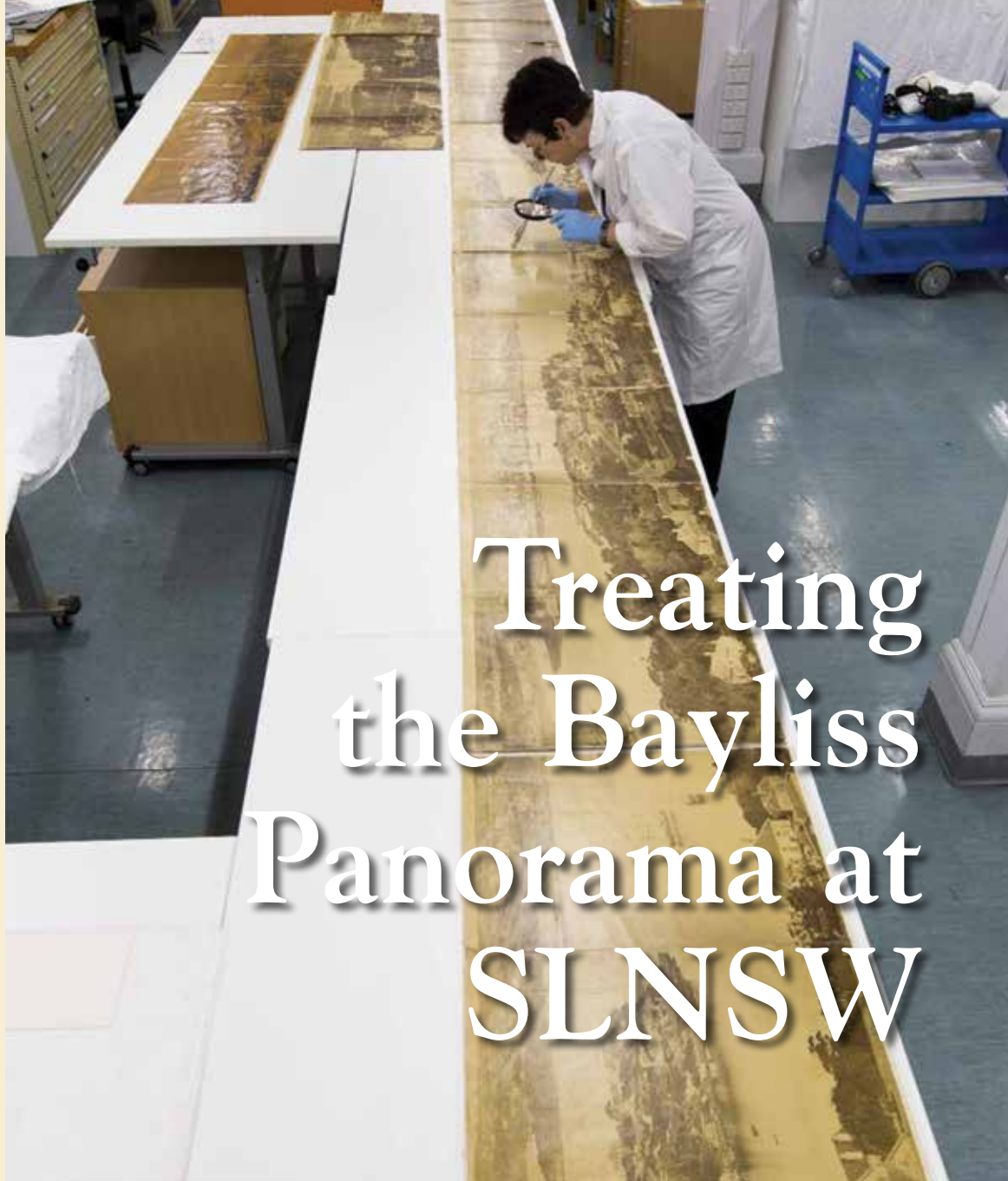


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Treating the Bayliss Panorama at SLNSW



Vale Bob Morrison



News from Hong Kong



Jasper Coleman in Darwin

Message from the Editors

The Newsletter is going electronic!

Commencing with issue 3 for 2015 (November) The AICCM will no longer be providing a hard-copy newsletter to members. In its place we will introduce an e-newsletter, which will serve the same function, and will also open new and exciting possibilities.

National Council have agonised over this over a number of years and have reached the decision reluctantly; many of us are extremely fond of the Newsletter in its hard copy form. However, we are increasingly living in a digital age and we feel that a digital form for the newsletter is the way forward. There are also financial reasons for the decision: the hard copy newsletter is an expensive thing to maintain and we feel

this money could be better used to serve the membership.

Furthermore, we have our own website which has the functionality to accommodate an e-newsletter and do things not currently possible in the print realm, such as incorporate high quality colour images, respond rapidly to changing circumstances, include content such as videos and interactives, and include links to information outside the organisation. Basically all the sort of functionality you could expect in the online world. The change will also make searching for information in past newsletters much easier.

All current newsletter content will remain and we will collect content in exactly the same way. This will be located on the website and an

e-newsletter will go out to members which will have basic text and hotlinks to each item. The content will also be archived electronically.

And finally, as we move forward, we would like to extend profound thanks to the company who have diligently designed, compiled, typeset, printed and mailed out the hard-copy newsletter over the last 10 years. They are ecoDesign ecoPrint helmed by Anna Marsland. Anna and her team have consistently produced a high quality professional looking newsletter, with a minimum of fuss and a lot of good grace; always happy to 'hold the presses' if we needed to make a last minute change. Thank you Anna! We are indebted to you and very sorry to have to move on.

The Editors



STERILISATION AS A CONSERVATION TOOL

Around the world, museums, universities, galleries and libraries are increasingly using industrial sterilisation techniques, such as irradiation, to strengthen their protections against mould, pest infestations and bacteria.

Irradiation is widely used in the medical, pharmaceutical and agricultural industries and is at the front line of Australia's quarantine system. It is a physical means of sterilisation whereby products are exposed to gamma rays. These rays act as a source of ionising energy that eliminates bacteria, pests and other pathogens, while having minimal impact on the treated item.

STERITECH

Steritech is a proud Australian family owned company and the leading contract sterilisation processor in the Asia-Pacific region. For more than 40 years, Steritech has been helping eliminate pests and disease, in order to make products safer for consumers and to protect the environment.

With plants in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane offering gamma irradiation, ethylene oxide and heat treatments, Steritech is the only contract sterilisation company in Australia.

Steritech is licensed and accredited by a number of Government authorities, including the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service, Therapeutic Goods Administration, Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority and the relevant State Environmental Protection Agencies.

BENEFITS OF IRRADIATION

Steritech has worked with a number of major Australian universities and State libraries to help manage pest and mould problems in archived materials.

The benefits of irradiation for professional conservators are:

- It is effective against mould and bacteria and depending on the dose will eliminate a broad spectrum of insect pests at all stages of development, including moths, booklice and silverfish.
- The gamma rays penetrate packaging and as such are the only sure way to obtain total penetration of archived materials.
- The process is chemical free and leaves no residues.
- It does not involve heating or cooling the treated products and does not expose the products to water.
- The process is relatively quick and simple and can be applied to archived materials in bulk.
- It is a recognised quarantine measure for goods travelling interstate or overseas.

Steritech is a member of the Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss opportunities to help Australian conservators protect their materials.

For more information, contact Raymond Bryden in Melbourne on 03 8726 5514, Jamie Crighton in Sydney on 02 8785 4403 or Glenn Robertson in Brisbane on 07 3293 1566, or visit www.steritech.com.au.



President's Report

It was Alfred Korzybski, founder of the discipline of semantics who noted that *"a map is not the territory it represents, but if correct, it has a similar structure to the territory, which accounts for its usefulness"*, in effect, our perception of reality is not reality itself but our own version of it, our own 'map'. These maps are created over time through the gathering of data, both formal and informal and through a range of sense and emotions that form our values, beliefs.

As President of the AICCM, the AICCM Constitution forms my conservation map, the map that we as a community of professionals have agreed to share and work from. However my reading of the map and its supporting documents (including the AICCM Code of Ethics), is influenced by the education I have received through the University of Canberra course (as it was taught at the close of last century!) and my work experiences as a paintings and frames and furniture conservator, working in both institutions and in larger private practice studios over the last fifteen years. It is my particular experience and knowledge that means I might focus on, or have a better understanding of some areas over others. It also means that I can be oblivious to, and incorrect or ambivalent about others still.

Thankfully, the AICCM comprises members and colleagues that although have very different filters through which they interpret the Constitution and the work of conservators generally, are willing to engage with the process of making and navigating a better conservation 'map' through their collective understanding and experience (rather than insulating themselves in the wilderness making do, Bear Grylls style). It is through their diverse experiences across a range of materials, professional settings (commercial, educational, institutional) and cultural contexts that AICCM members acknowledge, define and steer their way through a changing cultural heritage

landscape. It is by communicating these experiences with one another and cross-referencing experience with the 'known world' map of our Constitution and Code of Ethics that we re-confirm or revise what it is we know of cultural materials conservation.

This is why the theme of the 2015 AICCM National Conference *'Illuminating the New: Contemporary practice and issues in materials conservation'* is a critical one for the profession to address. It is aimed not only at exploring those areas at the edges of the conservation map (for example, the technically diverse and ethically confounding areas of Contemporary Media) but reinterpreting its existing features in new or more subtle ways (for example, just how precise and targeted can our cleaning procedures become with developing nano-technologies?). It is about exploring new or unfamiliar techniques, materials, methodologies and interpretations of practise and theory. The 3-day National Conference is to be held in Hobart Wednesday 4th – Friday 6th November with Conference Registration opening in August and I am very much looking forward to reassessing the 'lay of the land' with members and other interested parties.

AICCM Publications

On more practical matters, since the February edition of the Newsletter, National Council has been focused on planning and implementing the promised shift of the AICCM Newsletter to an e-news format. This June edition will mark both the final edition of the Newsletter as a distinct printable PDF. However its contents will concurrently be integrated into the website – a precursor to its future e-news format. So please take this opportunity to visit the AICCM website in the coming weeks to get a feel for the new format and if you haven't been there for a few months, you might just be as surprised as to how much things have

changed, like one member who recently e-mailed me with *"wow the AICCM site looks great!"*.

Similarly, The Bulletin has a whole new look with Edition 36.1 now available on-line through Maney Publishing and a hard copy currently on its way to all AICCM members. A reminder that AICCM members who access The Bulletin via the Maney Publishing website are also able to view other publications in the Maney stable including Studies in Conservation and Journal of the American Institute for Conservation.

