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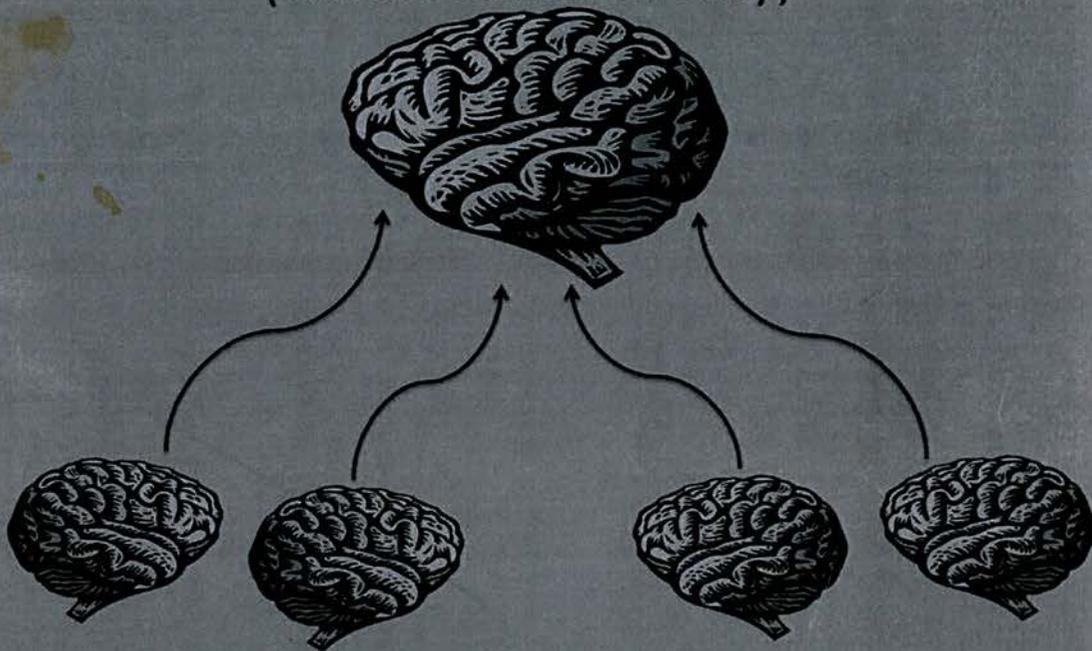
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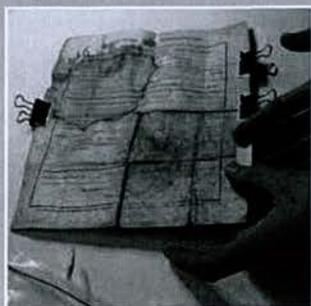
AIC conference in Albuquerque

Conservation's Brain (Conservation Theory)



Conservators' Brains

James Janowski, 'Articulating Value', 2012 AIC Meeting



RSL Lifecare Project second report



Conserving Islamic manuscripts



Artlab Projects Conservator Nick Flood at work

President's Report

Recently, a few conservators from Australia attended the AIC conference in Albuquerque – and I thought it was one of their better ones.

They had organised many more presentations and sessions on the theme (Outreach and Advocacy) than they normally have and this proved to be a smart move.

While keynote presentations were not as thought provoking as one would like, the other sessions more than made up for that – as usual the main problem was trying to attend all the parallel sessions. Even with three of us (myself, Mary Jo Lelyveld, and Alex Ellem) attending, it was impossible to get to everything that looked useful or interesting.

For me, there were two outstanding sessions amongst them all.

'Case Studies 111' consisted of 5 or 6 short papers presented outlining different projects that various organisations have instigated to promote and profile conservation. These included the 'conservation window' at the Walters Art Museum; the Lunder Conservation Centre and its 'conservation tours'; the Washington

Conservation Guild's booth they man at various events; and a recurring Preservation Fair – very much along the lines of something being planned for AICCM in November in Canberra – more on that closer to the event!

