna Mangraviti on behalf of the Library.



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