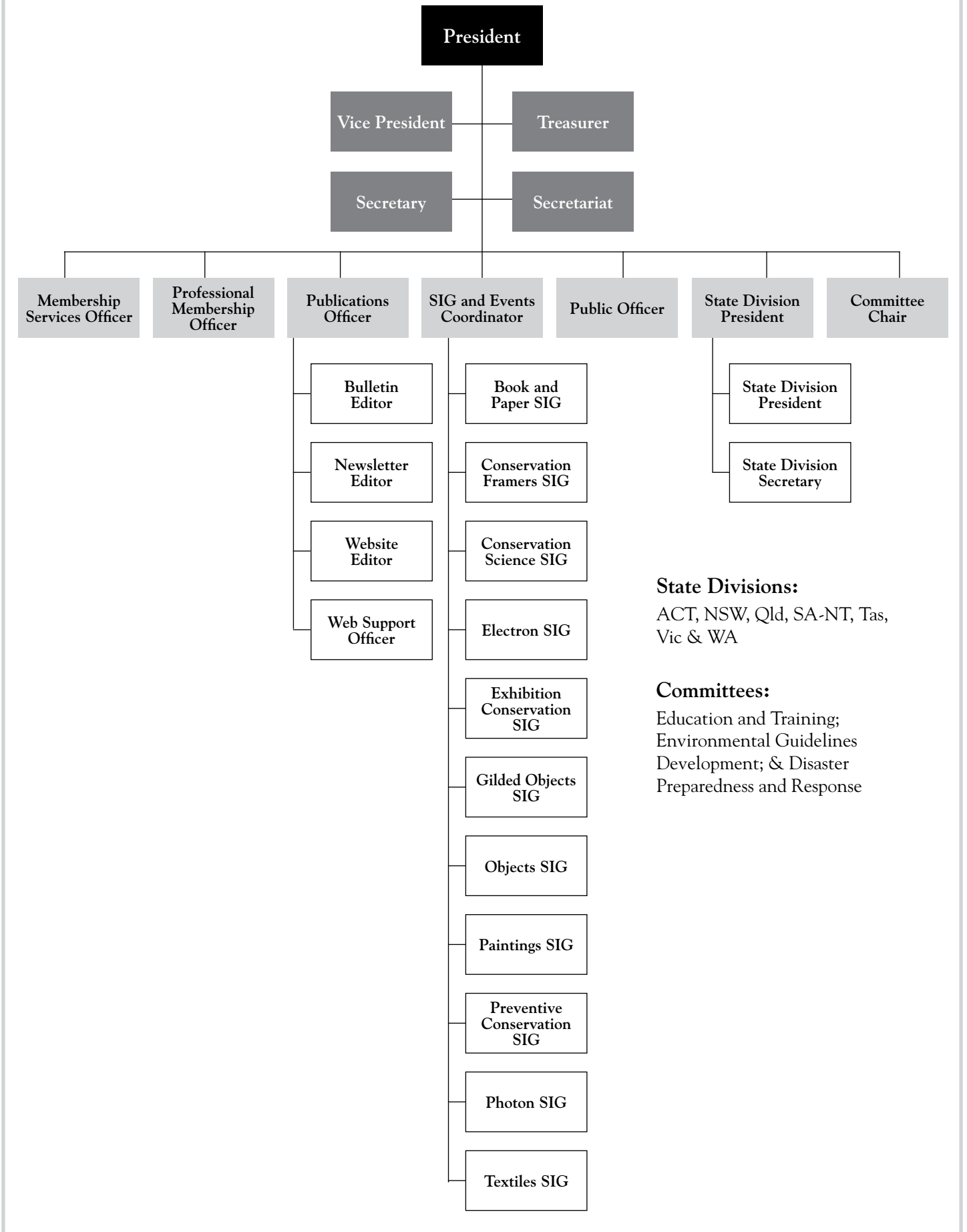


Committees, Working Groups and Taskforces

Over the years the AICCM had formed a number of groups who supported National Council through their focused work on particular issues and projects within the organisation. These included the Mould Remediation Working Group, Environmental Guidelines Taskforce and Education Standing Committee. To streamline these groups, Council have rolled several similarly-oriented groups and projects under over-arching Committees and have recently, or will be reviewing the Terms of Reference for these groups. The revised structure of these groups is now represented in the following Organisational Structure of the AICCM with incumbents in Office Bearer roles listed on the following table. More information about the activities of these groups can be found on the AICCM website.

MaryJo Lelyveld
AICCM President

Organisation Structure



State Divisions:

ACT, NSW, Qld, SA-NT, Tas, Vic & WA

Committees:

Education and Training; Environmental Guidelines Development; & Disaster Preparedness and Response

Vale Bob Morrison

Robert C. (Bob) Morrison sadly passed away early on April 25th, 2015 aged 71.

Bob was awarded his Masters of Science in organic chemistry from the Lowell Technical Institute, Lowell, Massachusetts. He worked in research and development at the Denison Paper Company and then as a chemist at the Carter's Ink Company, both in Massachusetts.

His career then took him to the New England Document Conservation Centre (NEDCC) in Andover, Massachusetts, where he was Director of Education and where he met his life partner Patricia. At NEDCC Bob was responsible for writing technical material pertaining to the preservation and conservation of books and works of art on paper and delivering this to NEDCC staff.

While at NEDCC, Bob heard about the new conservation course being started at the then College of Advanced Education. Always fascinated with Australia, he saw this as a great opportunity to experience it first-hand and applied for the position of lecturer in paper conservation. In early 1978 Bob and Patricia moved to Australia to take up an initial three-year contract. Bob stayed at CCAE/UC until 2003 where he taught, mentored and inspired two generations of Australian paper conservators.



Bob with a student at CCAE

To his students and later at the National Film and Sound Archive, Bob was without fail seen as a teacher, a leader and a wise voice. He was an inspiring and challenging teacher who demanded a high standard of his students but gave back as much as he was given. His lectures were very colourful, laced with generously shared interesting sidelights and histories of words, anecdotes from his time as an ink chemist, at the NEDC and of course his experience at Woodstock. His prac classes were punctuated by his experiences that generally started with 'when I was at Carter's Ink Company...' and dire warnings such as 'if you (insert some wrong doing) you're out of the program!' With Bob there was no such thing as a 'stupid' question. He helped his students to open up and to learn.

Memories of him setting his students the task of conserving a record sleeve from his collection and rehousing the vinyl in acid-free library board are still very clear, along with the satisfaction felt when the vinyl slid in and out of the cover perfectly at the end of the ordeal. His essay and report feedback was often almost as detailed as the reports themselves. His gleefully distributed mock artefacts challenged students but developed treasured hand skills. The knowledge and skill he fostered is regularly passed on today as his students teach new emerging conservators.

Bob loved his music, and he accumulated an expansive vinyl and cd collection covering everything from soul, rock, modern jazz, hip-hop and world music. He was particularly fond of rhythm and blues and hosted the Blues Show and Bagariddim, weekly music programs on Community Radio 2XX.

This love of music led him to work in a job he referred to as 'a labour of love' at the NFSA. He created a record label database that is still in daily use and has

grown to 5,494 records referencing over 193,000 items. Cataloguing discs was Bob's main day-to-day task at NFSA and he created over 20,000 records in his time here. At the NFSA he inspired many colleagues and entertained them through the rich conversations he specialised in. He did a lot to introduce the NFSA to the Internet sending around the 'Internet Tour Bus' on email to all staff.

Bob is remembered for his great sense of humour and laugh. He was always amused at some snippet of news evidencing extraordinary human error or lack of judgement responding 'Yeah! I know it!' and 'That's just stupid!'. Long after graduation we would know Bob was nearby when the scent of patchouli oil would waft past. And there he would be, in his paisley shirt, a little shy but still larger than life. Nearing Christmas, his white beard and booming laugh ensured he was all but mugged in shopping malls by small children mistaking him for Santa. He was always up for the challenge of who could wear the most colourful socks on any given day.

Shortly after his retirement, Bob was diagnosed with Multiple System Atrophy (MSA), a debilitating and incurable neurodegenerative disorder that eventually took his life. His brain has been donated to the University of Sydney for medical research in the hope of shedding greater insight into the causes of MSA.

Bob is sadly missed by Patricia, his CCAE/UC colleagues and students, and his colleagues at NFSA.



Bob in more recent times

Conference Review

ICON Ceramics and Glass Group Conference in Worcester

On a recent visit to the UK, I attended the ICON Ceramics and Glass Group Conference in Worcester. Day 1 was in a particularly appropriate location – the Museum of Royal Worcester, in the former Royal Worcester factory. This day had a particularly porcelain aspect, from demonstrations of fine slip casting and decorating by Worcester craftsmen, a tour of the Museum by ceramics expert Henry Sandon (who received a rock-star reception from the delegates) to the refreshments served on Royal Worcester porcelain.

Field trips comprised a private tour of Worcester Cathedral and a visit to Great Malvern Priory. Both are great examples of continual changes in use of ancient buildings and fabric with significant mediaeval features and the almost inevitable Victorian restorations. The lively Conference Dinner allowed for plenty of discussion and not a few social media updates.

The second day had presentations on a wide range of topics including the conservation and display of an enormous table fountain, dissolving animal glues with enzyme solutions and how to replace the missing head of replica Terracotta Warrior. Presenters came from different career stages and the interest in the variety of topics was obvious. One of the outstanding aspects of this conference was the collegiate atmosphere and friendly interaction between conservators working in institutions, those in private practice and as students.

Alayne Alvis, Conservator Sydney University Museums

Conference Announcement

BigStuff 2015 – Technical heritage: preserving authenticity – enabling identity?

Big Stuff is an international meeting focused on the challenges and requirements for conserving the large industrial structures and technical objects that form such an important part of our modern heritage. The conference features two days of talks and discussions about the preservation of industrial sites, oversized objects, machinery, and working technology in the context of their significance and interpretation. The meeting aims to bring together conservation professionals, curators, and those working in or interested in the heritage field, to share experiences and ideas and encourage a consistent approach to preserving technological heritage.

Speakers from Europe, UK, USA, Japan, China, Australia and Malaysia will talk on topics including corrosion protection for large equipment, preservation of concrete structures, the challenges of operating heritage machinery and of preserving layers of service history on technological objects. Objects discussed will include a 14 tonne seismograph, a portable radar (bring your own trainwagon!), radio and telephone equipment, transport items and infrastructure, a hammer forge, space age rocket engines and many more. Other issues covered will include strategies and case studies for heritage, community and industry groups working together to preserve historic technology and associated intangible heritage, and the preservation of technology heritage in situ within industrial and urban contexts.

