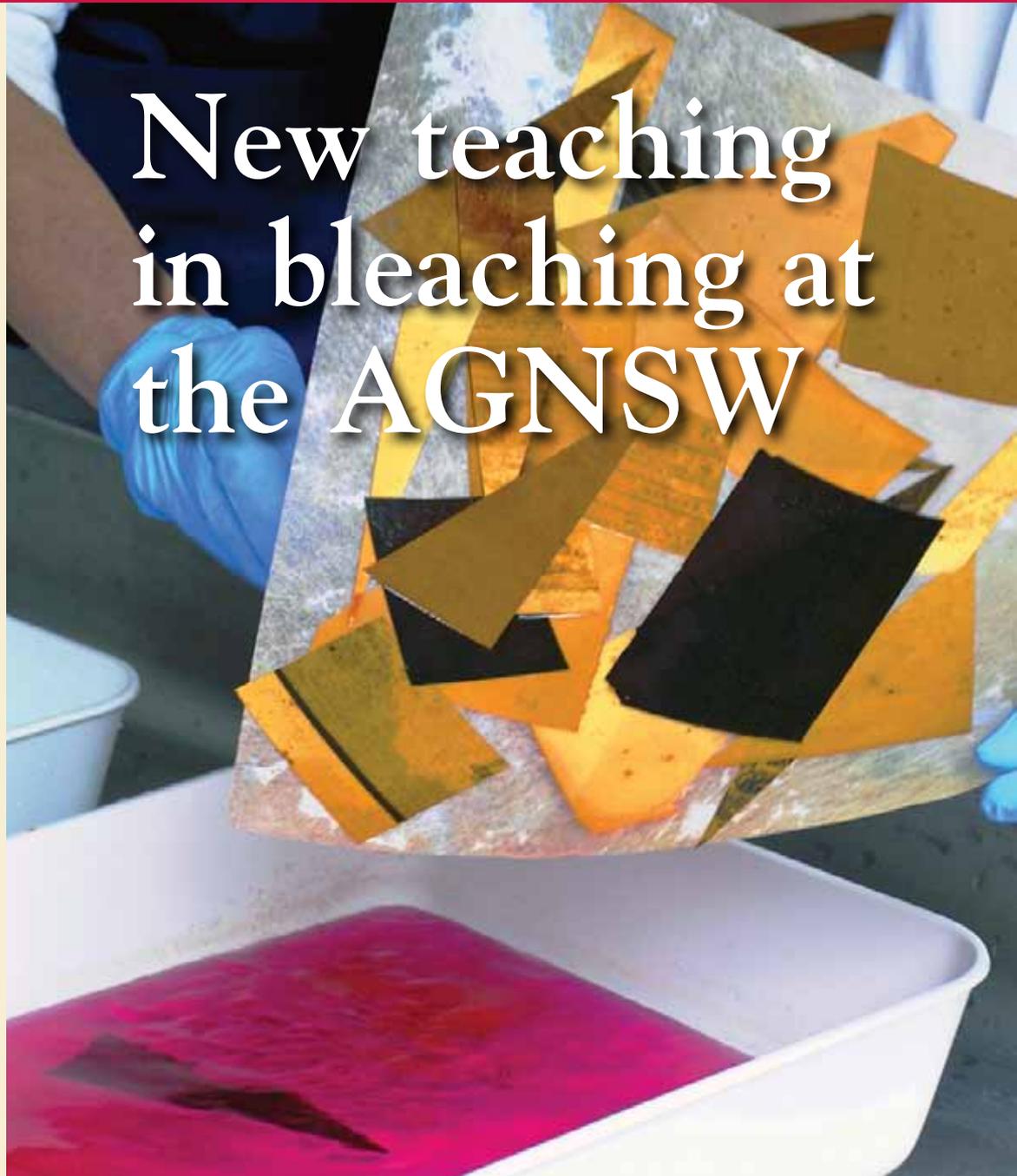


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Tapes of all types in West Virginia



RSL LifeCare in Narrabeen



Book review: Buddha's Brush, Buddha's Paste

President's Report

Moving to the shorter, more frequent newsletters means that we won't need a President's Report in every newsletter – probably just a couple of times a year. In its place we will have a regular update on National Council activities and news.

National Council met in early February for its annual two day face-to-face meeting. During these two days we focused on reviewing the Strategic Plan. We are still working on the final document, and when it is ready it will be put up on the website for your viewing – and comments.

We also had a presentation from Kim McKay of Momentum2, a PR firm that specialises in working with organisations such as AICCM – with a particular focus on sustainability and social issues. She was very inspiring and identified a few areas for us to focus on – particularly HEART, which she thinks is a fabulous project!

Over the last month or so there has also been email correspondence regarding the private conservators listing on the AICCM website – and the requirement for those conservators to be Professional Members of AICCM. In summary, it seems that some private conservators see the listing as advertising for conservators and that removal from the list will disadvantage those conservators that are not professional members. The list of private conservators is on the AICCM website as a service to the public, not to the private conservators. It is Council's view that those private conservators who qualify as Professional Members are the appropriate conservators to service the public, and represent the profession and AICCM.

Private conservators are in the process of applying for Professional Membership, with many already through the process. As a private conservator myself, I would like to stress that the process is simple and not at all time consuming. Maintaining the points required for continued professional development over 5 years is something that I manage without even thinking about it, as is the case with any conservator who has an ethical and responsible approach to their profession.

Kay Söderlund

March 2012

Hello from the new editorial team

From this issue a new team is editing the Newsletter. We hope to be able to maintain the high standard set by Fiona Tennant and her team from ICS.

We are based in Canberra and comprise:

- Ian Batterham (NAA)
- Prue McKay (NAA)
- Celia Cramer (Art and Archival)

The submission email (newsletter@aiccm.org.au) remains the same and all emails sent to the address will come to us from now on.

We are not proposing any radical changes to the newsletter at present. However, we are aiming to increase the frequency to 5 issues per year, on the schedule: *March, May, July, September & November*. In this way it is hoped that information will come to members in a much timelier manner. Each issue will be consequently shorter.

We are introducing a new segment this issue, entitled *Trawling the Internet*. It aims to let members know of interesting and useful information available on the Internet.

Bleaching workshop at AGNSW

New teaching on bleaching (or Teaching Bleaching)

At the Art Gallery of NSW
Bleaching Workshop 6-10
February 2012

Presenters – Renate Mesmer and
Julie Biggs

Venue – Art Gallery of NSW

On the Monday morning 15 attendees gathered together at the AGNSW to learn more about bleaching artworks on paper. Most of us had little experience of bleaching. It has gone out of fashion in recent years. Institutions in Australia seem to be rarely using it and people in private practice use it less than they once did. The participants were asked to bring samples to cut up so as to compare the various methods and techniques. The items were surface cleaned and washed before arrival.

The first step of the course was to predeacidify our objects in water adjusted with Calcium hydroxide. The necessity of items being predeacidified before bleaching was emphasised. The deacidifier needs to be in the alkaline region to work so you don't want to place an acidic item in it causing the pH to drop. This would cause damage to the paper as well as making the bleaching less effective.

The course was a mix of theory and practical. During the course we used 4 oxidating bleaching techniques: light bleaching, hydrogen peroxide, potassium permanganate, and calcium hypochlorite and 2 reductive bleaches: sodium borohydride and borane tert-butylamine complex. Before using each process Julie and Renate explained the history of the bleach and the specific chemistry involved. They also discussed the method to be used and the pros and cons of each bleach.

Light bleaching was carried out using both sunlight and artificial light. Unfortunately the Sydney weather was being uncooperative on the light bleaching day but we got a chance later in the week to do another sample on a sunnier day. The sunlight bleaching was faster than artificial light and more effective on my samples. The main problem with light bleaching is the amount of light exposure and the length of time in the water. The use of metal halide lights was recommended as it is faster than fluorescent lights but they require a more complicated and fixed set up.

Hydrogen peroxide was used both overall and locally. It is good for mat stains and is safe on lignin based paper but can cause blistering. The biggest surprise was the number of water changes needed in the rinsing and the length of time needed for rinsing to get rid of the peroxide ions. If peroxides are left in the paper they create free radicals that can cause deterioration and colour reversion. Peroxide test strips are available. A few of us vowed to go back and rewash some of our recently bleached items after this session.

Potassium permanganate was a scary process due to its dark purple colour. You can't see what is happening and when the item comes out of the solution it is brown. The item is then placed in a



Course presenters Renate and Julie making up hydrogen peroxide solution



Samples after bleaching

conversion bath and becomes almost immediately white. It is, however, very good on mould and foxing and is good on art paper that was originally crisp white. Calcium hypochlorite is also good on mould spots. It doesn't go as white as permanganate but you can see what is happening which is a big advantage over the permanganate bleach. It is important to wash the chlorine out of the paper but as chlorine



The workshop participants

is very water soluble this happens quite quickly.

Sodium borohydride is best used locally. It is a very effective bleach which works quite quickly and rarely goes too far. Making it up in largely ethanol makes it much more controllable and lessens the chance of blistering.

Borane tert-butylamine complex isn't usually used for bleaching and neither Julie or Renate has ever used it on a collection item. It was investigated for its properties for stabilising deteriorated paper. It works as a slow bleach but it requires items to be sit in solution for days rather than hours. It was very successful on some lignin paper I had but other people found the opposite and it completely changed the colour on one synthetic dye. As it is quite a toxic compound, I am not sure many of us will be using it often.