'Exhibiting Ourselves: Presenting Conservation' was a session that focussed on the presentation of conservators' work in exhibitions and how that can be used to raise the profile of conservation, along with fund-raising potential for their institution. Discussions that followed this session looked at questions posed by the organisers such as 'Does outreach take too much time?'; 'Is the conservation community aware that these exhibits are happening?'; 'It is more valuable to weave conservation information into exhibits on a regular basis rather than having conservation as a stand along topic?'; 'Do we know what our audience knows about conservation?'; 'Who should take the lead to make conservation more visible? Institutions, AIC, or individuals?'. All very interesting questions and all very relevant to what we have been discussing in Council meetings.

I also had a breakfast meeting with Meg Loew Craft, current President of AIC. This was a very useful meeting and we covered a wide range of topics, including fundraising and greater international dialogue and co-operation between the many conservation associations around the world.

Closer to home, National Council has been reviewing the Strategic Plan and this will be presented at the next AGM – in Brisbane on August 30th during the Book, Paper and Photographic Materials Symposium. Hope to see you there!

Kay Söderlund
August 2012

2012 AICCM Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held on Thursday 30th August 2012 from 5-6pm.
The venue will be: Auditorium 1, State Library of Queensland, South Brisbane, Queensland

AICCM Response to Federal Policy Initiatives

AICCM activities sit across a broad policy environment including the arts, culture, heritage and research at the Federal, State and local government level. Over the course of 2011-2012, the AICCM Blue Sky Working Group has been busy responding to three discussion papers submitted by the Federal Government for public review and contribution: The National Cultural Policy; National Research Priorities; and Australian Heritage Strategy.

We would like to thank all those members who took the opportunity to respond to the call for input. The responses were considered and thoughtful and provided a solid base upon which the AICCM submissions were prepared. The main themes to each discussion paper and the AICCM response are outlined below:

National Cultural Policy Discussion Paper

The Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport (DRALGAS) began consultation on a National Cultural Policy (NCP) in 2009. It is the first national cultural policy since *Creative Nation* was developed by the Keating administration in 1994. Its aim is to inform the direction of arts and culture for the next ten years in light of current opportunities and challenges. The main goals of the NCP presented for discussion were:

- the protection and support Indigenous languages and culture
- capitalising on emerging technologies and innovation
- strengthening the capacity of the arts to contribute to society and the economy
- supporting excellence and strengthening the role of art in telling the Australian story

Over 400 formal submissions were made from across the arts, culture and heritage sector. The AICCM's response was encouraging of the NCP themes, highlighting what opportunities they present for the profession whilst emphasising current AICCM practices that support the NCP goals. Commentary was also made on the importance of cultural heritage preservation (as opposed to the focus on arts creation and digital access) and the need for supporting cultural heritage networks.

Initially due for release in conjunction with the Federal budget in early May, the NCP release date has been postponed until later this year due to budget constraints and a consequent review undertaken on the Australia Council in late May.

Refreshing the National Research Priorities

Following a recommendation in the *Focusing Australia's Publicly Funded Research Review* (February – July 2011), the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research, and Tertiary

Education (DIISRTE) undertook a consultation process to refresh the National Research Priorities (NRPs). One of the key changes proposed in the review is the inclusion of a new national research priority focusing solely on the humanities, arts and social sciences (HASS) to the existing research priority areas of:

- An Environmentally Sustainable Australia
- Promoting and Maintaining Good Health
- Frontier Technologies for Building and Transforming Australian Industries
- Safeguarding Australia

The DIISRTE received over 60 submissions. The AICCM submission supported the inclusion of the new research area and provided feedback on the proposed wording of the NRP to incorporate the preservation of tangible and intangible heritage and expanding innovation beyond material advancement by including new approaches and techniques.

Australian Heritage Strategy

The Australian Heritage Strategy (AHS) was developed by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (DSEWPC) to provide a common strategic direction for the recognition, protection and celebration of the Australia's heritage. The consultation paper was supported by ten essays commissioned from leading heritage managers, consultants and academics, answering the questions:

- What is heritage?
- Whose heritage is it?
- Who are the players and what roles do they play?
- What are community expectations for heritage protection?
- What are the social and economic benefits of heritage?

The emphasis throughout the consultation paper and supporting essays was placed on intangible, natural and built heritage. The AICCM response recommended the acknowledgment of tangible-moveable cultural material within the DSEWPC definition of heritage as means of collaboratively managing cultural heritage resource across allied government agencies.