BigStuff 2015 will be held at the mining museum Centre Historique Minier (CHM) in Lewarde/France from 3rd to 4th September 2015. There is also day trip around the mining areas of North France on 5th September. Please view the conference homepage for further information: www.bergbaumuseum.de/bigstuff2015

Would you like to bring a poster?

While the program for oral presentations is full, participants can still register to show posters during lunch and tea sessions. This is an opportunity to showcase projects more informally, and is a particularly good opportunity for students and community groups to provide snapshots of their work. If you would like to show a poster please contact scientific committee representative Alison Wain with a short abstract or outline (alison.wain58@gmail.com).

News from Hong Kong

The AICCM has many members outside the shores of Australia. The editors have undertaken to reach out to these members to find out a bit more about their work, their challenges and their needs. We have initially looked to our near neighbours to the north as we feel members may not know much about what is happening in these countries. The first response comes from the Conservation Office in Hong Kong who want to tell us about their use of public programmes as leverage to build up an audience for conservation.

Enhancing Conservation Experience and Sustaining Conservation Endeavors – using public programmes as leverage to build up an audience for conservation

Gone were the days when conservators were confined to focus on the needs of artefacts behind the stage and shielded from the media and public attention. Stepping into the second decade of the 21st Century, by which conservation has taken on a far more complex landscape, the need for conservators to expand their role in communicating their work with the public has become more eminent. In line with the development of the society in the new era, conservators are now expected not only to perform their traditional roles with updated professional skills, but also fulfill a broader social mission to promote conservation awareness in addition to sharpening their identities in sustainable ways for the benefit of protecting and preserving the local cultural heritage for the future generations.

With some 30 conservators engaged by the Government to take care of all collection items pertaining to 19 public museum venues and archives in Hong Kong, there exists an apparent deficiency in manpower resources to cope with the conservation demand arising from the ever-growing collections. If we rely just on the Government or the museums to take up the responsibility of conservation, the unique and characteristic wealth of cultural legacy in Hong Kong may not be able to survive for the next generation. As the situation stands, conservation of Hong Kong's cultural heritage should not simply rest upon museum conservation professionals, but by all in the community, who if made more aware on related conservation issues, would be able to contribute

actively and substantially. In fact, tapping resources from the community to help protecting and safeguarding the local heritage is not only a global trend, but also a practical approach to spread the message of conservation across. As evidenced by many examples worldwide over the years, it has been proven that conservation of the local cultural heritage is a holistic activity which can only fully succeed with community participation. On the other hand, without public cooperation, cultural heritage (in particular those that cannot be collected by museums or the government) will stand a lower chance of survival.

With our vision and mission to accomplish, the Conservation Office (which operates under the Hong Kong SAR Government) understands that raising conservation awareness in the community is of paramount importance as part of our social responsibilities. However, the challenge lies with the sustainability considerations that we have to integrate into the strategic plans for unlocking the potential of this unique yet rich manpower resource in the community for the future development of the profession. While educational programmes have long been recognized as one of the most flexible and effective ways to extend access and act as instruments of change in peoples' attitudes, to evoke feelings, to convey significant ideas directly and engage the community, the Conservation Office launches a series of conservation educational activities with a goal to directly engage, educate and promote conservation to the public. Examples of such programmes include International

Museum Day Programmes, Conservation Volunteer Scheme, Conservation Office on Facebook, School Culture Day Programmes and the upcoming 'Conservation Clinic', and IIC 2014 Hong Kong Congress, etc. as outlined below:

International Museum Day (IMD) Programmes

To celebrate International Museum Day, we organize a series of educational workshops with themes set on conservation topics in May every year targeting at families as audience. While it has been found that enhancing meaningful interactions among family members will lead to collaborative learning among members, and that parents can be effective facilitators for their children's learning, the Conservation Office is in fact offering IMD programmes as a unique milieu for instilling conservation concept to families in an informal learning environment.



文物修復辦事處
Conservation Office

Conservation Volunteers Scheme

As part of a dynamic education programme that connects public to their local heritage and to conservation projects in their community, volunteers are recruited to participate in hands-on conservation work after getting 'apprenticed' to some experienced conservators in our office. The scheme proves to be successful as it is oversubscribed every year. Some experienced volunteers have in fact become not only our friends but also our ambassadors, helping us to spread the message of conservation further into the community.



School Culture Day Programmes

In collaboration with schools, the Conservation Office offers tailor-made, hands-on workshops to secondary school students throughout the academic year to complement their school curriculum with the concept of preservation and conservation of cultural properties. Students are offered a constructivist environment to learn, examine, expand their own understanding in conservation and to explore in ways that pique their curiosity and be encouraged to make their own experience in conservation.



Conservation Office on Facebook

Further to the launching of our website years ago, we have created a Facebook account since 2010 to encourage dialogues with the public audience besides helping to change the prevailing perception that conservation is restricted to a 'behind the stage' activity (if this is still the concept in the society). It is through this unique experience of connectivity between our Office and the public users that conservation can be seamlessly woven into the daily lives of the community, enabling unlimited transmission and dissemination of knowledge and information from the Office to the community and vice versa.

Conservation Clinic

For the first time ever, our Office will be offering free specialist consultation to the public who bring in their objects of sentimental values as one of the programmes of our upcoming 'Muse Fest HK 2015' to be held this summer. Through participating in a 30-minute 'clinical' practice on their collections under the guidance of conservators after 'consultation', the public can experience for themselves the fun and challenges of the profession.

The IIC 2014 Hong Kong Congress

It is with such aspiration and optimism that the Conservation Office was fueled to move forward and take on the challenge of staging the IIC international conference for the first time in Southeast Asia in 2014. As some 500 delegates from worldwide bid farewell to the 2014 Hong Kong Congress by the end of last September, the Conservation Office, being the organizer of the event, was heartened and relieved to see the smiling faces of the delegates, yet pleased and delighted to witness the fruitful outcome of the technical discussions, in particular the IIC/ICOM-CC joint declaration of guidelines on museum environment. As a matter of fact, the concerted effort of our staff, participants, speakers, stakeholders, sponsors, the local public, etc. throughout the planning process and the event delivery had seamlessly pushed the Conservation Office from the back of house to the front stage, making it more visible from a national

or international perspective. Apart from creating a platform for academic exchanges as well as developing conservation networking, the event has unexpectedly strengthened the professional ties between IIC and our Chinese counterparts as exemplified by the recent establishment of the IIC International Training Centre for Conservation (IIC-ITCC). In partnership with the Palace Museum in Beijing, IIC will be delivering the inaugural workshop of this path-breaking training initiative this coming autumn in Beijing.



Running these new initiatives has no doubt created additional workload to our already heavy conservation commitments, yet the outcome that we have generated after years is by far fruitful, rewarding and far-reaching. The active sharing of professional knowledge helps the community in Hong Kong understand what conservation is, and this in turn supports the Conservation Office's values and objectives of preserving the cultural heritage of Hong Kong. More importantly, broadening our communication and engagement with the public makes us more visible and accessible to the public which helps to generate a positive image on the profession as a whole and win their recognition for our endeavors. By appreciating that a great deal of hard work goes on (at the backstage of museums) with the preservation of cultural heritage upon which our cultural identity was built, we hope our audience would eventually see that conservation is in fact the responsibility of everyone in the society and they will be able to get engaged in an active two-way communication with us about the value of conservation in Hong Kong.

Alice C.H. Tsang, Casey P.C. LIU,
Conservation Office, Hong Kong

Perspectives of a Student Volunteer at the Museum

and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory

In June 2015 I was fortunate to spend some time volunteering with conservators Sandra Yee and Lisa Nolan at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT). My visit coincided with preparation for the annual National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award (NATSIAA), and I was able to gain a behind the scenes understanding of the conservator's role at the institution in the lead up to this major cultural event.



Jasper Coleman with Sandra Yee and Lisa Nolan

The NATSIAA has developed over 32 years to become a highlight on the Australian cultural calendar, as a showcase of artistic talent and developing trends in the Indigenous art world. The 2015 exhibition includes over 60 works, encompassing a range of media – paintings, paper, sculpture, ceramics and bark paintings, among others – and with the size of works ranging from small to monumental.

During this busy time, the conservation team plays a hands-on role at every stage of the exhibition development. Conservators have an acute understanding of every work in the exhibition, as they oversee handling,



Working in the art store

framing, condition reporting, cleaning and preparation of display materials. After judging, MAGNT has the opportunity to acquire works for the permanent collection, with the conservation department having a direct input into this process.

This work reflects the broad role of conservation at the museum, with staff extending their position beyond the lab to undertake work in curatorial and collections management capacities. This has been born of necessity, after an extended period of restricted government funding and the departure of staff members (with a number of positions still to be replaced). However, this has ensured that the conservation team has a holistic understanding of the museum collections – including Indigenous, Southeast Asian, Oceanic, Territory History, Visual Arts, Maritime History and Natural Sciences. As such, the conservators hold an extraordinary knowledge of objects beyond their material specialisations. A given day can see treatment of wide array of collection materials- from the restoration of boats in the maritime gallery to the consolidation of minute archaeological materials. Furthermore, conservators monitor environmental parameters, actively clean works on display and oversee Integrated Pest Management protocols.

An interesting facet of conservation practice at the MAGNT relates to the caretaking of Indigenous community collections, with a paradigm shift away from considering works as ethnographic materials towards one of community access. A number of objects are actively used for ceremonial purposes, a situation which necessarily entails a deviation from the strict environmental parameters of the museum. Conservation adapts to this by considering works within their context of use, as 'living' cultural objects.

The conservation team actively engages with current research and practice. Lisa has recently finished treatment on the museum's highly significant early Papunya paintings, in preparation for an exhibition of the collection. Created

in 1971-72, the works represent the beginnings of the Western Desert Art Movement, now considered one of the most important contemporary art movements in the world. Conservation of the works was a crucial component of exhibition development, with vital labels and documentation attached to the back of the works and adhered underneath their frames. In a number of cases, new works have been revealed painted onto the back of works, enabling them to be viewed by the public for the first time.

MAGNT has secured independent statutory authority as of July 2014, which will enable funding support from the private sector and philanthropic donations. A new board of has been founded, and the Northern Territory Government has announced an \$18.3 million redevelopment of the Chan Building in Darwin to becoming a dedicated visual arts gallery. This is an optimistic time, with MAGNT moving from strength to strength. It will be exciting to see the role conservation plays with the opening of this new exhibition space.