One of the main things that came out of the courses for me was that all bleaches require a lot of rinsing and this has to be taken into account when deciding whether or not to bleach an item. Also using a variety of techniques and bleaches are sometimes necessary to get the best result. We are all returning to our various labs with the desire carry out more testing and with much more confidence in how to use bleaches.

Sally Kneebone

Book and Paper Group News

Symposium update

We would like to give a special thank you to everyone who has put forward an abstract to present a paper at the upcoming 7th Book, Paper and Photographic Materials Symposium be held in Brisbane at the State Library of Queensland from the 29th-31st August 2012. The result is a very interesting and diverse range of papers set to be presented at the Symposium, from both Conservators and allied professionals from Australia and abroad.

An invitation is now open for poster abstracts. Posters on one of three key topics of the symposium are most welcome, as are posters on other topics or treatments. Please send a 300 word abstract of your proposed poster to Caroline O'Rorke at corcac@tpg.com.au by the 13th April 2012.

These three key topics of the Symposium are:

- Disasters: small or large and what we have learnt.
- Conserving born digital collections: library, archive and gallery perspectives.
- Conservation issues, Storage, Display and Transportation of contemporary works.

Each day of the Symposium will focus on one of the three topics, with a dedicated forum for stimulating discussion, providing the opportunity for all participants to be actively involved by

sharing their thoughts and experiences. Please start considering your thoughts and experiences with regards to these three topics.

EARLY REGISTRATION We are aiming to have registration for the Symposium open from mid-May, with an Early bird rate available. This should allow you or your institution to budget Registration Fees for either this or next financial year.

If you have any queries regarding the Symposium please do not hesitate to contact one of the Organising Committee members.

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We are looking forward to seeing you in Brisbane in August.

Kim Barrett
BPG Convenor

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“AWARD WINNERS 2011 – Industrial Packaging Innovation”

Pressure sensitive tapes on photographs

– Workshop at National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, USA

FAIC Collaborative Workshop in Photograph Conservation

In November/December 2011 I attended this 5-day workshop, held at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, USA. Elissa O'Loughlin and Linda Stiber Morenus have been teaching courses related to pressure-sensitive tapes on paper objects for several years and have an incredible wealth of knowledge, buoyed by their ongoing research and, it seems, a genuine fascination for the topic. This workshop is the first to focus specifically on photographs and Barbara Lemmen, from the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts in Philadelphia, and Douglas Nishimura, from the Image Permanence Institute, were on hand to provide the necessary expertise to give the previous workshop model a photographic slant.

The 14 participants are all mid-career photograph and paper conservators, mostly based in the US with a few



An eagle nesting - the view from the window

from further afield – Colombia, Italy, Holland. We began by learning the basics of adhesion and then the specifics of rubber-based and synthetic polymer-based pressure-sensitive tapes, including their invention and evolution and the degradation of their components. By the end of the first day we were sorting through mounds of different tapes, trying to identify their type and degree of degradation (Image 1). The instructors were able to provide a great deal of information, honing it down to the specifics necessary in a practical context, sometimes giving a demonstration, and then allowing participants a hands-on opportunity to test their newly acquired knowledge.

By the second day we had moved on to mechanical carrier and adhesive removal, focussing initially on heat and erasers, then on to Gore-Tex, poultices, solvent gels and immersion. The use of an eyedropper and micro-capillary tube for delivering solvent on the suction table was remarkably successful (Image 2). We worked individually and in groups on samples that had been prepared with different tapes on various photographic supports that had been artificially aged. Unfortunately we collated our results rather hurriedly and haphazardly on the last day. Processes such as salted paper and albumen were found to be quite responsive to a variety of techniques for adhesive removal, such as poulticing with Fuller's earth and suction table work, however there was concern about the possible effects on a microscopic level. Gelatin DOPs also posed few difficulties, though care must be taken to prevent solvent wicking in to the paper core from the edge. Problems were also encountered with chromogenic prints, with colour shifts occurring beneath tape and the sensitivity of the dye layers being an issue.



Using a capillary tube to deliver solvent to a tape stain



Just part of the collection of tapes amassed by the presenters

I found the workshop very worthwhile for a number of reasons. I learnt new techniques and about equipment and tools of which I'd never heard or thought to use in this way (a bassoon reed for lifting tape carriers was particularly novel). I also rediscovered things which I'd encountered while studying conservation or in my early professional years but had not used for awhile. I think everyone appreciated the lecture on the Teas chart, which was a brief but effective introduction to the use of solvents as an aid to tape and tape stain removal. There does appear to be a lack of research into the effects of solvents and local treatment on photographic materials. Difficulties related to reproducibility of manufactured objects and the compartmentalised and secretive nature of the photographic industry are huge obstacles.

The location for the workshop was superb. The NCTC is nestled on the banks of the Potomac River and surrounded by forest. The area is beautiful and serene, and the centre is equipped with excellent facilities. I found it the perfect setting for intensive learning.

My attendance at the workshop was made possible by contributions from The Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation and University of Melbourne Commercial. I was also granted a scholarship from the FAIC/NEH. The support was much appreciated and I hope to make good use of the information and skills learnt. A comprehensive list of references was provided that I would be happy to pass onto anyone interested – kglen@unimelb.edu.au.

Katy Glen
Paper & Photograph Conservator
Centre for Cultural Materials
Conservation, University of
Melbourne

RSL LifeCare Project

RSL LifeCare War Museum Project

In February conservation and cultural heritage students from the University of Melbourne and University of Canberra travelled to Narrabeen, NSW to undertake a cataloguing and conservation project at The RSL LifeCare's War Museum.

RSL LifeCare is a charitable organisation founded in 1911 "as a haven for those who needed help after fighting for their country" on Bare Island, Botany Bay. In 1939, the organisation moved to its current home in Narrabeen. LifeCare Narrabeen is now one of largest retirement accommodation and aged care facilities in Australia. With over 5,000 residents they deliver various levels of support from retirement living to residential and community facilities and care <http://www.rsllifecare.org.au>.

The War Museum collection has been compiled through donations from past



The War Museum's most photogenic mannequin

and current residents from The First World War to present day conflicts and peace keeping missions. The material is representative of a military collection featuring uniforms, flags and textiles, photographs, war diaries, personal papers and published material, personal belongings, food rations and equipment, medals, weapons, dioramas and much more. Students have been cataloguing and assessing all items to create a collection catalogue complete with donor information and conservation priorities. The hot, humid, coastal climate in Narrabeen provided ideal conditions to encourage mould and insect infestations in the food rations, textiles and paper material. This provided students with a challenging real world experience.

The students "particularly enjoyed the close association of many Village residents with the items on display". Once the word spread around the Village that "young people" were conserving the museum, residents started stopping by for a cup of tea and a chat about their military service and check up on their donated memorabilia. One repeat visitor, a French elderly gentleman recounted the story of how his grandfather collected a German helmet from the battlefield. The helmet has previously been labelled as being donated by French man, no name. Thanks to his willingness to share his story, the helmet can correctly documented with accurate provenance information.

Both the students and residents thoroughly enjoyed this experience. Their presence "breathed new life into the museum". Every Friday is Village lunch day at the Dug Out where meals are served by the executive staff. Students were invited to join the residents at their tables and were not allowed to drink cask wine, only bottle wine for the conservation team!



Some of the project students outside the War Museum; left to right Sandi, Jenny, Tara, Fran, Julio, Klara, Bindy, Jane, Mandy and Lisa



Cataloguing teams at work; Fran, Reyhane and Lisa with uniforms; Rob accessioning military equipment and Mandy is working on private papers

The project is only in its infancy and there is plenty of work to keep the students busy over the year. The next visit is proposed for May/June with students from the first group already indicating their interest to return.

RSL LifeCare was extremely supportive providing flights, accommodation and food. For University of Canberra students the project counted towards for their course placements. I encourage new students to become involved in this fabulous and rewarding opportunity.

The project would not have been possible without the support of Barbara Reeve, Australian War Memorial who connected us with this project and Penny Joy from RSL LifeCare, so a huge thank you to both of them. Jo-Anne Levings from AWM was instrumental in creating the collection accession spreadsheets and showing the team to how to activate them.



Jane mould cleaning an air force pilot doll made by one of the residents



Tara and Sandi removing food and cleaning military ration packs

I would also like to thank all the students who have so been involved in the project to date; Julio Aviles, Mandy Brown, Rob Cooke, Tara Elder, Klara Ewart, Sandi Mitchell, Reyhane Mirabootalebi, Jenny O'Connell, Fran Paterson, Jane Walton, Bindy Wilson and Lisa Yeats.

Sophie Lewincamp
lews@unimelb.edu.au



Klara on cleaning day



Institutional News

Western Australia

WA Museum

The exhibition entitled 'Extraordinary Stories', launched for the CHOGM meeting held in Perth last year, has been returned to its owner, the British Museum.

Isa Loo, Simone Hartnack, Carmela Corvaia and Ulli Broeze-Hoernemann were the lucky conservators who worked in cooperation with the English team to install and demount this amazing exhibition with artefacts representing most of the 54 Commonwealth countries. It comprised many exquisite and unique objects and included the Celtic Snettisham Great Torc, an elaborate gold collar made from just over a kilogram of gold. It was worn by an ancient British leader almost 2000 years ago.

Isa, Ulli, Simone Hartnack and Richard Garcia were also involved in the treatment of objects and installation of the **Debt of Honour** exhibition which is currently showing in the temporary exhibition gallery at the WA Museum. The exhibition highlights the war efforts of Australia's first guerrilla commandos and their life-long effort to repay the 'Debt of Honour' to the East Timorese people. The exhibits range from handwritten letters, a cross-stitch embroidery, flags, guns and weapons, uniforms, posters and many more. Volunteer **Geneviève König** did an excellent job preparing and adjusting mannequins for some of the uniforms that are on display.