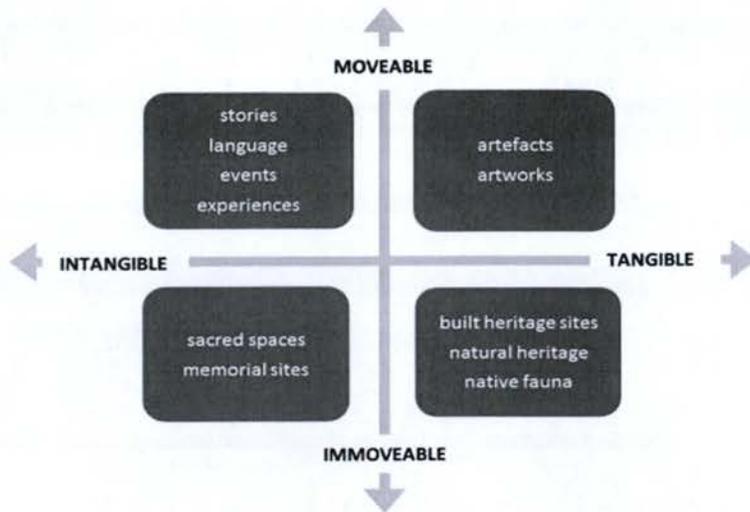


Figure 1. The various aspects of heritage

The outcomes of these policy discussions will influence the arts, culture and research environment and, either directly or indirectly, the opportunities for and strength of, our profession within it. In the short-term this may involve access to funding or the re-structure of arts and heritage

agencies. In the long-term, such policies shape the national definition of and approach to valuing and engaging with private and public collections. We await the results of these discussions with great interest.

Mary Jo Lelyveld



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.



AIC Annual Meeting: Outreach & Advocacy

May 2012, Albuquerque New Mexico

A Brief Account of Various Sessions and Presentations

Attending the AIC General Meeting with its theme of Conservation Outreach and Advocacy offered an excellent opportunity to hear what other conservators are doing in the current environment marked by funding cuts and regular change. MaryJo Lelyveld and I were recipients of grants from the Samuel H Kress Foundation, which assisted our travel to attend and speak in Albuquerque. The conference theme provided a broad range of specific topics on outreach and advocacy, but many were scheduled at the same time, limiting how many we could attend, but we persevered!

In one of the opening keynote addresses, Tyler Green spoke of the loss of art journalism and the decline of newspapers and magazines. He urged the conservation profession to advocate for our profession by telling stories from our research and observations working with cultural heritage to communicate their cultural significance to the public in new arenas. He highlighted that the conservation related podcasts on his blog *Modern Art Notes | ARTINFO.com* were the most downloaded shows. Green suggested directing conservation stories to new places where the audiences are: flickr, Wikipedia, twitter, facebook, and digital versions of newspapers. Not only can these stories attract broad audiences but they also provide the opportunity to demonstrate how conservators and collecting institutions care for cultural heritage.

In the first conference session titled, *Articulating Value*, James Janowski's (Department of Philosophy, Hampden-Sydney College) presentation, *Making Strides in Outreach and Advocacy – or How to Make Conservation and Conservators stronger*, was stimulated by Frank Matero's comment in a GCI Newsletter (18:3, Fall 2003), "...we've neglected to convince the public and politicians of the importance of the work." His argument was framed around the fact that conservators can readily speak the language of objects' and science, but should develop further their fluency of 'the language of meanings and values', a language we learn but do not use often enough. While the language of objects and science is necessary, being able to talk with allies about the significance of artefacts to people is a better means of promoting the importance of conservation and why we do it to professional allies, politicians, clients, the media and the public. "Conservators should connect... via smart talk about the profound and invaluable significance in objects and places," which can provide insight into the 'deep rationale underlying conservation'. James Janowski can be contacted at: jjanowski@hsc.edu.