My experiences at MAGNT have shown me that the role of the conservator must be dynamic and adaptable. It has been fantastic to see the passion of the conservation staff, who work so effectively within an institution with relatively small staff numbers. I extend my sincere thanks to Sandra and Lisa for sharing their wealth of conservation knowledge and for being so accommodating during my stay.

Jasper Coleman, University of Melbourne



Jasper and Sandra Yee

Volunteer placement project:

an assessment of burnt *Araliaceae* specimens at the National Herbarium of Victoria, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

In January 1972, 126 sheets of foreign collected plant specimens from the Araliaceae family (largely from the genus *Schefflera*) was sent on loan from the National Herbarium of Victoria in Melbourne, to Dr. David Frodin, Keeper of the Herbarium, University of Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea. In mid-1978, the loaned Araliaceae material was seriously damaged in a fire, resulting in many of the sheets becoming severely burnt. The material includes specimens collected in Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Samoa, Timor, New Zealand and one specimen from Sydney, Australia. The 126 sheets are significant, featuring many specimens collected in the nineteenth century and sent to Ferdinand von Mueller, who established the National Herbarium of Victoria in 1853.



Schefflera aromatica, collector: Odoardo Beccari, collected in West Sumatra, photo: Jessye Wdowin-McGregor



Schefflera pueckleri, collector: anonymous, collected in Australia, photo: Jessye Wdowin-McGregor

Araliaceae specimens. A description of the damage to each sheet was recorded and the burnt material was sorted into categories according to condition (fair, poor, unacceptable). While just over a third of the sheets suffered severe scorch damage to specimen, label and mount and will require specialist conservation treatment, it was determined that the remaining sheets could be re-mounted in house or were stable enough to stay in place on their original mounts. In addition, each specimen was removed from the newspaper that contained it and placed in acid-free tissue paper between a new folded bond.

Dr. Pina Milne, Manager, Collections at the Herbarium, uncovered important additional details about the collection during the project upon contacting Dr. Frodin, who is now retired, and an Honorary Research Associate at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, United

Kingdom. Dr. Frodin noted that the fire was accidental, resulting from faulty electrical equipment or wiring within the temporary herbarium building in which the collection was housed. It is fortunate that Dr. Frodin had earlier gone through the specimens and put together his own notes, which contain details of the species, collector, geography, date and MEL number. Dr. Frodin's card notes were invaluable for the assessment, particularly where this type of information was lost or unreadable on the remains of the specimen labels.

It is hoped that the assessment will also be useful as a reference when preparing an application to secure funding for possible conservation treatment to those specimens that require it.

The project was supported by National Herbarium of Victoria, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria staff Dr. Pina Milne (Manager, Collections) and Wayne Gebert (Curation Officer).

Jessye Wdowin-McGregor, recent University of Melbourne conservation graduate

During February through to May in 2015, recent University of Melbourne conservation graduate Jessye Wdowin-McGregor conducted a detailed and comprehensive assessment of the burnt

William Robinson Research Project

A significant QUT and Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA) collaboration to research the technical art history and conservation treatment of William Robinson's paintings was begun in November 2014 with the two year appointment of paintings conservator, Sophie Theobald Clark to the project.



Goats and Chickens, William Robinson, 1980

William Robinson (b 1936) is a highly respected Australian artist whose paintings have a significant presence in all principal Australian museums and galleries, in private collections and in public collections overseas in Auckland, Vatican City and New York. The most significant collection of Robinson's work exists at QUT's William Robinson Gallery at Old Government House in Brisbane, including two Archibald Prize-winning works.

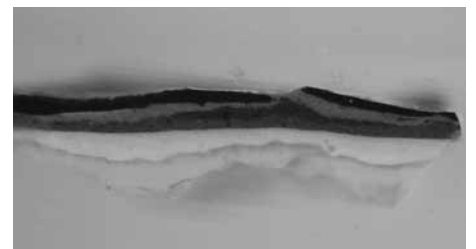
The impetus for the William Robinson Research Project began after the QUT Art Collection had been photographed and surveyed in 2013-2014 by conservator John Hook and photographer Richard Stringer. This survey was prompted by the significance of the collection and the emerging stability issues of the paintings. QUT senior curator Vanessa Van Ooyen facilitated the collaboration with QAGOMA in support of the study of Robinson's materials and techniques

and with aim to inform conservation of his work. The project is fortunate to have the generous cooperation of the artist and the facilities and expertise of the conservation department at QAGOMA, who also have significant Robinson works in their collection. Funding for the research obtained by QUT employs Sophie three days per week, QAGOMA painting conservator Gillian Osmond one day per week and John Hook in a consulting role.

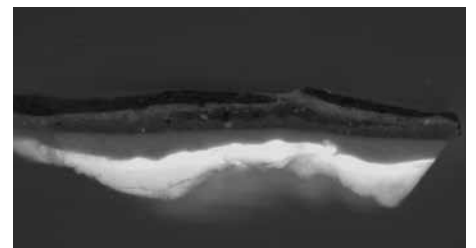
William Robinson's work spans almost six decades and has reflected his life through its different phases accordingly. The last four decades have constituted the most significant years of Robinson's work. His subjects have changed from intimate interiors to humorous farmyards to epic landscapes and have returned to interior and still life scenes in recent years. Interestingly, the techniques and materials used by the artist are also quite distinct for each corresponding period, changing from more local Australian resources to internationally sourced materials as commercial success provided a broader range of possibilities. The constant in Robinson's materials and techniques has been his conscious effort to use materials reputed to be traditional and stable.

The project will utilise several strands of investigation to establish the most thorough and sound knowledge of the artist's materials and techniques and to inform approaches for best practice in conservation. Research will draw on literature review, interviews with the artist, condition surveys, technical analysis of selected works, a conservation practice survey and treatment of key works in the QUT Art Collection. Three artist interviews have provided an initial guide to the materials and techniques of Robinson's paintings, their storage and travel history, as well as a brief survey of those

used for works on paper, bronze castings, and ceramics. Analytical techniques applied to paintings and samples to date include optical microscopy, Fourier Transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR), scanning electron microscopy with energy dispersive X-ray analysis (SEM-EDX), and FTIR imaging microscopy at the Australian Synchrotron. The combination of interviews and analysis has already established that Robinson's paintings are far more complex than the artist's recollections and intentions suggest. In turn, analysis has prompted new, informed questions that will be presented to the artist in future interviews. Interesting trends are emerging which it is hoped will assist understanding and management of specific vulnerabilities. Detailed results will be published separately.



Paint cross-section from black chicken at 10x magnification



The same cross section under UV illumination

As part of this research Sophie is interested to hear from conservators who may have encountered paintings by Robinson. A survey is planned for distribution in coming months but your contributions or questions are welcome at any time. Sophie can be contacted at sophie.theobaldclark@qagoma.qld.gov.au

**Sophie Theobald Clark & Gillian Osmond,
QAGOMA**

Division News

ACT Division

AGM

We had our AGM on 4 June. The new council comprises:

- Ian Batterham, President
- Kasi Albert, Secretary
- Jane Wild, Treasurer
- Anna Kalloudis and Danica Auld, Student Representatives
- Kate Eccles-Smith, Hakim Rahim, Nick Zihrul and Karen Wilcox, Ordinary Members

Heritage Festival event

17 April we presented an evening of talks entitled 'Conserving Canberra' as part of the Heritage Festival, 2015. The event was hosted by the Canberra Museum and Gallery and was advertised as a joint event with the AICCM. Over 40 people attended and feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

The following talks were presented:

- Ian Batterham (NAA) – The Walter Burley Griffin Canberra Designs – where Canberra began
- Nick Flood (ICS) – The AWM Dioramas. Where interpretive material becomes icon
- Kim Morris (A&A) – The Orroral Valley Homestead wallpaper conservation project. Care and conservation of heritage wallpaper in a public space
- Meg Absolom (NGA) – The history and development of the NGA sculpture garden

- Nathan Pharaoh (NMA) – Historical cars with a Canberra connection
- Jennifer Elton (Historic Places) & Jenny Gall (NFSA) – To play or not to play – Musical instruments in Historic House Museums.

NSW Division

The Division held a meeting at the State Library of NSW about the ANKAAA Harvesting Traditional Knowledge Project. This involved showing the DVD created from the two workshops, a talk by a conservator who attended one of the workshops and completion of a feedback survey requested from ANKAAA. The event was well attended with approximately 40 people attending.

In July the Division is hosting a tour of the renovated storage facilities at Sydney University.

Queensland Division

On 12 May we held a lunch time talk entitled "In Conversation: Gillian Osmond discusses her PhD journey from Art Gallery to the world of nanotechnology and back again...". The discussion was very well attended and an interesting insight into the work involved in undertaking a PhD.

Future talks will include Lucilla Ronai from SLQ doing a walk/ talk through the Distant lines exhibition at SLQ and Jen Walker giving her IIC conference paper on conserving silk and Asian Buddhist scrolls.

For the past three weeks Queensland Museum had two Uni Melbourne interns: Hanna (ethnographic) and Fiona (textiles). At the end of their

stay in Brisbane they gave members a summary of their work. SLQ have also had two work experience placements Talitha and Sharee.

Applications will soon be open for the QLD professional development annual grant. Recipients will be notified in August 2015.

SA/NT Division

The AICCM SA/NT Division held a Chinwag on the 13th May 2015 at Artlab. A presentation was given by Director Andrew Durham, following his recent visit to India, on "Conservation and display at the Ambedkar Museum in Nagpur, India". The Ambedkar Museum is a memorial to Babasheb Ambedkar, the principal architect of the Constitution of India but also revered today as a champion of the Untouchables, or Dalits, and campaigner against social injustice against them. Following the Chinwag there was a General Meeting to discuss general business and to receive nominations for the re-election of committee members.

The AICCM SA/NT Division AGM was then held on the 16th June. This was preceded by a Chinwag talk by Finnish Textile Intern Lotta Ekman about her education and experience in Textiles Conservation in Europe including Finland and Turkey.

News from SIGs

Newly and re-elected council members for 2015/2016 are as follows:

- Kristin Phillips (on leave until October), President
- Mary-Anne Gooden, Secretary
- Treasurer, Rosie Heysen (acting President until October)
- General Committee Members: Jo Dawe, Filipa Quintela, Andrew Durham, Helen Weidenhofer, Heather Brown, Jodie Scott & Renita Ryan

The SA/NT Division is running a National Conference Flight and Registration Competition open to all fully paid up local SA/NT Division members for 2015/2016 who are eligible to go into a draw to win flights and registration to the AICCM National Conference in Tasmania in November. The Competition is to be drawn on 3rd August by Mirna Heruc, President of Museums Australia SA.