Dr Ian Godfrey has returned from his twelfth trip to Antarctica where he was involved in the conservation and maintenance of Mawson's Hut and

artefacts left behind by Mawson and his team. He gave an entertaining and interesting power point presentation to staff and AICCM WA Division members, explaining the incredible hardship these explorers had to endure.

In January 2012, **Vicki Richards** and **Jon Carpenter** were actively involved in a capacity-building programme held in Cape Town, South Africa. They were based on Robben Island and presented two NAS 3 Conservation modules to maritime and terrestrial archaeologists as well as Robben Island Museum and South African Heritage Resource Agency employees. The modules included lectures, tutorials and practical sessions. The practical sessions for the diving participants consisted of taking in-situ conservation survey measurements on an 18th century unidentified wreck located in Table Bay. The practical sessions for the land participants concentrated on the conservation management of cultural sites on Robben Island which are to be incorporated as part of a proposed walking tour, in addition to the guided tours of the political prison on the island.

In February 2012, Vicki and Jon were in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Marianas Islands. They performed corrosion surveys on the aircraft and shipwrecks that were sunk in Garapan Lagoon during WWII. The survey included sixteen wrecks. The results will be used by the local Heritage Preservation Office and Cultural Management employees to develop conservation management strategies in order to preserve their underwater cultural heritage into the future.

We have welcomed **Inger Nyström** to the team. Inger will be with us for the next three months to work on waterlogged objects as part of the Historic Shipwreck Grant.

After many years of productive work and dedication to the conservation profession **Maggie Myers** has retired from the Museum to live in Albany with her husband John. A farewell lunch was held for Maggie with many staff attending to bid farewell and to thank her for all her commitment, enthusiastic approach, hard work and friendly manner. Maggie will be missed by all.

Art Gallery of Western Australia

A welcome addition to the Conservation Department has been the return of **Natalie Hewlett**, who has stepped in while **Maria Kubik** is in England for professional development. Natalie has joined us from a contract at the NGV and we are very glad to have her on board to help with the work needed in the lead up to the opening of the first of six exhibitions from the Museum Of Modern Art (New York). The first exhibition is 'Picasso to Warhol: Fourteen Modern Masters' that opens 16th June 2012. We have also welcomed **Vanessa Wiggin** back into the AGWA fold. Vanessa will be assisting with the preparations for MOMA and also helping Conservation prepare for upcoming internal displays and storage projects.

David Graves and **Stephanie Baily** are busy preparing for a major Jeff Wall exhibition opening in May. David is continuing the ongoing conservation program for the Antony Gormley *Inside Australia* installation at Lake Ballard in the Western Australian goldfields.

Stephanie and **Kate Woollett** have been busy preparing a number of important Western Australian colonial works on paper for the new Centenary Gallery display changes. Both conservators have just returned from attending the

recent 'Use of Bleaching Techniques in Paper Conservation' workshop held at the AGNSW. Preparations are now in hand to share the many findings of the workshop with the paper conservation community by presenting a local division AICCM lunchtime talk in March.

There have been some changes to the AICCM (WA) Division for 2012. Natalie Hewlett is the new President, Stephanie Baily is the new Treasurer, Kate Woollett is the new Secretary, David Graves is an ordinary member and Vanessa Wiggin is an ordinary member. All in all the AGWA conservation staff are fully committed to engaging with the WA conservation profession!

Corkill Conservation

Corkill Conservation has had a very busy start to the New Year. **Felicity Corkill** has been working on a collection of artworks from a University, including some John Olsen etchings and a Lloyd Rees mixed media, an old linen-backed plan belonging to one of Perth's oldest institutions and many private works ranging from University certificates to photographs and a series of beautiful landscape watercolours. Felicity also had to flatten a very large screenprint (over 1 m x 1.4 m), which took up the entire lab table space and required the use of her (specially cleaned) dining room floor for humidification, before flattening on the lab tables! Over the next few months, as requests for work keep coming in, it looks like she will be busy on a whole range of interesting treatments.

New South Wales

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Paintings Lab

Simon Ives is working on the rehang of the Australian collection which were cleared from the galleries to make way for Picasso. This has presented the opportunity to clean many paintings from the collection which are rarely off display. John Glover's *Launceston and the River Tamar* is having a major clean, while many of the other works are being given more minor treatments. **Paula Dredge** is continuing work on her PhD, in addition to recently organising a portable XRF workshop with Dr Bruce Kaiser who travelled from Canada to provide training and update the team on changes relating to the device's software. **Michelle Wassal** is working on a programme of cleans until the rehang commences in April. The European collection is also being rehanged and intern **Hayley Munro** is taking on a number of surface cleans as part of this. **Louise Allen** is also continuing with us working steadily on a Frank Medworth painting. **Kristel Smits** has started retouching damaged areas of Jean Portael's painting of *Esther*, whose story is documented in the Old Testament Book of Esther. **Kate Wilson** has beautifully completed a very difficult varnish and over-paint removal treatment on the background of the painting, completely reviving it. Unfortunately Kate was not able to stay for the retouching treatment before moving to Brisbane. **Lisa Charleston** has been busy concentrating on a special project involving the upgrade of policy, compliance and staff training for X-ray analysis equipment within the department. Lisa has also been involved in the preparation of a large number of paintings from the Australian collection which are due to go on outward loan. The Gallery sadly bids farewell to Lisa, who has decided to move to beautiful Tasmania. Lisa has been a wonderful

colleague to us all, and her passion and enthusiasm within the department will be greatly missed! Lisa will be replaced by **Melissa Harvey**, who is currently working on a project to prepare over 50 Dobell Prize-winning drawings which are due to tour next year.

Exhibitions

Frances Cumming has been keeping a watchful eye on the condition of items within the Picasso show, in addition to preparing works for a busy year of outgoing loans.

Frames Lab

The team has been busy preparing frames for the re-hang of the Australian and International Collections in May/June this year, as well as keeping up with ongoing loan requests. **Margaret Sawicki** has been preparing items for loan to both the National Library of Australia and the National Gallery of Australia. **Barbara Dabrowa** has been devoting her time to a major treatment, sponsored by the Bank of America, on the frame for Piguénit's *Flood in the Darling*. The restored painting and frame are scheduled for permanent display in the Australian galleries later this year. The frame is coated in several layers of thick over-paint that has required hours of painstaking paring back to reveal the original gilt surface and detailed composition ornamentation hidden underneath. She has been ably assisted in this task by **Sandra Hodgen** who has been volunteering one day per week, as well as being employed to complete treatments on loans to Vaucluse House. **Stephanie Limoges** has been employed on contract to treat works for the May re-hang, as well as conducting a major treatment on the frame for Sydney Long's *By Tranquil Waters*. This work, along with several other important pieces by Long, will be travelling to Canberra for the upcoming retrospective at the National Gallery of Australia. **David Butler** is continuing to make a new reproduction frame for the painting *Sons of Glovis II* by Evariste Luminais and is to make two new frames for paintings in the Australian collection: *Nasturtiums* by E. Phillips

Fox and *The Music Lesson* by Sydney Long.

Paper Lab

The paper department has been busy hosting a bleaching workshop presented by Renate Mesmer (Head of Conservation at the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington) and Julie Biggs (Senior Conservator at the Library of Congress, Washington). The workshop aimed to further inform mid-career conservators on past and current practices in bleaching techniques, and was by all accounts very informative and a great success. In addition, **Carolyn Murphy** has been busy preparing works for the Australian and Contemporary gallery re-hangs, and is also preparing to return the all important Picasso works on paper back to their home in Paris! **Analiese Treacy** has been working on a large number of loans to various regional venues, in addition to presenting details on work carried out on the AGNSW's collection of Toulouse Lautrec posters which were conserved thanks to funding provided by the ever-supportive Conservation Benefactors. **Sarah Bunn** is coming to the end of her work on the Lloyd Rees album project funded by the Friends of Conservation. This has involved conserving a collection of the artist's drawings, which have then been mounted onto album pages in preparation for post binding. **Tom Langlands** has been working on a number of Jackie Redgate works in preparation for display in May.

Asian Lab

Lily Yang has been working on a collection of scrolls, donated to the AGNSW, that require lining and re-mounting, and has also been researching a very interesting collection of scholars' art materials including chops, brushes, ink stones, brush holders and washes. Lily has been working with the Curator of Chinese Art to determine the materials used to make these items and the artists/scholars to which they belong.

Objects Lab

Objects conservators **Kerry Head** and **Donna Hinton** are busy preparing artworks for the upcoming exhibition Australian and Contemporary Gallery re-hangs in addition to preparing for the upcoming 'Symbolism' and 'Sekka' exhibitions due to open in May and June. The Gallery bids a fond farewell to **Victoria Bramwell-Davis** who has decided to seek challenges further afield. We wish Victoria all the best with her future endeavours.

Australian National Maritime Museum

The conservation section continues to be very busy with many different projects. 'Aqua', the successful 'immersive' experience summer exhibition has just finished, with the bump out currently underway. The redevelopment of the Wharf 7 foyer space, to interpret the site and improve the display of vessels, is well under way, with structures being built and exhibition furniture and boat cradles imminent. Completion is expected in May/June. A small exhibition 'Titanic Remembered – 100 years' is in development, opening early April. A few core gallery changeovers are scheduled for install over the next three months, incorporating objects that are in the process of being treated and condition reported.