In one of the Disaster Outreach sessions, I spoke about the AICCM response to the Black Saturday Bushfires and the lessons learned. An AIC-CERT member Randy Silverman, University of Utah Marriott Library, spoke about the 2011 flooding of the Mouse River in North Dakota, which caused \$1.4 billion in damages. Randy was involved in the response to a historical society

there and spoke about the importance of conservators working as emergency responders needing to take a strong role in processing the necessary paper work to achieve funding. People caught up in the trauma of a disaster that involves their homes, communities and workplaces are often too distracted to follow through with the applications for funding that would support response and recovery. Two other speakers, Kathleen Maher, Director Curator of The Barnum Museum in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and Susan Mathisen, President S.A.M. Fundraising Solutions, outlined the damage caused to The Barnum Museum and its collection of 25,000 artifacts by a tornado, and ensuing complications brought on later by a major snowstorm and Hurricane Irene and detailed the museum's response. Although the museum, in a historic building built in 1893, has been closed for two years and requires extensive restoration as do the collection items, they have been successful in gaining wide support from the local media and community through regular communications. Their plan is to incorporate conservation principles into the restoration of the building and engage with conservation education programs as part of the recovery of the collection. Their energy and determination in very difficult circumstances has resulted in creating new, strong partnerships, re-invigoration of the institution and building local engagement even though they're closed!

MaryJo presented an excellent talk in a *Wooden Artifacts Session* that schematically explored a variety of approaches to communicating

conservation stories to broader audiences, using the recent treatment of the Régence period frame that houses Poussin's *Crossing of the Red Sea* at the NGV as a reference point. She proposed the use of thinking tools such as the Integral Theory framework, which is similar to Appelbaum's Characterisation Grid, to 'more effectively mediate the experience between the audience and the artefact'. By considering the subjective and objective perspectives of individuals and collectives, one can identify better ways of anticipating the interests of different groups and produce communications that can reach out to a broader range of audiences.

The outreach session Conservation and Education provided useful examples of successful outreach to conservation students and non-conservators through training. One talk discussed the evolving role of the conservator and how it should lead us to consider what we are teaching conservation students, while keeping an eye on needs within the sector now and in the future. Another talk outlined the role of conservators involved in teaching programs at art schools, which extended the students' exploration of their

materials and processes encouraging them to make informed decisions about their work and the handling and display of their art, while also enriching the understanding by conservators of artists' intentions in making art.

In addition to many presentations concerning conservation materials, techniques, and treatments, there were several presentations about conducting conservation work in public areas of museums. Generally the projects were available to the public for just a few hours per day or periodically within a week, some were in enclosed spaces and others more directly accessible. Everyone who had been involved had found many positive outcomes but they also questioned the sustainability of the practice. Communication with conservators was encouraged which impacted the kind of work that could be done in such a setting. At the Walters Art Museum a conservator would work behind a window and talk with onlookers. It provoked lots of questions and surprise when conservators were conducting documentation and examination as people expected only to see them undertaking treatments!

At the close of the last Painting Group Session a tips session was held and people could earn additional raffle tickets for sharing tips about favoured materials, techniques, and suppliers. Something we might consider for future AICCM symposia. Additionally, for every session individuals were asked to take notes and write up a blog on the AIC website or a review for the AIC newsletter about a session, another practice we may want to try. Overall, the mood was positive and one really felt that everyone presenting was passionate about finding ways for conservators to connect with new and existing audiences to enrich their understanding of the importance of what we do.

The AIC annual meeting was an excellent experience and attending and participating is something you may want to consider in the future. Next year it will be in Indianapolis, Indiana from May 29 through June 1. The theme is *The Contemporary in Conservation*.

Alex Ellem
National Gallery of Victoria

Expressions of interest: AICCM Professional Membership Committee member

The AICCM has created a Professional Membership category to build community and business confidence in conservation professionals. Professional Membership of the AICCM will ensure that conservation professionals who meet high standards of professional and ethical conduct are given due recognition.

The AICCM is seeking a new Professional Membership Committee member.

This role is a voluntary position.

You'll be responsible for assessing AICCM Professional Membership applications twice yearly.

The role reports to the Professional Membership Officer (National Council position).

You'll need: Access to the internet, phone, computer. Familiarity with the structure of AICCM.

Expected time commitment: Only 2-3 hours/twice yearly, usually during business hours.

Contact:

Please contact the current Professional Membership Officer for more information about the role:
Cushla Hill cushla@unimelb.edu.au (03) 9348 5700.