AICCM trade fair stand at Art and Frame 2015

The organizer of Art and Frame 2015 exhibition and trade fair has again very generously offered a stand to AICCM. This will be our second appearance at Art and Frame after the first successful display in Melbourne in 2013. The exhibition will be held on August 14-16, from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm at Royal Randwick, Sydney. The AICCM stand will be in the public area of the exhibition so this will be a great opportunity to showcase AICCM to both the public and the framing industry. **Sophie Brown** has kindly offered to coordinate the exhibition this year so if anyone would like to assist AICCM by minding the stand for up to 4 hours on any day please contact Sophie at: sophie@conservationframing.com.au

We also need display items for the stand and take away material. Posters that would inform and engage the general public will be useful for the display. Posters on frame treatments, paper and painting conservation treatments and large format treatments are especially interesting to the public attending this exhibition. Please contact Sophie if you can assist by lending material.

Sophie has organized a public lecture "Framing with conservation in mind: Collaborating with conservators," that has been included in the official seminar program. This will be an exciting event for AICCM so please help out if you can spare the time.

Louise Bradley, AICCM Conservation Framing SIG convener



The AICCM stand at ArtFrame 2013

Textiles SIG

Symposium Announcement

The theme of the AICCM SIG Symposium is "Emerging Technologies in Textile Conservation and Design". The single day symposium and half-one day workshops held from 15-16th April 2016 will coincide with Sydney fashion week. Authors submitting abstracts relating to the theme should include a brief biography. Abstracts should be submitted no later than 31st July, 2015.

The theme relates to collaborations between conservators and the materials and techniques of textile designers and textile artists working in apparel, costume, furnishings, non-apparel, and textile art focus areas.

Abstracts can relate to the following areas of textile conservation:

- Analysis
- Artistic Intent
- Indigenous textiles
- Materials and Techniques
- Exhibition and Mounting
- Pest control and storage
- Preventive conservation
- Treatments

The timeline for submissions, review and registration is as follows:

Submission of Abstracts 2015, July 31st

Workshop Proposals 2015, July 31st

Submission of Papers 2015, Oct 30th

Programme Announcement 2015, Dec 1st

For further information, please contact

Julie O'Connor
julie@conservationsolutions.com.au

News from the Universities

Melbourne University

SC@M (Student Conservators at Melbourne University)

SC@M has a new committee for the year 2015-2016. We look forward to working with AICCM members to organise thought provoking events for students at the Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation.

- President: Irene Finkelde
- Treasurer: Sally Kilby
- Secretary: Vanessa Lau
- Events officers: Pam Soriano and Zora Sanders
- Web officer: Shannon Klaassen

University of Canberra

The University of Canberra is pleased to congratulate Dr Mona Soleymani on her completion of PhD thesis, "*The Effects of Plant Dyes, Watercolours and Acrylic Paints on the Physical, Chemical and Biological Stability of Japanese Tissues Paper Used in Paper Conservation*". Dr Soleymani graduated recently in April 2015 and is the first conservation PhD to be completed since the reopening of the conservation courses at the University.

The University is also pleased to congratulate graduates Daniel Kelley who received First Class Honours and the University Medal for his honours research project on the conservation of a World War II Welbike and Caroline Milne who gained a Chancellor's Commendation for receiving the highest grade point average for an undergraduate degree.

Some exciting course changes are happening with all 1st year units in the Bachelor of Heritage, Museums and Conservation now being delivered flexibly. This means that all material in these units will be delivered both face-to-face and online, or by intensives, which allows remote students with work and family commitments to access the course without having to relocate to Canberra for the whole of semester. Depending on student's study choices this means that it may be possible for

students to complete the conservation component of the course in two semesters on-campus in Canberra, with the other elements of the course completed through on-campus intensives, online participation and internship and volunteer placements in heritage organisations in their local area. The traditional face to face university experience is also available for students who have the opportunity to come to Canberra!

The students at the University have been very busy, with UC Cultural Heritage Collective member Robyn Victory organizing students to speak at lunchtime seminars on topics ranging from architectural conservation in Pakistan to student experiences in volunteering. Students have also been very active in implementing collection management and preventive conservation for the UC Indigenous Artefact Collection, and the Australian National Museum of Education collection. The Collective has also been running student led conservation workshops so that students can reinforce their bench skills and improve their skills in implementing conservation treatments. ACT Heritage funding is supporting work on the UC Mineral and Economic Geology Collection, and further funding is being sought for additional work on the UC Indigenous Artefact Collection.



The Social Pages

ACT

National Archives of Australia – National Office, Mitchell Conservation Laboratory

Recent UC graduates **Laura Daenke** and **Caterina Agostinetti** recently finishing their three month contracts in the lab as File Repair Team members. They have been invaluable in freeing up time for the conservators to undertake higher level treatments.

NSW

International Conservation Services

We welcome **Bronwyn Tulloh** to the Objects and Outdoor Heritage team. Bronwyn is a recent graduate of the Masters of Cultural Material Conservation at Melbourne University.

Australian National Maritime Museum

In March we welcomed objects conservator **Sarah Murray** to the ANMM conservation team, replacing **Rob McLeod**. In May **Agata Rostek-Robak** was appointed as our new Manager of Conservation, replacing **Jonathan London** who is now Head of Conservation at the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (Powerhouse). Agata joins us after many years of service at the State Library of NSW.

For those of you in the conservation community who have worked at ANMM in past years, we want to share the news that **Jack McBurney** one of our much valued conservation volunteers for over 20 years, retired at the end of 2014, just prior to his 90th birthday. We miss his excellent skills as maker of book boxes and folders / heartfelt poet and storyteller. He has

recently moved from his home of 60 years in Beecroft, to live in a retirement village close to his family in Bunbury WA. We miss him and wish him all the best!! We welcome Sue Brian as our new volunteer, having previously provided her invaluable skills and services at the Norfolk Island Museum for 5 years.

State Library of NSW

The Collection Care Branch at the State Library of NSW would like to welcome two new team members. **Paula Thorby** is an Assistant Conservator with the Paper and Photographs Team. Paula completed the Diploma of Library and Information Services with WSI TAFE in 2014 and was a Research Assistant at Parramatta's Heritage Centre and the Local Studies and Family History Library before joining SLNSW. **Natalie Cassaniti** has joined us as an Assistant Conservator for the Digital Excellence Program. She was awarded a Master of Museum Studies (Sydney University) in 2014, and afterwards gained the position of Collections Officer at Fairfield City Museum & Gallery. Currently Natalie is working on rehousing portrait miniatures from the Library's Dixson Collection.

Nicholas Beckett, Assistant Conservator with the Digital Excellence Program, recently completed a diploma in Library and Information Services at Sydney Institute of Technology. One of the key subjects undertaken was regarding digital repositories which are used for creating metadata files for digital library collections.

Conservator **Kate Hughes** has been announced as a 2015 Churchill Fellow. This will enable her to travel to the Natural History Museum, London for eight weeks to document the artist materials in their First Fleet watercolour collections.

Conservator **Bronwen Glover** was awarded a 2015 George Alexander Foundation International Fellowship which will assist her as she undertakes a Masters of Conservation Studies- Books and Library Materials at West Dean College in the UK in September.

Since February 2015 **Barbara (Basia) Dabrowa** has been undertaking a secondment from the AGNSW as Senior Conservator, Conservator of Artworks.

SA/NT

Artlab, Australia

Artlab Australia's 30th Anniversary was celebrated on the 19th of June with a lovely evening of reminiscence and laughter. Senior Preventive Conservator **Anne Dineen** was awarded the inaugural 30 year trophy for her dedicated service. Several past staff members, volunteers and special guests attended including Artlab's first director, **Ian Cook** who travelled from Sydney for the event!

A smaller scale nine month project recently came to completion with Projects Conservation Manager **Abby Maxwell-Bowen** welcoming daughter Mia Blossom May into the world.

Tasmania

Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery has a new Director, **Janet Carding**. Janet took up the role in early April, and was formally Director at The Royal Ontario Museum in Canada (since 2010). Janet has also worked at the Australian Museum in Sydney and has been very supportive of our upcoming National Conference.

Victoria

National Gallery of Victoria

After 12 years at the NGV, **Annette Soumilas** has left the position of Textile Display Specialist. Annette has been an important member of the Textile Conservation team since 2002 and integral to the success of more than twenty NGV Fashion and Textile exhibitions. Her knowledge, experience, attention to historical accuracy, and eye for detail has played a significant role in enabling the NGV to deliver displays of extraordinary quality. We wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

In May, one of the wittier members of our department, Conservation Administrative Coordinator **Toby Miller** left to take on the role of Assistant Curator, Interim Collection Storage Improvements Project at the NGV, a position which will allow him to take full advantage of his skills and education in the areas of Art History and Professional and Applied Ethics. With Toby's departure, **MaryJo Lelyveld** has left the bench as a Frames and

Furniture Conservator to take on the mantle of Coordinating Conservator for the department.

In February, the department welcomed back Conservator, Exhibitions and Loans, **Janelle Borig** from two years maternity leave spent with her beautiful girl Alev. Janelle jumped straight back in to the thick of things with preparations for the always popular 'StArt Up Top Arts 2015' exhibition and Conservator of Photography **Pip Morrison** will be returning in mid-July from maternity leave spent with her sweet daughter Tilda.

The department has also appreciated the skills and company of several contract conservators and interns over the past few months. **Rebecca Clark**, employed with the Textiles Conservation team for several weeks in April-May did an extraordinary job creating underpinnings for works from the 19th century Australian fashion collection for the Culture Victoria digitisation project. The Textiles Conservation team is also currently hosting intern **Michelle Hunter** undertaking her 3 month work placement as part of her conservation

degree at Textiles Conservation Centre, Glasgow.

In the Frames and Furniture lab, **Emma Rouse** continued on as a volunteer following her university work placement undertaking treatment of Joseph Highmore's 'Anthony Highmore' (c.1745-7) until her departure in March to take up a new role at the Heritage Conservation Centre in Singapore. **Siobhan O'Donovan** joined the lab from April – July to assist with a number of treatments including the major restoration to corner ornament on John Ferneley's 'Squire George Osbaldeston on Assheton taking the fence side by side with Sir Frances Holyoake-Goodricke on Crossbow'.

Sandi Mitchell completed her two year placement as Hugh Williamson Conservation Fellow in March and whilst she remained with the NGV, ably overseeing the paintings treatment of the John Rogers Herbert Conservation Live Project, we sadly farewelled her in June as she left Melbourne for the warmer climes of Sydney, to take up a position as Paintings Conservator.