The Australian Maritime Museum Council (AMMC) Conference was held over two days recently at the Museum and a talk, written by **Rebecca Dallwitz** and presented by **Jonathan London**, was given on the conservation of archaeological material retrieved from the *Mermaid* shipwreck site a few years ago.

Rebecca Dallwitz is coordinating the conservation input into the 'Fish in Australian Art' exhibition which opens in early April. There is a large number of loans to process and condition report, as well as collection items to treat. **Caroline Whitley** is also condition

reporting, treating, mounting and framing many works on paper, both collection items and loans, for the same exhibition.

Julie O'Connor is continuing her work on re-housing the textile collection and has passed the 50% stage! Congratulations Julie! The collection was re-housed in three storage configurations: hung, rolled or boxed. One 19th century navy frockcoat was dry-cleaned and conserved to stabilize it for storage purposes. Two wool/nylon cushion covers from *Blackmore's First Lady* (BFL), the Cavalier 37 yacht sailed by Kay Cottee in her 1988 circumnavigation of the globe, were wet-cleaned using Hostapan T (pH 6.1). Eight polyurethane foam cushion inserts associated with the BFL cushions were photo-documented then re-covered with Parsilk to better protect the cushion covers from the byproducts of polyurethane deterioration. An acrylic sealed, wooden box with inbuilt shelving was designed and made to better house the remaining cushions in storage.

Object conservators **Kathryn Yeates** and **Penny Nolton** have both recently left the ANMM. Kathryn returned to live in her hometown of Perth, while Penny has taken a position in conservation at the Australian Museum. We wish them both well!

Jen Woodhouse, an objects conservator by training, commenced working with us in September as a volunteer one day a week. She is assisting with various projects across the specializations. **Henri Holekamp** another of our volunteers has been busy with Jen cleaning a number of trophies in preparation for photography. A group image of these trophies will be part of the *100 Stories* coffee table book being produced by the ANMM to mark the 20th anniversary of the museum. She also continues with matting and re-mounting of works on paper.

Long-time volunteers **Victor Chiang**, **Geoff Tonkin** and **Jack McBurney** continue their invaluable work on box making and packaging of collection

material, and helping out as necessary with framing and de-framing works on paper for various exhibitions.

Australian Museum

We welcomed new staff members **Penny Nolton** and **Silvia da Rocha** in February. Penny brings 15 years of experience working in some of the major institutions in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and Darwin, most recently the Australian National Maritime Museum. Penny will be working on loans, collection surveys and projects in our Aboriginal collections. Silvia will be working across a number of Natural Science projects, and working closely with Sheldon Teare our Natural Sciences Conservator.

Wendy Richards completed her internship as part of the Canberra conservation course. She carried out a number of Ethnographic and Natural Science conservation projects, helping many of our staff. We hope to see more of Wendy in other projects later in the year.

Colin Macgregor has been reviewing the parameters of our anoxic pest control treatments as AQIS are now prepared to accept this as a treatment method. He would be interested in comparing notes with anyone using anoxic treatments in order to reach an agreed national standard for temperature, duration and oxygen levels for negotiations with AQIS. He can be contacted at colin.macgregor@austmus.gov.au. Colin has also just completed a revision of the Collection Disaster Salvage Plans and is continuing with the monitoring of air-conditioning energy savings experiments.

Heather Mackay is conducting research into museum dioramas to devise a conservation program for the Australian Museum's Lord Howe Island diorama. This is the last remaining one of its kind in NSW and is a unique heritage item. The diorama covers a wide range of materials, taxidermy bird mounts, plant materials, eggs, and the painted diorama

background and landscape. The diorama also throws up a number of challenges, such as cramped working spaces and potentially hazardous materials.

Kate Jones prepared and packed loan material for a display at the National Museum of Australia about two feisty Australian women: Jane Catharine Tost (c.1817-1889) and Ada Jane Rohu (1848-1928). This mother and daughter team were both taxidermists and shopkeepers and the Australian Museum has several animal mounts prepared by the women and numerous cultural artefacts purchased from their shop. A selection of these specimens is now on display at the National Museum of Australia. Kate is currently in a packing frenzy, preparing to install natural science specimens at the Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation. The specimens will feature in a contemporary art installation about the fragility of animal life by artist Janet Laurance. Kate is loving the 'contemporary art experience'.

Sheldon Teare has just installed 'Spirit Faces', an exhibition containing a number of Melanesian masks in the Museums brand new project space exhibition cases. These cases will be high turnover, highlighting objects from our collections. With assistance from Silvia, Sheldon is also working on the next big exhibition at the Museum, called 'Deep Oceans'. This work involves organizing the treatment of a whale skeleton, transferring wet specimens from ethanol to glycerol, and the conservation treatment of a ridiculously large, and slightly battered, Sun Fish! Sheldon also has a number of Natural History projects requested by other NSW museums. Along with other glamorous projects associated with Natural Science conservation, some interesting future work includes rehousing the museum's expansive collection of Australian birds nests, 3D scanning of specimens, and the treatment of collector's chests, which feature a variety of specimens and other curiosities.

Megan Dean-Jones has been busy repairing an over-modelled crocodile skull from the East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea. This amazing object had been damaged with major losses to the nose and deep cracking around the jaw area. Many of the decorative seeds and shells had also fallen out of the clay substrate. It is now consolidated and in much better condition. She is also humidifying a collection of leaf aprons from Bougainville Island to flatten them in readiness for an improved storage system.

Preservation Australia

The year has begun with juggling of multiple projects from various parts of the country. Projects include treatments, rehousing and series of a training sessions. **Beate Yule** is honing her skills on backing removals from blueprint plans. There are over 30 plans of varying sizes, with a range of adhesives and backings. The blueprints are by a renowned architect and apart from the backings they are in good condition. It appears to be the month of architectural heritage as the other project that began this month was a rehousing of original architectural drawings for a small historical society. There are over 150 plans that with the assistance of the Community Heritage Grant program are able to be conserved and rehoused.

Tegan Anthes has begun a variety of Preservation Needs Assessments for small community museums which has involved some travel to regional Australia. In addition, Tegan is preparing to run a series of custom-designed workshops for both large and small institutions on disaster planning and recovery. It seems that, with the recent dramatic weather conditions, the need for disaster planning is becoming prominent in the minds of collecting institutions. Tegan received a surprise gift for her February birthday of a handmade wooden paste bowl. This delightful bowl is handcrafted in the UK by Bob Creswell, with a section

for resting your brush and a fitted lid. We are now the appointed Australian and South Pacific distributors for Bob's bowls.

Kay Söderlund is also running about the countryside conducting training sessions in disasters and assisting small museums in writing their plans. Kay is also driving the business forward with ideas of revamping both the Conservation Resources and Preservation Australia websites. The websites will remain separate with Conservation Resources providing the product line for the Preservation Australia conservation business. Look out for the new websites.

State Records NSW

The main projects continue to be treatment of plans prior to digitisation – including Crown Plans and Public Building Plans. When completed, these collections will offer a wealth of information for researchers, and family and social historians. Conservation work has involved the fairly standard treatments such as re-attaching lifting areas of the plans to original backings, as well as more complex re-treatments removing gauze and plastic film facings and then undertaking extensive repair work. Some of the Crown plans have linings and facings that we think date to around the 1970s/1980s that have turned a rather nasty orange colour – if anyone has come across something similar we would love to share notes! Needless to say, documentation of the treatments has not been found...

Elizabeth Hadlow will be taking maternity leave from the end of March until sometime next year. The preparation for the 12-month hiatus has involved formalising procedures filed in Elizabeth's head into written documentation. Additionally, Elizabeth has been involved with writing funding bids for large-scale collection preservation projects and a new storage facility at State Records' western Sydney site.

Clara Cesarone has a number of pot-boilers on the go – rebinding volumes that are not urgently required for clients at this stage but that are used regularly either by the parent agency or researchers. Our sewing frame has been getting quite a bit more use lately.

Jill Gurney has been preparing items for our online '1942 commemorative exhibition' – detailing the input of NSW in Australia's preparation and response to threats during the Second World War.

Paul Smith will soon be tackling storage options for a collection of tracings of aboriginal rock art on polyethylene sheeting, some of which measure 10 metres.

Carol Marsh has been working through a large series of divorce files damaged by water and mould in a past flood incident. The files contain parchment documents that have blocked heavily to adjacent paper documents which makes separating them a very time consuming proposition.

Powerhouse Museum

Since mid-2011, the Powerhouse Museum has operated around major building renovations. It has been an enormous challenge for everyone, particularly the conservation department who are trying to keep at bay the impact of dust inside showcases and on open display.

The Australian Dress Register builds momentum as word spreads about the project. Another online project, 'On The Farm', is currently being developed by Powerhouse curator Margaret Simpson. The intention is to encourage the identification, research and preservation of Australia's farming heritage. The website will have an illustrated international database of farm machinery manufacturers outlining items they produced. **Kate Chidlow** is writing conservation case studies for the site.

Last December, Kate and other conservators conducted a disaster training session for the staff and volunteers at the Powerhouse Discovery Centre, Castle Hill. The workshop provided a hands-on experience for the participants.

Nadia McDougall worked on six large-format Otto Kunzli 1984 Cibachrome photographs. Swiss born Kunzli is regarded as one of the most provocative and influential jewellers of the post war period. The photographs had been stored framed since the 1980s and were in excellent condition. Acidic backing boards and deteriorated masking tape were removed and replaced with Coreflute®. Condition reports, photography and documentation were undertaken in preparation for their loan to the National Gallery of Victoria for the 'Unexpected Pleasures: the Art and Design of Contemporary Jewellery' exhibition.