Expressions of interest should be sent to the secretariat@aiccm.org.au by Friday July 27th 2012.

The Letter of Intent on Cooperative Disaster Preparedness for DISNSW

DISNSW is a cultural disaster preparedness group for the Greater Sydney Region. A letter of intent has been signed by 12 Signatory Organisations to allow for cooperative assistance in the event of a disaster or emergency. The Letter of Intent (LOI) sets out a framework for cooperation between the collecting institutions named. The aim is to promote cooperation between these institutions in the event of a disaster which affects one or more of the institutions. The LOI is not intended to be legally binding or enforceable and sets out only the parties' broad understanding and intentions about cooperation in disaster recovery arrangements. Signatories are: Powerhouse Museum, State Records of NSW, Australian National Maritime Museum, Australian Museum, Historic Houses Trust of NSW, Museum and Galleries of NSW, Museum of Contemporary Art, National Archives of Australia, Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain trust, State Library of NSW, University of Sydney, and Art Gallery of NSW.

Sue Gatenby
Powerhouse Museum

11th Annual Symposium of the Costume and Textile Association

On 20-21st July I attended the 11th Annual Symposium of the Costume and Textile Association was hosted by the Suter Art Gallery in Nelson, New Zealand. The main theme of the symposium was "Town and Country" with four main sub-themes including traditional Maori textile material culture and adaptation: costume, textile art and textiles related to social history and migration.

Maori textiles

Patricia Wallace's paper traced traditional materials (muka) and techniques used to make kete (woven bags). Tryphena Cracknell traced the materials and techniques traditionally used by Maori and the transition to modern materials including faux fur used to manufacture Maori cloaks. Lucy Hammonds also studied the effects of migration and the introduction of new materials used to make Taonga (Maori treasures).

Costume

The following presentations ranged from the practical aspects of clothing through to the cultural, historical and social status associated with clothing.

Mary Kislar's keynote address focused on the symbolism of costume through studies of European portraiture from the Auckland Art Gallery's travelling exhibition, *Toi a Tamaki*, based on her book "Angels and Aristocrats". On a similar theme, Georgina White looked at 19th century photographic portraiture, techniques and props to interpret clothing styles and influences. Jane Malthus and Moira White discussed the development of 19th century waterproof clothing in New Zealand while Linda Tyler studied styles of dress in the scientific community from three piece

suits to the white coat. Davina Davis studied the progression of 19th century military uniforms worn by the volunteer forces in South Canterbury.

The generous donation of dresses to Te Papa by Mrs Cousins who owned a costume hire business in Wellington gave Phillipa Doyle an insight into Victorian influences on clothing and clothing styles during the 1940's to 1960s.

Chrissy Tetley worked with a group of school students from Turakina to develop a community tartan design which reflected their Maori and Scottish roots. Simone Montgomery presented "Steam punk" a retro futuristic fashion trend with related origins to Victorian fashion, but incorporating elements of science fiction, romance and fantasy.

Textile Arts

Textile artists used the theme of "Town and Country" to develop textile collections and art installations related to their practice.

Jill Kinnear and Ann-Maree Reaney collaborated on a collection of digitally printed 1950's dresses made by Lucy Bell based on films and moving images collected from their "American road trip".

Jo Torr developed a collection of textiles based on archaeological evidence including ceramic fragments and whaling artifacts remaining at the Enderby whaling settlement in the Auckland islands from 1850. Catherine Davies-Colley developed textile sculptures and wall-hangings to narrate the personal stories of matriarchs and lineage in her family.

Betty Woods lamented the decline of a rural community through her

installation of aprons which symbolised the community spirit that once existed in the Kumara area during the 1980's.

Deb Donnelly gave us an insight into the work practices and design inspiration of Tracey White, a felt artist who uses acid dyes to produce creative felted textiles for local and overseas markets.

Social History

Several stories of migration wove a common thread through the presentations which related to the social history and fabric of New Zealand society. Textile sleuth, Vivien Caughley uncovered clues from a sampler (1886) rescued from a rubbish bin in Wellington to uncover the migration of its maker, Ethyl Parsons from Victoria to Wellington.

Lorinda Cramer laboriously sifted through the information contained in the diaries of women from country and urban Victoria during the gold rushes, to unravel the significance of textiles to hearth and society during this time.