Submissions for the newsletter

We welcome your contributions to the newsletter, as well as any comments you may have.

Deadlines for submissions are:

- The last Friday in January
- The last Friday in June
- The last Friday in 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 .jpg or .tif files.

All text should be sent in .doc or .docx file, in 12pt Times New Roman font, with no editing.

Please ensure all content, including photographs, has been approved by appropriate parties, prior to sending to the Editors.

Names in the text should be in bold the first time used, then in normal font afterwards.

Thank you from the Editors

Advertising in the Newsletter

Given our imminent change to electronic format our advertising policy and charging scale are currently under review. The new arrangements will be published on the AICCM website soon.

Professional News



ACT

National Gallery of Australia

Exhibitions

As usual, the NGA's conservation team has been working on a wide variety of new and changing exhibitions. Just a few weeks ago, all conservation sections were involved in a significant change-over in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) galleries. This refresh saw the installation of some fantastic works that are new to the collection, as well as some favourites that have been resting. Objects, paper and loans conservators were also involved occupied briefly with the deinstallation of James Turrell: a retrospective, although the bulk of the work on this massive show has gone to construction contractors, whose job it is now to demolish the impressive light installations.

Paper Conservation (**Andrea Wise, James Ward, Fiona Kemp & Rose Peel**) and Mountcutting (**Kassandra O'Hare**) have also been involved with condition checking and installing the *The story of Rama: Indian miniatures from the National Museum, New Delhi*, in which the Ramayana is told through one hundred and one paintings, each illustrating a key moment from the narrative. The paintings come from a variety of schools and regions, using different styles. **Fiona Kemp** continues her work on the development of audiovisual procedures, having put them to use in the preparation of a travelling audio visual exhibition, *Light Moves*, now installed in its first venue.

There's never a dull moments for loans conservator **Jane Wild** who continues to assess venues and prepare documentation for the NGA loans and exhibition program. In the last financial

year the conservation section processed 708 works of art (over a 1000 condition reports!) for 204 outgoing loans. There were 27 inward loans with 144 incoming works. The majority of these works were for display in our temporary exhibition space with exciting exhibitions such *Atua: Gods of Polynesia* which later travelled to St Louis Art Museum, more recently *James Turrell: A retrospective* and the upcoming *Myth + Magic: art of the Sepik River, Papua New Guinea*.

Objects conservators (**Beata Tworek-Matuszkiewicz** and **Jack Dallwitz**) are also working on a number of upcoming exhibition projects, as well as outgoing loans. Meg Absolon is leading the charge in preparing NGA works for *Myth + Magic: art of the Sepik River*, as well as coordinating with registration to receive numerous incoming loans for the show. **Sarah Mchugh** is also assisting with *Myth + Magic*, visiting the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby a few months ago. **Kasi Albert** has started readying objects for and upcoming decorative art and design exhibition, as well as continuing to work through a massive new acquisition of early Australian silver and metal ware.

Preventive Conservation (**Lisa Addison** and **Cheree Martin**) have been working with AQIS and treating large sculptures for the *Myth + Magic* show. Lisa has also been working with **Donna Hinton** AGNSW in investigating the air quality showcases, in particular the issue of fogging within cases: causes and impact on the care of the collection.

Treatment projects

In recent weeks the paintings team (**David Wise, Jocelyn Evans, Sharon Alcock, Greg Howard, & Allan Byrne**) have individually and collectively completed major treatments on artworks

by Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton, Vida Lahey, George Webb, David Aspden, Michael Johnson and Arthur Boyd, in preparation for exhibition or loan.

The paintings team are also currently considering *I'll put a girdle around the world* by Mervyn Napier Waller for treatment; this is a triptych painted as his design for the façade of Newspaper House in Melbourne (the resultant mural is still 'on display' for all to see on the exterior of 247-249 Collins street, Melbourne).

In paper conservation a new collection of Japanese screens and scrolls is in the process of being condition checked and safely rehoused prior to any treatment. **Rose Peel** continues with the monumental task of debinding and treating the collection of 19th century French satirical newspapers, *Le Charivari*.

Textile conservation have been very busy working on items for several loans over the past few months. **Claudia Motolese, Micheline Ford** and **Blaide Lallemand** have been working on toys, doilies, embroideries, Asian textiles and a group of Robert McPherson blankets all going to a variety of venues both here in Australia and overseas as well as a collection of 9 quilts going on loan to Hazlehurst Art Gallery. A Possum skin cloak presented an interesting conservation issue of fatty acid bloom on the surface of friable red ochre, removed by brush vacuuming under the microscope. **Melissa Bolin** has been working with us on a short term contract whilst **Hannah Barrett** was overseas on leave and also attending and presenting a paper at the AIC conference in Miami.

National Archives of Australia – National Office, Mitchell Conservation Laboratory

Loans and Exhibitions

The Waterhouse Natural Science Art Prize is now showing at the South Australian Museum and includes content from the National Archives of Australia. The exhibition will travel to Canberra in November this year.

Treatment Projects

Sally Kneebone, along with Laura Daenke and Caterina Agostinetto have completed a project on a series of panoramic photographs from our A1861 artistic copyright (1907 – 1969) series. In all, around 200 panoramas were rehoused into 24 outsized custom archival folders.

Caroline Milne and Clair Murray have completed the treatment of a six-sheet colour advertising poster for Robur Tea, printed in the late 1890s. The poster is part of our A1719 Artistic Copyright (1871 – 1913) series and required cleaning, flattening and lining before digitisation could proceed. Once each sheet has been scanned the full image will be created by digitally stitching each sheet together. It was decided to keep the original sheets separate for the time being to save on having to store an awkwardly outsized poster.

Lab staff are still processing files affected by water leaks in the February and April downpours. Our Freezer has been working hard to buy us some time before mould sets in.

Workshops and Conferences

Prue McKay will be travelling to Prague soon to attend a Getty Conservation Institute course called “photographs and their environment: decision-making for sustainability”, from 13-24 July at the Institute of Art History, Prague which will be instructed by Bertrand Lavédrine and Sylvie Pénichon.

New South Wales

State Library of NSW

Loans and Exhibitions

The State Library is committed to enhancing public access to our collections through a busy outgoing loans program. Recently three items travelled to Adelaide for the Art Gallery of South Australia’s exhibition *Treasures Ships: Art in the Age of Spices*. The complex logistics of the loan were managed by Caroline Lorentz and Lauren Dalla of our Exhibitions and Loans team. This was especially challenging given the size of two of the items: the Miranda and Gijsbertz maps, each having at least one dimension over a meter. These maps are historically significant and visually stunning but pose some conservation challenges due to the large vellum substrate. Prior to the loan being dispatched conservators re-tensioned the string mounting systems and sealed the frames with Marvel Seal to create a microclimate for the sensitive material. Due to the significance and fragility of these items, conservator Cath Bartley travelled with them for the two-day trip from Sydney and across the Hay plain to Adelaide to oversee their transport and installation. The exhibition will be displayed at the Art Gallery of South Australia from 13 June 2015 to 30 August 2015 and will then travel to the Art Gallery of Western Australia for display from 9 October 2015 to 31 January 2016.



Re-tensioning and packing items for *Treasure Ships* loan

At the end of June, Conservator Kate Hughes is travelling to Queensland Art Gallery to install some of the Libraries most significant photographic materials for the travelling exhibition *The Photograph and Australia*. Recently the items were on display at the Art Gallery of NSW. The items will be on display in Queensland from 4 July to 11 October.

Surveys and assessments

Barbara (Basia) Dabrowa is undertaking a survey and assessment of the condition of more than 1700 framed objects including oil paintings, watercolours, pastels, photographs, maps and their frames in preparation for their relocation to an updated storage area at the Library. A future project will be to assess 499 historic empty frames with the aim to reunite them with their original paintings. Some stabilisation of the artworks and frames will be undertaken prior to the move. The Collection Care team have been assisting Barbara with this survey and her deep gratitude goes to all of them.

Conservators Steven Bell and Kate Hughes have commenced the documentation and assessment for one of the Library’s premier items, a fair copy of James Cook’s Endeavour Journal written by his clerk Richard Orton. It presents a challenging combination of failing book structure, iron gall ink deterioration and long-term light exposure. This treatment is being undertaken in anticipation of the 250th anniversary of Captain Cook’s landing in Australia.

Treatment projects

In the Collection Care Laboratory is an amazing item that deserves our attention, a panorama of Sydney by Charles Bayliss for Bernard Holtermann Circa 1870s. This albumen print is made up of 22 segments attached to a canvas backing creating a panorama of Sydney measuring 9.98 metres in length. In its life it has been rolled and folded for storage, which has caused extensive damage throughout the whole image, especially at section joints. The panorama has suffered tears, losses of

image and major delamination. The conservation of this item is being led by Senior Conservator **Nichola Parshall** with the team of **Wendy Richards, Kate Hughes, Ana Barros Soares Watts, Cath Bartley, Trish Leen** and **Lang Ngo**.



Conservator **Trish Leen** working on the *Bayliss Panorama of Sydney*

Heights Heritage Conservation

Exhibitions

In May, **Tess Evans** was in Brisbane for the deinstallation and packing of the costumes from the Costumes from the Golden Age of Hollywood' Exhibition, just after it won first prize for 'Best Temporary Exhibition' at this year's MAGNA

Treatment projects

It's been a busy year so far, with lots of varied projects from the conservation, mounting and framing of an enormous pre Civil War American Flag, in private ownership, to the conservation and preparation for display of a beautiful pair of C17th ladies silk shoes for the National Trust of Australia.



Awards

Work has now started on a collection of costumes going on permanent display in the new Slim Dusty Centre, in Kempsey and more Hollywood costumes for the 'Orry Kelly' Exhibition at ACMI in August.

Research Projects

In March, **Tess Evans** attended the ICON Textile Forum in London and presented her research poster 'Breaking the Mould'; investigating the use of STERI-7 to remove mould from Cultural Heritage, and in collaboration with Steri-7, has now produced a new and improved formulation, which will hopefully be on the market shortly. The National Trust and English Heritage have now begun using the product.

International Conservation Services

Treatment Projects

The Objects and Outdoor Heritage team have been busy working on various projects in the lead up to the end of the financial year. **Karina Acton, Katy Ross, Nick Flood** and **Bronwyn Tulloh** recently spent 2 sunny weeks in Brisbane assessing a large collection of public artworks. Meanwhile, **Eoin O'Sullivan** also spent time in Brisbane to complete treatment of a bronze sculpture. Work continues on a wide range of other objects including the desalination of several cannonballs from a collection of maritime archaeological objects, conservation of the James Dalton fountain in Orange, and

condition assessing historic missiles at Woomera

Adam Godijn and **Doug Rogan** have been working at Old Parliament House on the coats of arms. The outdoor gilding on top of a scaffold presented many challenges including the freezing Canberra Conditions (-6), numb fingers, and wind that could send even the transfer leaf sailing off to Lake Burley Griffin.