Nadia also assessed the condition of, and cleaned, a collection of 17 framed watercolours and drawings by acclaimed Australian artist and film maker George Gittoes. Unfortunately, as was the trend in the 1970s, the artworks had been adhered to the window mounts and backing boards without access to the backs of the drawings. Old framers points were removed from the frames and replaced with movable clips. The project was undertaken after a request from Gabrielle Dalton, the curator and George's wife. High quality digital photographs were taken as part of the artist's archival reference and for possible publication and exhibition catalogues.

Over the past two months **Vanessa Pitt** has predominantly worked on the treatment of two 19th century didactic fishing and needle displays. As they are large objects made with composite materials – paper, metal, wood, textile, celluloid – they have been a challenge and fantastic learning experience for Vanessa. **Tim Morris** has been a great help with the repair of the outer wooden and glass frames.

Suzanne Chee has been busy planning and preparing for the 'Frock Stars' travelling exhibition. With the help of a Visions Australia grant won last year, this exhibition takes a look at the complex organisation behind the staging of Australian Fashion Week, from buyers, media and models to designers, volunteers and producers. A centrepiece in the exhibition is a catwalk showcasing 15 key Australian Fashion Week outfits drawn from the first shows in 1996 to the present.

Another Powerhouse Museum travelling exhibition is 'TINYTOREUM'. **Gosia Dudek** installed this exhibition at Liverpool library in December 2011. It will be on display until April 2012. Gosia has also completed repairs of eight objects from a recently acquired collection of 27 stoneware and earthenware sculptural ceramics representing Australian fauna, made by Joyce Gittoes between 1975 and 1990. She has also completed repairing a 1905 Royal Doulton porcelain vase painted by one of the best English ceramic painters, Edward Raby.

Frances Fitzpatrick has worked on the stabilisation of a platypus/possum skin rug in preparation for a loan to its region of origin. The rug consists of a diamond pattern patchwork of the skins of 80 platypus which forms the body of the rug, and numerous possum skins forming the external trim. The skins were collected by Charles Bulwinkel in the 1880s and 1890s from Duck Creek and Emigrant Creek, tributaries of the Richmond River in northern New South Wales which flowed through his property. On Bulwinkel's death in 1918, the skins passed to his daughter Greta Davidson who had them stitched into a rug.

Vanessa Pitt, **Rebecca Ellis** and Frances Fitzpatrick worked on the stabilisation of Floating Forest a 30 part organic fibre installation art work to be loaned to the Ararat Regional Art Gallery. This object was acquired by the Powerhouse Museum in 1991 and has never

been displayed previously. This loan required a relaxing of our standard loan requirements. It is possible and probable that some of the components will be damaged in transit or installation due to the fragility, scale and complexity of the pieces but it is unlikely to ever be displayed again.

'Harry Potter the Exhibition' continues to draw enormous crowds. More than 200,000 people have visited the exhibition since it opened last November. Costumes, movie sets and props from all eight films are displayed in the exhibition. **Teresa Werstak**, Rebecca, Suzanne, **Carey Ward**, **Dave Rockell** and Tim assisted a large team from GES (Global Experience Specialists) USA to install the displays.

Rebecca will be attending the POPART Projects (Preservation of Plastic ARTefacts in museum collections) conference in Paris from the 7th-9th March. The three day symposium aims to address plastic identification, assessment of degradation and the care of plastics. Following the conference Rebecca will travel to the UK for a three day training course in leather conservation.

Teresa will accompany the objects from the Korean exhibition 'Spirit of jang-in: treasures of Korean metal craft' back to Seoul.

Sue Gatenby has organised with Dr Bruce Kaiser from Bruker Elemental to run a two-day workshop on Accurate Elemental Non Destructive XRF. The aim is to train conservation staff in the operation of their XRF Tracer 111 and have a look at some objects which present more complex material identification. We anticipate that this instrument will be used for the identification of metals, determination of gold karat levels, hazardous materials ID and new acquisitions material identification.

Elwing & Gurney Archival

James Elwing recently completed cleaning, consolidation and repair work on the last batch of 15 mouldy ledgers for The Hills Shire Council in western Sydney. This reduced OH&S issues for material being prepared for transfer to NSW State Records.

Jill Gurney has been repairing damaged and brittle 19th Century sales catalogues for a Sydney institution, and is currently washing, deacidifying & rebinding a bound biblical text and rebacking a bound journal, both 17th Century, for a private client.

Working has been difficult this year as, this late in our careers, we have finally transferred our workshop to large modern premises, still in Lawson. When, metaphorically, the dust settles, we will have an open day.

Heights Heritage Conservation

Tess Evans is currently taking a sabbatical in England to do research and career development. In November, Tess completed a certificate course in Laser Cleaning through the University of Liverpool and is currently undergoing a research project on mould removal from historic objects in collaboration with the University of Glasgow. Tess has been doing contract work for the V&A, Christies and the Historic Royal Palaces and is applying for Professional Accreditation with ICON. Tess is about to embark on her PhD.

Lesley Little has been working on a private collection of Jewish textiles, mounting and preparing them for exhibition and storage.

Meanwhile, during a quick return trip, Tess and Leslie prepared 35 beautiful Omie bark cloths for two exhibitions and are planning to work on a further 45 in May during the next visit.

ICS News

The Paper Conservation Department is expanding. We welcome **Michelle Stoddart** who joined our team just after presenting her graduation paper at the CCMC, Melbourne University, and **Sharon Dye**, who remains based in Brisbane but will come to Sydney for blocks of work over the next few months. Michelle and **Wendi Powell** have been removing soot and surface dirt from hundreds of meters of sacred parchments resulting from exposure to a fire. **Kate Papierniak** oversaw the treatment and all the steps were performed in accordance with the demands of the religious tradition and honoured and respected the wishes of their custodians.

Kate, Wendi and Michelle worked tirelessly on the Jessie Scarvell exhibition for the National Trust NSW, alongside the paintings department members **Matteo Volonte**, and **Claire Heasman**. The National Trust then held a reception at the National Trust Centre when our conservators were able to present to those donors who have funded the work and also talk about the conservation treatment in front of the artworks. It was very well received by the donors and satisfying for the conservators to get such positive feedback. Sharon and Michelle completed preservation treatment on a deteriorated early map depicting cemetery lots. This map was very fragmented and required extensive consolidation of media and an application of a facing before the removal of the exhausted backing material and to enable washing on suction table.

Gail Hamilton, Michelle and Sharon have prepared a large collection of bound records for digitisation. Wendi has also worked on some very interesting yet challenging pieces which required removal of Masonite; stain reductions on a two sided water sensitive ink drawing; and an artwork which had areas that had been highlighted by the artist

using lead based media which blackened over time. Kate has also worked on the preservation of jar labels as part of an object for art exhibition; early advertising materials for a corporate exhibition; as well as treatment of a large C type print. With no thanks to the recent NSW inclement weather, Kate, Wendi, Gail and Michelle recovered and stabilised material from a major disaster affecting over 20 boxes of mixed paper and magnetic media materials. This was possible with great assistance from **Adam Godijn**, **Meredith Lynch** (Client Relations Manager), **Erin Watson** (Collections Manager), **Eleanor Sampaga** (Conservation Consultant) and **Clair Heasman** (Paintings Conservator).

Karina Acton and **Sofia Lo Bianco** have continued to work on a multitude of different object types. Particular treatment challenges of the last few months have been an Albion Press with high lead content in the paint surface and vellum platens requiring replacement, archaeological finds from the Sydney Town Hall site, and internal investigation of the Bertram Mackennal bronze figures on the Cenotaph, Sydney using an endoscope to work out why a gypsum material continues to leach out weep holes in the bronze.

The furniture department of **Oliver Hull**, **Eoin O'Sullivan** and **Kat Edghill** is close to completion of a major project for the Members Dining Room at Old Parliament House, Canberra, and has an exciting array of ship figure heads, fire damaged furniture and travelling trunks to challenge them next.

South Australia

Artlab Australia

As always, all the staff here at Artlab are keeping busy, with many projects currently underway across the organisation.

In the paper lab **Elizabeth Mayfield** and **Andrew Cuch** have been working on some important historical documents from State Records of South Australia. This includes a pressed letter book that holds copies of outgoing letters by meteorologist Charles Todd, who was largely responsible for designing and constructing many telegraph lines including the Overland Telegraph through the centre of Australia to Darwin and connecting Australia with England. Todd's other roles included Government Astronomer and Postmaster General. The letters were in extremely fragile condition and the ink was eating through the thin paper; most required lining with heat-set tissue as the damage was too extensive and the pages too fine for individual tear repairs.

The other books from State Records include the field notebooks of **AB Cooper** and **George Goyder**, two other important Australians, both surveyors from South Australia. George Goyder is well known for the creating of Goyder's Line, a guide to areas of adequate rainfall for English farmers settling in Australia. The small note books had damage around the spine and the binding and many small tears on the covers. The binding and spine was stabilised and the tears repaired with Japanese tissue.

Andrew has also been working on a collection of oversized books commissioned by Napoleon recording his conquest of Egypt. These include many detailed illustrations and maps of the area. The books needed stabilisation of the spine and cover, and some tear repair throughout the accompanying text.



Justin Gare undertaking repair work on a large coadestone lion

Aquila Evil and **Anna Austin** have been busy with exhibition repairs and treatments, as well as mount preparation for works for the forthcoming exhibition 'South Australia Illustrated' at the Art Gallery of South Australia that showcases various local historical works.