The paper team (**Eliza Penrose, Wendi Powell, and Katie Wood**) recently spent two intensive weeks working on site at the National Archives of Australia in Chester Hill along with **Rob Williams**. With much help and hard work from temporary project staff **Rosie Cook, Kiah McCarthy, and Dominic King**, they were able to carry out surface cleaning, mould remediation, and rehousing of over 800 boxes full of documents, books, and ephemera.

Katie Wood and Eliza Penrose worked on site at the Downing Centre cleaning and repairing several sections of historic wallpaper that were uncovered during renovations.

In the paintings department, **Matteo Volonté** has had a Scandinavian focus, working on a painting by a Norwegian artist who grew up in Paris amongst names like Henri Matisse, and a Still life by a well-known Danish painter, scenographer and illustrator. **Claire Heasman** has been occupied cleaning a number of oil paintings by Peter Laverty in preparation for a retrospective exhibition at Artarmon Gallery. Claire is currently working on an unusual portrait of Alderman Francis Punch, who was mayor of North Sydney from 1890 – 92, where the artist seems to have used a combination of traditional oil paint and a photographic technique.

Claire Heasman, Matteo Volonté, **Arek Werstak**, and **Adam Godijn** carried out maintenance work on the Muswellbrook Reconciliation Mural, including removal of graffiti.

Skye Firth and **Gail Hamilton** have been treating soft furnishings for Sydney Living Museums, several World

War Two Silk Escape Maps and the Bicentennial Tapestry belonging to Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre.

Preservation Australia and Conservation Resources

Treatment projects

In the last month, we finally finished the long-term project with NSW Lands and Property Information (formerly NSW Department of Lands) where we were preparing their plans for safe digitisation prior to moving the collection to State Records. This project was ongoing since 2004, so finishing it was cause for a glass or two of champagne! Then two weeks later we were contacted by another government agency that has.....a plan collection that needs digitizing.

Workshops and Conferences

In May, **Tegan Anthes** presented a paper at the national Museums Australia conference in Sydney about her work on an astrographic glass plate collection. It is a collaborative project (still ongoing) with The Powerhouse Museum, Australian Disaster Recovery, and Preservation Australia to recover a collection of glass plates recording star locations through a survey undertaken in the 1880's. The plates had been stored away for years and the collection very nearly lost until the decision was made to re-locate the collection at The Powerhouse Museum.

Video Conferencing Workshop – In early June, **Kay Söderlund** presented one of our standard workshops via video to a group of museum volunteers in Broken Hill. This was organised through EdTV and hosted by The Australian Museum. While there were a few technical hiccoughs, it all went surprisingly smoothly and looks like it might be an effective way of offering conservation expertise to remote and regional museums.

We also held our 'Tips and Tools' session which was well attended with a variety of paper conservators sharing ideas, tips, favourite tools, stories – and fabulous cake!

Studio Space

For the last 18 months, **Tess Evans** of Heights Heritage Conservation, has rented a small space in our studio in Annandale. Tess is now working on larger projects and is only using this space sporadically. Consequently, this space is available for short-term rental – or if there is a conservator interested in a long-term option we are happy to discuss this further. The space is lovely and light-filled – with excellent cake and coffee!

Elwing & Gurney archival, Lawson

Treatment Projects

Otherwise, we have been repairing and digitising contract plans of R.O. Wynn properties in Mount Wilson and a Victorian photo album.

Book reconstructions have included 'Household Furniture', a 1760 book of designs in four parts on single sheets, which was made into sections and taken back to the four parts of the original stabbed format, and a 1903 copy of 'Just So Stories For Little Children' by Rudyard Kipling which required repair to all section folds.

Workshops and Conferences

James Elwing and **Jill Gurney** ran six conservation workshops for Royal North Shore and Nepean Hospital volunteers caring for cultural collections in March and April. These were conducted at their premises in Lawson.

It has been a privilege to work with these volunteers, many of whom are retired nurses who had held responsible positions within their institutions, thus having an understanding of process.

Units on the kinds of materials held in these collections were given, on books, photographs, textiles, ceramics, metals and plastics; individually and in combination, together with the effects of environment and handling. Hands-on work included book supports and cases, photograph storage, clamshell boxes, padded textile hangers, and

improving original picture frames to make them safe for display.

With each of these, the participants went home with the models they had made.

We have yet to supply a seventh day in which to discuss and clarify issues raised by the the workshops, and supply printed learner resources to participants.

Australian National Maritime Museum

Exhibitions

Staff have been busy working on several new exhibitions, including: War at Sea-The Navy in WW1 is now travelling to eleven regional museums over the next 4 years, after its initial 7 months display at ANMM. *Shackleton: Escape from Antarctica* and *Painting for Antarctica: Wendy Sharpe and Bernard Ollis follow Shackleton* both opened in April. *Undiscovered* (June 27- Nov 15) is a striking series of 10 large-scale photographic works by celebrated Aboriginal Artist Michael Cook, from the Bidjara people of southwest Queensland. An exhibition to mark NAIDOC week 2015, *Undiscovered* provides a contemporary Indigenous perspective of European settlement in Australia, a land already populated by its original people. Cook's artworks shift roles and perspectives around the notion of European 'discovery' of Australia, reflecting upon our habitual ways of thinking and seeing our history. The exhibition also includes two indigenous nawi watercraft – a large dugout canoe and a smaller raft, both from the ANMM collection.

South Australia/Northern Territory

ARTLAB

Objects Conservation

This year has been very exhibition driven in the Objects Lab. In February we enjoyed the company of the French team from Les Arts Decoratifs, Paris, as we assisted our own Textile Lab to take down "Fashion Icons" at the Art Gallery of SA.

Justin Gare prepared a WWI exhibition for the South Australian Maritime Museum before giving the Art Gallery of South Australia his all to prepare the vast exhibition "Treasure Ships: Art in the Age of Spices" for display and travel to Perth. Over the past few months the whole Objects Lab has been diligently focused on this epic task with the assistance of Object Conservators **Helen Behrens** and **Megan Sypek**.

Whilst in 'Treasures' mode, **Jo Dawe** organised the display and packing of the 12 previous winners of the Waterhouse Art Prize Exhibition from the South Australian Museum including an exquisite but fragile 'lace' collar constructed from plant filaments.

The Lab is now returned to an orderly appearance but we still have crates being filled to travel two collections from the South Australian Museum – fossils to Japan and PNG Sepik Art to Canberra, two of the many projects coordinated by **Renita Ryan**. We are also assisting with the South Australian Museum's Opal exhibition and the ongoing storage project in the Foreign Ethnology Store.

Filipa Quintela has been surveying and stabilising bark paintings and buckets that have been on very long term open display at the Australian Aboriginal Cultures Gallery of the South Australian Museum. Unfortunately Filipa has found new evidence of touchy-feely-naughty-visitors so she will be making recommendations to prevent further damage.

Sophie Parker finally finished the treatment and storage/display box of Major Genders Cavalry sword and attachments for History SA. Major Genders represented South Australia with his dress sword regalia at the opening of the Melbourne Parliament and Federation in 1901. The sword and attachments were much improved in appearance by a conservation treatment which was a lovely mix of textiles, leather and metals.

Other treatments have involved the joint efforts of the Projects & Objects Labs. These include the waxing and polishing of the reinstalled bronze John Dowie Gates at the new Adelaide Oval and the treatment of the bronze Mary McKillop Sculpture by Judith Rolevink outside the Catholic Cathedral, both managed by Ian Miles.

Meanwhile, **Abby Maxwell-Bowen** worked over her pregnant bump as she cleaned & repaired two marble sculptures: Queen Esther from the Art Gallery of South Australia including restoration of her hand mirror, and substantially transforming La Plongeuse (The Diver) from the Riddoch Art Gallery. She also reinstalled four large sculptures at the Adelaide Oval.

Paintings and Frames Conservation

The entire Paintings team has been concentrating on the treatment of the hand painted ceiling, cornice and frieze decorations in the historic Ayres House Ballroom. Home of the late Sir Henry Ayers the house is the last surviving mansion of its era on the southern side of North Terrace in the city of Adelaide. The interior decorations were hand stencilled room after room with the formal dining room ceiling, treated in 2013 by Artlab, still regarded as the most significant hand painted ceiling in the country. Restoration work was last undertaken in the Ballroom the 1980-90s. Current treatment has involved selective surface cleaning, consolidating flaking and lifting paint layers, filling and retouching of losses as well as the repair of a number of cracks.

Rita Costabile has also been focusing much of her time on exhibition

preparation for the Art Gallery of South Australia's Treasure Ships exhibition.

Paper and Books Conservation

The Art Gallery of South Australia's Treasure Ships exhibition has also been a major focus for the Paper team who have all been very busy undertaking condition reports, making travel boxes and installing items.

The Paper team have also been working through copying and rehousing a large collection of water damaged hospital files.

Jodie Scott has undertaken repairs to the label on a very valuable bottle of Penfolds Grange.

Preventive

Senior Preventive Conservator **Anne Dineen** and **Stuart Fuller** have been continuing to provide a range of handling, digitisation and disaster related workshops to attendees from a range of regional and locally based collections including the South Australian Aviation Museum located at Port Adelaide.

Stuart Fuller and **Rosie Heysen** were fortunate enough to undertake a Preservation Needs Assessment of The Peterborough Times Printing Office in Peterborough, South Australia under the National Library of Australia's Community Heritage Grant scheme.

Anne Dineen also completed a Preservation Needs Assessment for the John McDouall Stuart Society collection. John McDouall Stuart was an early explorer of northern South Australia and the Northern Territory with the Society's collection including artefacts and memorabilia from explorations and the daily lives of Stuart and his companions.

Projects Conservation

The ANZAC Day Centenary has meant Projects has been predominantly busy with treatments for War Memorials, Honour Rolls and other related material. However providing advice and condition checking for various outdoor bronzes by Ken Martin and

Judith Rolevink at the Adelaide Oval introduced a sporting theme to the Projects' work diary and some long-overdue treatment to a Bourdelle outdoor bronze at the Art Gallery of South Australia is also underway.

The Paintings and Projects Lab's joint work opportunities continue as the teams combine resources and expertise to investigate options to improve the exterior appearance of several heritage railway carriages.