The Paper Lab has had some extra assistance from Melburnians **Peter Mitchelson** and **Liz Long**, who have both recently completed a month at Artlab.

The Paintings team has been busy preparing many colonial works for the forthcoming 'South Australia Illustrated' exhibition. Sadly for us, **Chou Chia-Ling (Betty)** an intern from the National University of Fine Arts in Tainan, Taiwan, has returned home.

Preventive conservators **Anne Dineen** and **Kasi Albert** have made a second trip to Queensland for their disaster planning project for Queensland Museum, this time visiting the Museum's store in Brisbane and The Workshops Railway Museum in Ipswich. Kasi is also working on a preservation needs assessment for the National Trust of South Australia's historic house Collingrove Homestead, located in the beautiful Barossa Valley town of Angaston. Kasi enjoyed a very pleasant few days at Collingrove during the survey. Anne is also preparing

to undertake a preservation needs assessment at the Sheep's Back Museum at Naracoorte, SA.

The Textiles Lab is busy working on several costumes for the upcoming exhibition 'RMS Titanic' at the South Australian Maritime Museum. They are struggling to resist the temptation to stand in the bows of ships with the wind in their hair... **Kristin Phillips** continues her love of flags and is working on the Harefield Flag, belonging to Adelaide High School, which supported the Harefield community in England during WW1. After the war Harefield sent a large Union Jack to the Adelaide High School as a thank-you for the support. The school and Harefield continue connections to this day with students from the school visiting Harefield as part of a trip to Gallipoli later in the year. The flag is in very poor condition and requires wet cleaning and full lining. A large and extremely damaged painted silk Coachbuilder's Trade Union Banner belonging to the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union is on its way and will keep the lab busy for quite a few gruelling months.

The Projects team has continued to maintain its outdoor 'hi-vis'-attired presence in the city. This summer, with assistance from the Objects and Preventive teams, Projects completed a full treatment on the bronze sculpture of Sir Samuel Way in Adelaide's North Terrace. Gumboots were required when the replacement for a long-missing halo on a fountain – *St Mark* by Rosemary Madigan – had to be reinstated while the pond was full. The water feature theme continues with a large bronze fountain piece by John Dowie currently in the lab for investigation and treatment. Meanwhile, the team continues to assist various institutions with collection care, advice and maintenance for various outdoor works and is about to undertake and manage the dismantling and moving of several fountains and sculptures for Adelaide City Council, in preparation for the redevelopment of the Adelaide Oval.

The Objects team have been busy packing up the Donald Bradman collection. These items have been on display at the South Australian Cricket Association and have been returned to the State Library of South Australia for the duration of the SACA redevelopment. They have also been continuing to hunt 'woolly bear' (carpet beetle larvae) in the entomology collection at the South Australian Museum. They are delighted with the South Australian Government's pledge of \$2.7m towards protecting this important collection by installing new, sealed cabinetry. **Justin Gare** has also undertaken some major repairs to the tail of a life-sized Coade-stone lion, while **Sophie Parker** has uncovered some very interesting past repairs on a large ceramic vase. Bands of lead were used to strap together two broken handles, although unfortunately the soldering has removed much of the original gilding around the lead.

Queensland

Queensland Museum

The Conservation Lab is taking a well earned (but short) breather after the redevelopment of the Queensland Museum exhibition spaces, which opened on the 20th January. The lead up to the opening was an extremely busy time and we had to bring in reinforcements to help process the objects for the new exhibitions.

As part of the redevelopment **Jenny Blakely**, **Elizabeth Thompson** and **Sarah Murray** condition reported and treated almost 600 objects for the Discovery Centre. One of the highlights of this new display was a grey nurse shark specimen collected in 1914. Elizabeth spent many hours carefully scraping over-paint off the shark's fins to restore it to a more realistic colouring and there was much debate about which fake eyes to use as the originals were missing. A further challenge for this

object was that the designers wanted it installed in an acrylic case above people's heads. The original taxidermy included a large eyelet at the top of the shark for it to hang from, but we could not find any information about what the eyelet attached to inside the specimen. Jenny organised to get the shark x-rayed, which was of great interest to the vets at the University of Queensland School of Veterinary Science where she took it. Inside we found a mix of wood and metal supports, as well as a few loose screws amongst the sawdust used to fill the skin!

Out of the whole team, Sarah saw the largest variety of items, working on objects ranging from dolls and toys to scary-looking medical equipment (such as a Violet Ray Obesity Roller), gramophones, old-fashioned cameras and hats. We also introduced her to Queensland cockroaches through the casings she found on some of our Indigenous shields and drums. They grow things bigger in Queensland! Sarah has now returned to Canberra to finish her studies.

We were also grateful for the help we got from **Stephanie Smith**. Stephanie studies conservation at the University of Melbourne and came home for the holidays so we put her to work. Stephanie's main task was to condition report, treat and install objects into a set of drawers for the Discovery Centre. These drawers are interacted with very enthusiastically by the public, and as such she learnt a lot about packing, supports and how to tie things down. We hope to see her again and wish her all the best for this year.

The exhibition 'Bouncing back from disaster' also opened in January as part of the redevelopment. This display highlights Queensland's response to recent flooding and cyclones, and included a section on the impact of these events on the natural environment. As a result **Cathy Collins** spent a lot of time consolidating mud onto objects. Cathy also got to work on a Walba, a traditional raft from Mornington Island, commissioned specifically for the

reopening of the Queensland Museum. One of the biggest challenges was actually getting it into the building as it was too long for the goods lift.

Helen Barnard has been busy making hundreds of cushions and supports for the Discovery Centre display. The cushion making never stops and she is now making supports for our upcoming exhibition of Egyptian artefacts. Elizabeth and Jenny have also been working on *Rock 'n' Roll George's car* and some objects belonging to the Indigenous Education Policy Unit. Rock 'n' Roll George was a local Brisbane identity who was easily recognised by the custom fit-out of his car. This work will be highlight in an upcoming publication. Jenny and **Peter Maxwell** have continued work on our WWI tank *Mephisto* that was damaged in last years floods and we are hoping it will return to a new specially designed space later in the year. **Janet Campbell** continued her work uploading old condition reports and conservation documentation into our collection management system – a task that never seems to end.

Victoria

National Gallery of Victoria

The Paintings Conservation studio has returned to three core staff. **John Payne** has completed work on the sixteenth century panel painting by Cola dell'Amatrice, *The Finding of the True Cross*, and will start work in the coming months on the Flemish triptych *The Miracles of Christ*. **Carl Willis** is in the last stages of the retouching of Poussin's *The Crossing of the Red Sea* and will take up the cleaning of the newly acquired Correggio in the following months. **Michael Varcoe-Cocks** has returned to examination and treatment work with the nineteenth century collections. **Alex Ellem** has stayed on as a part time volunteer principally to finish work on Ansdell and Creswick's *England*.

In Exhibitions and Loans conservation **Helen Casey** has been busy with outward loans including preparing a life-size 'plastic' motorbike by the artist Eamon O'Toole to go up to Ipswich Art Gallery. Helen also is currently de-installing the contemporary art exhibition by Ranjani Shettar – those 1200 beads now have to come down one by one. Helen also attended the NZCCM annual conference in November to deliver a paper on her very encouraging tests so far on the Passepartouts. **Catherine Earley** is preparing to receive 200+ pieces of contemporary jewellery in preparation for the install of the exhibition *Unexpected Pleasures*. **Janelle Borig** is just wrapping up the de-install of the 'Tjukurrjjanu: Origins of Western Desert Art' exhibition with preparation for it to travel to Paris later this year.

In Paper Conservation, **Ruth Shervington** and **Louise Wilson** are treating a variety of works from the NGV's comprehensive Asian art collection in preparation for display in the newly refurbished Asian galleries which open later this year. Treatment decisions have been informed by attendance at the Mike Wheeler Indian miniature painting workshop held at NGA in 2010 and the Water and Paper workshop held in Austin, Texas in 2009. Techniques employed have included consolidation of Indian miniatures using a nebuliser, followed by fine brush application and capillary washing of Japanese prints on a slant wash table. **Pip Morrison** has been examining and surface cleaning a group of Simone Douglas chromogenic photograms dry mounted on acrylic in preparation for the photographic exhibition 'Light Works'. **Sarah Brown**, who has been volunteering in the lab for the last 18 months, successfully completed her Masters with a case study on digital fills for a stereo transparency from the NGV collection. Since then she has been enjoying a major treatment on an early nineteenth century silver gelatin print with serious water damage.

In the Frames and Furniture Conservation studio, **Holly McGowan-**

Jackson completed a re-fit of the panel painting *The Baptism of Christ* by Palmezzano into a more appropriate Italian cassetta frame that has been in the NGV collection since the 1950s. Treatment of the frame included the replacement of large timber losses from the back edge and floral ornament at one corner. She also undertook structural and cosmetic treatment on an 18thC walnut veneered cabinet for loan. Early in 2012 **MaryJo Lelyveld** spend two weeks in Paris undertaking a practical study in the workshop of Marie Dubost, and visiting several collections and craft studios. During the workshop MaryJo developed her skills in the technique of *reparure*, the recutting of gesso layers prior to gilding. She is now transferring those skills to the replacement of losses on the Régence frame for Poussin's *Crossing the Red Sea*. **Suzi Shaw** has been working on formalising several IPM related documents along with other colleagues, a project which will continue until mid year, as well as preparing Japanese lacquered Buddhist works for temporary exhibition whilst the Asian galleries are closed for redevelopment.