Textiles Conservation

The textiles team have welcomed **Lotta Ekman** to the lab. Lotta is a Textile Conservation student from Finland undertaking a 3 month internship with us. She has been assisting with a wide range of projects including stabilising the body of a mid-19th century doll, treating silk handkerchiefs from WWI and disguising losses on printed Asian textiles with carefully painted patches.

Kristin Phillips and **Mary-Anne Gooden** with the assistance of Anna Austin, Tessa Bell and Barbara Flaum have been busy treating, preparing and installing textile and costume items for the Art Gallery of South Australia's Treasure Ships exhibition.

The Migration Museum's exhibition *Love a good yarn: knitting & crochet from Nanna to now* also required the preparation of a number of items by **Mary-Anne Gooden** including a very quirky mix & match 3-sided vest!

Surveys and Assessments

In April, **Andrew Durham** visited the Ambedkar Museum in Nagpur, India. The museum is a memorial to Babasheb Ambedkar, the principal architect of the Constitution of India but also revered today as a champion of the Untouchables, or Dalits, and campaigner against social injustice against them. Andrew was able to survey the collection and make recommendations for its future care & display.

Workshops and Conferences

In May, Andrew Durham participated in the Premier of South Australia's Shandong Cooperation and Development Forum as a member of the Arts and Cultural Delegation.

Tasmania

Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

Exhibitions

Hobart has been embracing winter and has just finished another very successful DarkMofo celebration. Conservation staff have all been involved in exhibition preparation, most notably 'Ashes to Ashes' a quirky look at Georgian and Victorian death rituals including objects, textiles, paintings and works on paper held at one of our historic houses, Narryna; and an exhibition of paintings of the Antarctic by John Kelly held at our city site. And no, we did not take part in the Winter Solstice Nude Swim.

Treatment Projects

Currently Object Conservator **Nikki King Smith** is cleaning and preparing a mind boggling assortment of jars and bottles from a Chemist shop that operated in Hobart between 1907-1970. The jars and bottles will be part of a reconstruction of the shop to be installed at our city site in July. Painting Conservator **Erica Burgess** has been working on an eclectic array of paintings from our collection to be included in a massive exhibition to be held in 2016 entitled 'Tempest'. Paper Conservator **Cobus van Breda** is working on an exhibition of 19th century panorama's to be exhibited in January 2016.

Victoria

National Gallery of Victoria

Exhibitions

Several upcoming exhibitions have required conservators of all specialities to carry out treatment and preparation of works for display. The largest of these, *The Horse* is due to open in August and draws on over two hundred objects artworks from the collection. The exhibition is panoramic in its historical breadth and encyclopaedic in its range of materials which has kept conservators **Trude Ellingsen**, **Ruth Shervington**, **Louise Wilson**, **Siobhan O'Donovan** and **Kate Douglas** busy as they treat a range of works that range from ancient Greek vases and Durer etchings to framed oil paintings, saddles and riding garments.

In March, **Catherine Earley** and **Suzi Shaw** spent several days in China condition reporting and couriering works to Melbourne from the Forbidden Palace as part of the lavish 'A Golden Age of China: Qianlong Emperor, 1736-1795' exhibition and are retracing their steps as they accompany the works at exhibition close in late June.

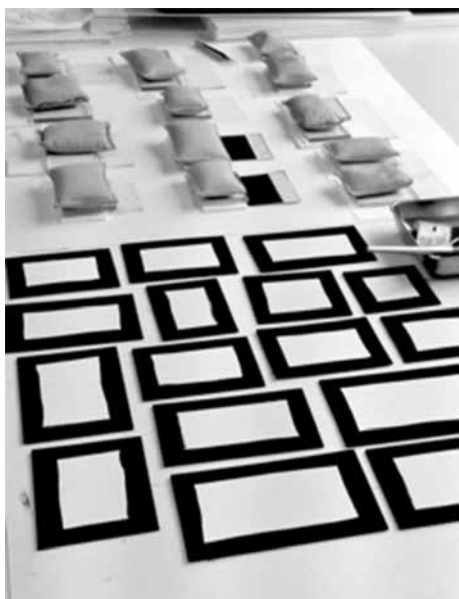
Treatment Projects

Funding from the Copland Foundation has made possible the treatment of both the painting and frame of frame for 'Moses bringing down the Tables of the Law' (c.1872-8) by John Rogers Herbert, making it available for display for the first in over seventy years. The six-week treatment of the painting was supervised by **Sandi Mitchell**, whilst **Suzi Shaw** has been overseeing the six-week frames treatment. They were assisted by 27 volunteers from the Melbourne conservation community and University of Melbourne conservation students for the project which was carried out in the public gallery space as a means of engaging the public with the processes of treating paintings and their frames. The paintings treatment took place

on a large custom-built platform to accommodate the painting, which is over six metres in length. **Gervais Battour** constructed a special rolling gantry to enable conservators to carry out the cleaning and consolidation of the painting while it lay flat on the platform. The work is due for display in mid-July.



Gaby and Yasmin cleaning the painting.
Photo by Sandi Mitchell



Noni, Ren and Adil clean the frame. Photo by Suzi Shaw

Raye Collins' treatment of the painting and **MaryJo Lelyveld's** reproduction frame for Frederick McCubbin's 'The North Wind' (1891) are almost complete. The project, made possible by the support from Bank of America-Meryll Lynch, will be documented in an e-book and feature recent analytical work undertaken by **Michael Varcoe-**

Cocks at the Australian Synchrotron. Also in the paintings studio Hugh Williamson Conservation Fellow **Johanna Ellersdorfer** is carrying out the treatment of Joshua Reynolds' *Lady Frances Finch*, **Carl Villis** the treatment on Jacques-Louis David's *Head of a Man* and **John Payne**, the treatment of Johann Zoffany's *Elizabeth Farren as Hermione in The Winter's Tale*. X-radiography of the painting undertaken by John as part of the examinations in the lead up to treatment uncovered series of earlier portraits of other subjects, including one with a possible royal connection.

Holly McGowan-Jackson is undertaking a 3 month long treatment project on the Josef Frank *Armchair* (c. 1930). The two chairs were donated to the gallery in 2014 along with the funding to support the treatment to one of these. Treatment is focused on removing multiple layers of brown and cream coloured lead-based overpaint to reveal the original orange finish. **Sarah Brown** has been working on hinging many large format colour photographs which have arrived as new acquisitions as well as a mounting project on a work recently acquired by the artist Patrick Pound, which involves individually cutting and mounting 186 found photographs to form one large display. **Di Whittle** has been managing the treatment and re-coating of a number of our outdoor sculptures on display in the NGV Garden moat as well as preparing several sculptures for display in the upcoming 'Lenton Parr' exhibition at NGV-A.



Preparing mounts for a recent Patrick Pound acquisition.
Photo by Sarah Brown

Research Projects

In the NGV paper Conservation studio **Ruth Shervington** and **Louise Wilson** are working on a database of Albrecht Durer's watermarks. Over 20 years ago, their predecessors Lyndsay Knowles and Cobus van Breda undertook the immense task of taking beta radiographs of the NGV's extraordinary collection of Durer engravings and woodcuts. The current project aims to bring together their data with new observations in the form of a database that is linked to the NGV's Collection on-line. The database will be accessible on the NGV's website from late August.

In June, the Conservation Department launched the Frames and Frame Makers Database. This on-line resource currently represents over one hundred and thirty frames, by Australian and International frame makers working in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Each entry describes frame construction and finish in detail, supported by art historical research and other frames references where possible. Entries also include a detailed colour image of frame ornament and moulding profile and are searchable by artist name, frame maker or artwork title. The database, made possible by the support of the Telematics Course Development Fund, is the culmination of decades of interest and research into frames by **John Payne**.

AICCM Special Interest Groups (SIGS)

Group	Convenor	Email
Book & Paper	Prue McKay	prue.mckay@naa.gov.au
Conservation Framers	Louise Bradley	loubradley@bigpond.com
Conservation Science	Petronella Nel	pnel@unimelb.edu.au
Digital & Audio-visual Heritage	Stuart Fuller Somaya Langley Gerald Preiss	stuart.fuller@gmx.com somaya@criticalsenses.com gerald.preiss@aiatsis.gov.au
Exhibitions	Samantha Hamilton	samantha_hamilton@bigpond.com
Gilded Objects	Barbara Dabrowa	
Objects	Helen Privett	helen_privett@optusnet.com.au
Paintings	Maria Kubik	Maria.Kubik@artgallery.wa.gov.au
Photon	Amy Bartlett Lydia Egunnike Kelly Leahy	Amy.Bartlett@launceston.tas.gov.au lcegunn@gmail.com kellyleahey@hotmail.com
Preventive Conservation	Sarah-Jane Rennie	rennie@netspace.net.au
Textiles	Julie O'Connor	julie_oconnor_au@yahoo.co.uk

SIG convenor positions are open for election every two years.

For further information contact the SIG Convenor Helen Privett (hprivett@museum.vic.gov.au).

AICCM National Council Executive and Officer Contacts 2013-2015

Role	Incumbent	Contact
President	MaryJo Lelyveld	President@aiccm.org.au
Vice-President	Anne Carter	VicePresident@aiccm.org.au
Treasurer	Adam Godijn	Treasurer@aiccm.org.au
Secretary	Jennifer O'Connell	Secretary@aiccm.org.au
Secretariat	Michelle Berry	secretariat@aiccm.org.au
Membership Services Officer	Celia Cramer	chooknanny@gmail.com
Professional Membership Officer	Cushla Hill	cushla@unimelb.edu.au
Publications Officer	Cobus van Breda	Cobus.VanBreda@tmag.tas.gov.au
SIG and Events Coordinator	Helen Privett	hprivett@museum.vic.gov.au
Public Officer	Ian Batterham	ian.batterham43@gmail.com
Bulletin Editor	Nicole Tse	nicoleat@unimelb.edu.au
Newsletter Editor	Ian Batterham	newsletter@aiccm.org.au
Website Editor	Carole Best	WebEditor@aiccm.org.au
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AICCM National State Presidents 2013-2015

State Division President – ACT	Ian Batterham	ACT@aiccm.org.au
State Division President – NSW	Sheldon Teare	NSW@aiccm.org.au
State Division President – QLD	Caroline O'Rorke	QLD@aiccm.org.au
State Division President – SA-NT	Kristin Phillips	SA-NT@aiccm.org.au
State Division President – TAS	Amy Bartlett	TAS@aiccm.org.au
State Division President – VIC	Susie Collis	VIC@aiccm.org.au
State Division President – WA	Kate Woollett	WA@aiccm.org.au