We are happy to welcome **Skye Firth** to the Textiles Conservation lab two days each week. Skye will be concentrating on treatments of new acquisitions and assisting with Art Deco Fashion. 'Linda Jackson: Bush Couture' opened for Australia Day. This retrospective exhibition was conserved by **Kate Douglas** over a period of six months and is now on display at NGVA at Federation Square. The textiles conservators, **Bronwyn Cosgrove**, Kate Douglas, **Solitaire Osei** and Skye Firth are now preparing works for the redevelopment of the NGV Asian Galleries. In addition to this project, work is starting on the next Fashion & Textile exhibition 'Art Deco Fashion'. This involves several major treatments and the team will be employing FTIR analysis to determine materials present in applied decoration found on the costumes.

In December, 2011, we sadly farewelled **Noel Turner**, who has taken up a

position with the Department of Sustainability and Environment. **Sharon Grigg** and recent graduate and volunteer **Stephanie Limoges** have also completed their work with us after finishing extensive consolidation and inpainting to repair water damage to the frame for Rigaud's *Monsieur Le Bret and his son, Cardin Le Bret*. We thank them all very much for their fantastic contribution to the Frames and Furniture Conservation program. Our biggest and most joyful news is Janelle's marriage to Hakan last November, and we wish them both a very happy and long life together.

Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation, The University of Melbourne

In late 2011, the Paintings team treated a private collection of paintings damaged mainly with smoke and soot in a fire. The cleaning regime was devised using the Modular Cleaning Program developed by Chris Stavroudis. There were some issues with heat-affected varnish, as well as some heat-related damage in the form of minor blistering in the paint layer. The treatments carried out were greatly successful. The Paintings team will soon be treating two 19th century portraits, which will provide a challenge as one portrait is covered in a wide network of drying cracks. The treatment will involve varnish removal, lining and extensive inpainting to reduce the appearance of the cracks and to restore the sitter's face. **Vanessa Kowalski** and **Caroline Fry** travelled to a small town in western Victoria in late February to treat a large painted scenery backdrop from the local heritage-listed hall. This involved cleaning, repairing tears and losses and reintegration of the areas of loss. They spent three long days on their knees, with the object laid out on the floor of the hall.

Cushla Hill and paintings students **Isabelle Waters-Lynch** and **William Sit** worked in January on a project to clean 130 paintings from the Cunningham

Dax Collection. This comprised a collection of contemporary works by Isabelle Duncan, which were suffering the effects of poor storage, minor mould and insect infestation. It was great to have the support of keen students to assist on this project and for them to experience a real-life remediation project. Isabelle, William and **Peter Mitchelson**, a recent paper graduate, have been assisting the painting conservators to remove approximately four metres of degraded newsprint from the verso of an unstretched indigenous artwork. The aim was to remove as much as possible of the newsprint intact and advice from the staff paper conservators was invaluable.

Both the Paintings and Paper sections are continuing to work on Heide Museum of Modern Art objects in preparation for 2012 exhibitions. In addition, the Paper team (**Belinda Gourley**, **Katy Glen**, **Marika Kocsis** and **Libby Melzer**) has been focused on the treatment of a selection of high value prints from the Print Collection at the University's Baillieu Library. This has involved dealing with the complex issues of previous repairs and the ubiquitous University Library ink stamp on the verso of most prints. The treatment of the second batch of fire-damaged material from a herbarium collection was also carried out in January. The first batch was treated a few years ago and the techniques developed then were utilised again for this stage of the project. **Nick Selenitsch** is focused on preparation of Public Record Office material for the exhibition 'Gold and Governors: 150 Years of the Old Treasury Building' opening in April at the Old Treasury Building.

The Objects team of **Carmela Lonetti** and **Reyhane Mirabootalebi** has recently relocated from the campus labs to join the rest of the commercial services team at North Melbourne. They are working on a range of objects from wood to textiles. Late last year Carmela worked jointly with private conservator, Paul Hunt, and a stone mason on a stone war memorial for a local council. As well as treatment of

the stone, re-gilding of missing lettering was undertaken.

The Academic team at CCMC is now in full swing with the start of Semester 1. **Petronella Nel** conducted the Chemistry bridging course for new students, prior to the start of semester. This year is seeing the move to a block teaching format where subjects are delivered in blocks rather than across the whole semester. **Sophie Lewincamp** has been coordinating a number of projects during the teaching break. Work has continued on the flood damaged Warmun Art Collection with assistance from the paintings team, **Jennifer O'Connell** and Reyhane. Sophie has also coordinated the RSL student project in Sydney. See the report elsewhere in this issue.

Congratulations to **Catherine Nunn** and husband Andrew, who welcomed baby Isobel, born on the 16th February. Paper conservator, **Briony Pemberton** has returned from maternity leave. **Albertine Hamilton** has taken up a twelve-month paper conservation internship position with CCMC, funded by the Miegunyah Fund of the University of Melbourne. Alby recently completed the treatment and mounting of a large parchment with **Jordi Casasayas**. Libby Melzer is continuing with her Masters research, *The Parchment of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in Australian Collections*, which is part of an ARC Linkage Project between the University of Melbourne and the State Library of Victoria.

Museum Victoria

We're very pleased to announce some recent appointments in the conservation team. **Karina Palmer**, who has been at MV since 2006 as an Objects Conservator, was appointed Senior Conservator, Collection Presentation in November 2011. **Sarah Babister** was appointed Objects Conservator in March and **Karen Fisher** re-joins the team in two part time roles, Conservation Assistant and contract Objects Conservator. We will

also welcome **Felicity Corkill** to the team in April as a contract Paper, Book and Images Conservator working on the Scientific Illustrations exhibition. Congratulations and welcome to them all!

Karina Palmer is working with Museum Victoria Facilities Management on developing new processes to reduce HVAC energy consumption while maintaining best possible preservation environments.

Sam Hamilton has recently been involved in the new acquisition of *Boorun's Canoe* for the Bunjilaka redevelopment project. The canoe was made in late 2010 in Bruthen (East Gippsland, Victoria) by artist Steaphan Paton, his grandfather Uncle Albert Mullett and Steaphan's brothers and cousins. The aim of making the canoe was to teach and reconnect the younger generation with traditional Indigenous construction methods and ways. The canoe was displayed at the Krowathunkoolong Keeping Place in Bairnsdale until 3 Feb 2012 when the community and museum staff took the canoe (secured in a stillage, strapped onto the roof of a 4 wheel drive) to Cherry Tree Creek at Lake Tyers to float the canoe. Additional making processes were carried out to prepare for the floating and these activities were recorded in detail by Sam. It was an amazing opportunity to document the specific materials and techniques used to create the canoe pre and post floating and also a unique experience to see an object in use. The canoe is now located at the Moreland Annexe where it will be closely monitored until it is dry. It is planned for temporary open display during NAIDOC week in July 2012 and then on long term display in the Bunjilaka redevelopment from June 2013.

The rest of the team continues work on a variety of projects including the Collection Risk Analysis Methodology project, *Wonders of Ancient Mesopotamia* and *Wallace and Gromit's World of Invention* exhibitions.

ACT

National Archives of Australia – National Office (Canberra)

Our main activity recently has been the analysis of a number of significant collection items using the micro fading technique, carried out by Bruce Ford from the National Museum of Australia. A representative sample of 20 items from the Federal Capital Design Competition (including the famous and much-loved Marion Mahony Griffin renderings of Walter Burley Griffin's designs) and associated works, the Proclamation of Sovereignty Rights over Antarctic Territory made by Sir Douglas Mawson, and a range of inks and stamps were analysed for their tendency to fade. The result will provide useful in determining future display parameters. As a result of this testing, we hosted a visit by the Archives' new Director General, David Fricker, and crews from the Canberra Times and WIN television. All items relating to the Federal Capital Design were condition checked by the Conservation team, and high resolution digital images were made. The related frames also underwent a maintenance check and clean.

Cheryl Jackson and **Prue McKay** are tutoring University of Canberra conservation student, Kerry Yates, who has begun her internship in the lab this month, focusing on photograph conservation. Cheryl also delivered a public *Fade to Grey* seminar in January, about the preservation of digital prints.

Since the last newsletter, **Sally Kneebone** has installed and de-installed many Archives items for our exhibition 'Traversing Antarctica – the Australian Experience', and was ably assisted in object preparation by the rest of the Conservation team. The first venue was the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, and the exhibition will open at the Archives in Canberra later in the year.

Travis Taylor supervised the movement of furniture, believed to have been used by Edmund Barton, from the Archives Director General's office in Parkes (that's Parkes in Canberra, not Parkes New South Wales!) to our Greenway repository. Travis also took over the supervision of the Conservation Lab while **Tania Riviere** was on leave over the Christmas period.

Tasmania

Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office

A private collector has donated about 65 paintings to the Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts of works by the 'Sunday Painters', a group of artists (Roy Cox, Max Angus, Elspeth Vaughan and Harrie Buckey) working together to produce mainly Tasmanian landscapes. The works were made between about 1945 and 1977, and are mostly watercolours on paper. **Stephanie McDonald** and Caitlin Sutton (Archivist) collected the paintings and will soon begin treatment and exhibition plans.

Stephanie has prepared the loan of an 1848 painting by William Duke of a whale being 'cut-in' on a whaling ship, which will be going into the exhibition 'Fish in Australian Art' at the Australian National Maritime Museum. She has also been repairing glass plate slides as part of a digitising and rehousing program she is managing for a collection of over 2000 glass plates. A volunteer is also rehousing other collections of glass plates from the Archives Office of Tasmania's collection.

Stephanie also attended the workshop 'The use of bleaching techniques in paper conservation' at the Art Gallery of NSW, presented by Renate Mesmer and Julie Biggs. The workshop was extremely valuable, bringing the information available on paper bleaching techniques up to date and taking some of the fear out of the use of bleaching.

Mould Working Group

New Convenor

The Mould Working Group put a submission to National Council at last year's AGM – which you may have read in the last Newsletter. Basically we have progressed along some paths of investigation, but still have some areas that require more exploration.

The most important news this month is that **Sue Gatenby** will be taking on the role of convenor while Elizabeth Hadlow is on maternity leave. Sue's experience and enthusiasm will be great assets to the Group and it will no doubt go ahead in leaps and bounds over the coming months.

Elizabeth would like to formally express her thanks to Sue for taking on the role and keeping the Group running. She would also like to thank the Group members for their time and enthusiasm over the last 12-18 months.

Sue's email address is sueg@phm.gov.au if you would like to contribute.

Trawling the Internet

WWW

Welcome to a new section of the Newsletter where we let you know about useful sites on the Internet.

We have a number of sites to let you know about:

1. Paper through time (<http://paper.lib.uiowa.edu/>)

Reports the results of a study carried out by the University of Iowa Center for the Book. The study, carried out by a group led by Tim Barrett, analysed 1,578 papers dated between the fourteenth and the nineteenth centuries using only non-destructive techniques.

2. Parks Library Preservation (<http://parkslibrarypreservation.wordpress.com/>)

A Blog set up by Library & Archives Preservation at Iowa State University Library. Topics include supplier and product information and tips and suggestions for disaster mitigation.

3. The Conservation and Art Materials Encyclopedia Online (CAMEO)

Sponsored by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Cameo is an electronic database of terms, materials, and techniques used in the fields of art conservation and historic preservation. It currently contains information on over 10,000 materials.

This will be a regular segment in future newsletters. If anybody knows of sites that may be interesting to the membership please let us know.

Conservation notes

Scrimshaw – Personalising your Bone Folder

Paper conservators will all have a bone folder in their toolkit – a tool with a myriad of uses. At the National Archives Laboratory we have found a way of making your bone folder more striking and more personal – using the historical art of Scrimshaw. Donna, a scrimshaw artist in the USA, has a stock of bone folders and will personalise one for you for a very reasonable fee. The artwork can be chosen from a range of traditional themes – sailing ships, whales, mermaids – or you can suggest your own. She can also scrimshaw your name on the folder – so no one will dare steal it. Donna trades through eBay under the name *Art in Ivory* (<http://myworld.ebay.com.au/artinivory/>).

Ian Batterham

Book Review

Buddha's Brush, Buddha's Paste – How the vision of Buddha Amitābha's Pure Land was brought to life again

by Natalie Kleber

In April 2004, German restorer Hai-Yen Hua-Stroefel received at her workshop a large Buddhist painting on silk, enclosed in a gigantic glass frame. Ms Hua had no idea that her work on this rare 14th century Japanese Taima-Mandala (a visual translation of Buddha Amitābha's Contemplation Sūtra) would evolve into her largest, most demanding and most interesting project. This once-in-a-lifetime experience would take her on a long voyage of discovery, extending beyond the conventional confines of restoration practice, tracing back major historic events and unfolding the spiritual insights and secrets at the back of it. "Just as a cocoon slowly unravels when the silken thread is pulled, the picture's design, its painting techniques and its historical and spiritual background yielded up their secrets as the work proceeded," Ms Hua reminisces.

The Mandala was in a very fragile condition. Due to inappropriate mounting and framing, the silk painting had been exposed to air circulation at the back, and had lost much of its original colour pigment. It also showed countless stains and tears, and was in danger of falling apart at the slightest movement.

New processes were trialled, suitable materials sought out, appropriate tools and special equipment designed and built. The restoration work, which took one year, involved both modern and traditional restoration techniques, and European as well as far eastern working methods.

A multifunctional trough was constructed for wet cleaning. Additionally, a so-called "sandwich" technique was invented for protection. The refinement of wheat paste as a major adhesive substance was undertaken in numerous steps, involving special apparatus and tools. The actual mending of the picture was facilitated through a construction called a "light tube", which enabled the restorer to reach every section of the large painting and to detect defects easily. Afterwards new "life layers" were applied for stabilization, following a predetermined pattern to avoid tension.

One of the most innovative features was undoubtedly the use of silk glue in restoration in order to secure the front of the picture. After many experiments, silk glue, also called "sericin", had turned out to be the most appropriate adhesive to match the silk painting. It is thought that this is the first time in history that silk glue has been utilised in a restoration process. After many months of intense work, the formerly damaged and fragile picture was set into a new frame and finally shone in all its original glory.

Having developed a strong connection to the artwork, Ms Hua decided to set out on her own journey of investigation to learn more about the cultural and spiritual background of this magnificent work of art. Her search led her to the origins of Buddhist philosophy in Ancient India. It was in the northern



Hai-Yen Hua-Stroefel

region of India that the groundbreaking Sūtras of Buddha Amitābha had been formulated. Early in their history they were translated into Chinese, and the first illustrations, on the walls of caves, were created of Buddha Amitābha's Pure Land, which is at the centre of the Contemplation Sūtra. More complex versions later appeared as paintings on textiles. Around 550 CE, Buddhism made its way from China via Korea to Japan, bringing with it many Chinese religious artefacts and cultural goods, and in the 8th century, a painting of the Contemplation Sūtra was created in the Taima-Temple near Nara, Japan, now considered to be one of its most perfect pictorial representations.

Ms Hua's attention was then drawn to the painting's actual content and its message. Bit by bit, the medieval painting yielded up its secrets. "The Sūtra is presented as a huge historical theatre play, leaving the spectator to follow the single scenes on three different stages, ultimately culminating in the central finale," she comments. On the first stage, the drama of an Indian royal family can be witnessed, narrating worldly themes of betrayal, temptation, compassion, life and death. On the second stage, a path to wisdom is delineated, providing profound solutions for worldly hardships. On the

last two stages, the secret of the Pure Land is revealed, and the aspirants are welcomed by Buddha Amitābha.

All of these findings have recently been documented in her book titled "Buddha's Brush, Buddha's Paste", which is furnished with 363 colour illustrations. The bilingual book (English/German) represents the author's untiring commitment to capturing and comprehending all the aspects of the artwork and to portraying the vision of the Pure Land, starting with the physical aspect of the restoration process in order to arrive finally at the spiritual concepts that underpinned the painter's artistic vision.

Hai-Yen Hua-Stroefer was born in Taipei, Taiwan. She studied the history of art, German language and literature, and graphic design in Taiwan, in the US and in Switzerland. Her education has taken her to the Bavarian State Library in Munich, the Austrian National Library in Vienna, the Palace Museum in Taipei, and the Abegg Foundation in Riggisberg/Switzerland. She has been involved in restoration of art on paper and textiles for thirty years.

Buddha's Brush, Buddha's Paste is published by the University of Hawaii Press

Submissions for the newsletter

We welcome your contributions to the newsletter, as well as any comments you may have. Deadlines for submissions are: **25 February, 25 April, 25 June, 25 August and 25 October.**

Please send your submissions to newsletter@aiccm.org.au All submissions will be acknowledged by email. If you haven't heard from us, we haven't heard from you!

We encourage the use of images wherever possible. Please send separate to your text in either .jpeg or .tiff files.

All text should be sent in .doc or .docx file, in 12pt Times New Roman font, with no editing. Names in the text should be in **bold** the first time used, then in normal font afterwards.

Thank you

Advertising is accepted.

Positions vacant

1/2 page*	\$110 inc. GST
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Commercial

1/2 page*	\$220 inc. GST
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Advertisers must supply their own inserts.

Classifieds

\$0.88 per word including GST.

* 1/2 page: 190mm (w) x 125mm (h) landscape

Full page: 210x297mm portrait, with 3mm bleed all around

Notices pertaining to AICCM activities are free of charge.

Advertising for inclusion in body of Newsletter accepted until the 1st day of the month in which the Newsletter is due. Early booking preferable.

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List of SIG Convenors

As all SIG convenor positions are open for election every two years, over the past 6 months there has been numerous elections and nominations with the following results.

SIG	Contact	Election
Antarctic Heritage	Julian Bickersteth	SIG cancelled 2011
Book & Paper	Kim Barrett	Elected 2010
Conservation Framers	June Andersen	Election 2011
Conservation Science	Deborah Lau	Re -Elected 2011
Education	Eric Archer	SIG Cancelled
Exhibitions	Catherine Earley	Re -Elected 2011
Gilded Objects	MaryJo Lelyveld	Re -Elected 2011
Objects	Helen Privett	Re -Elected 2011
Paintings	Andrew Durham	Elected 2011
Photon	Stephanie Bailey	Elected 2011
Preventive Cons.	Sarah-Jane Rennie	Elected 2011
Private Practice	Kay Soderlund	SIG cancelled 2011
Textiles	Jessie Firth	Re- elected 2011
Digital & Audio-visual Heritage	Peter Shaw	Established 2011

The SIG convenors listed here are congratulated on their commitment to the ongoing activity of their group. As a member of several SIGs I look forward to all the upcoming events in 2012 and encourage all forms of activity that will enrich our membership of AICCM.

It was decided this year that 3 SIGs (Antarctic Heritage, Education, Private Practice) were to be dissolved due to various reasons.

A new SIG has also been formed by Peter Shaw regarding the Digital & Audio-Visual Heritage. Please contact Peter to be a part of this SIG.

Tegan Anthes
SIG Coordinator

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