Linda Warner pieced the pieces together to reveal the practices of community quilt makers prior to and post European settlement including the use of sugar bags, flannel and hay, chard, and paper wadding to form utilitarian quilts.

Tanya Zoe Robinson's ancestral relationship to Norman Alexander who was a Dannevirke designer led to her research into his Silvalyne clothing label. In 1927, he migrated to New Zealand from Lebanon with an eye to design clothes for women who were actively part of New Zealand's social scene at that time.

Eloise Taylor speculated about the relationship between sitter and artist:

the stylish Annette (Andy) Stiver who migrated to New Zealand from the USA in the 1930's with her new husband, and the artist, Christopher Perkins who painted her portrait held at the Hawke's Bay Museum and Art gallery. Then, after migrating from New Zealand to Sydney with her husband she became an influential commentator for "Home" magazine.

For those conservators who have yet to traverse the Tasman Sea to the Symposium of the Textile and Costume Association of New Zealand, it is an opportunity to understand cultural influences on textiles; their social context, and past and emerging technologies used to produce textiles. The diversity of the membership of this group enhances communication between museum professionals, social historians, textile artists and designers regarding the value of textiles to our shared social history.

The visit included a viewing of the textile storage facilities at the Suter Art gallery and Te Papa.

Julie O'Connor
Australian National Maritime Museum

RSL LifeCare Project: Stage Two

In June this year, stage two of the RSL LifeCare Project took place. Students from the conservation programmes at the Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation, the University of Melbourne and at the University of Canberra travelled to Narrabeen, New South Wales to undertake the documentation and conservation of the War Museum there. The museum contains over 5000 objects donated by residents and families of the RSL LifeCare village.

In Stage Two, the important task of documenting the collection continued with much progress being made. As the RSL LifeCare prepares the collection for a new museum site, the documentation of donor information and current condition is critical.

During this stage, the students had the opportunity to work with conservators from the **Australian War Memorial**, **Claire Champion**, Object Conservator and **Jessie Firth**, Textile Conservator. Claire and Jessie shared their knowledge in different areas of conservation. Jessie brought her own sewing machine and taught the students how to make padded coat hangers to provide support for the many uniforms in the collection. Claire shared her knowledge of mount making for the aeroplane models

in the collection. Other preventive conservation training included cleaning of medals and construction of cloth covered support boards, freezing and encapsulation of fragile textiles to protect them while they are on display.

Collaborative work with the residents continues. Elva Bett, from the RSL LifeCare Museum committee assisted with sewing an encapsulation for a fragile lace work. While other residents popped in daily to discuss the provenance, and also the use, of items with the students.

Research into the collection has also begun, with University of Melbourne student, **Lisa Yeats** writing her research thesis on the Japanese collection. Lisa travelled to Narrabeen in May to undertake condition reporting and research on the collection. Word spread quickly with residents coming forward with information to share with Lisa.



Uniforms on padded coat hangers.
Photographed by Jennifer O'Connel



Medals on Fabric Covered Boards.
Photographed by Jennifer O'Connel



Encapsulated textiles.
Photographed by Jennifer O'Connel

The bug traps have been filling quickly! Several objects, particularly hats and pennants, have been frozen to kill pests. There was some excitement when the Army and Police were called in to check that the bombs were safe. Three were given certificates, but one was taken away. This museum definitely has a diverse collection of materials to learn from.

It is not all work though, the students were lucky enough to be there during the 'Winter Festival' which is held to encourage residents to get involved in activities during the cold winter months. There was a formal dinner with a three course meal and entertainment from two local singers. It was a beautiful evening and a great opportunity for the students and residents to mingle.

RSL LifeCare continues to support the project by providing flights, accommodation and food for the students. Penny Joy and Donna Robson, staff at RSL LifeCare look after the students and make sure that they have everything they need during their stay.

Thank you to all the staff, students and graduates who participated in Stage Two:

CCMC – Sophie Lewincamp, Sarah Boundy, Elizabeth Ellis, Yvonne Hearn, Eliza McKenna, Sandi Mitchell, Emily Mulvilhill, Danielle Measday, Fran Paterson, William Sit, Sophie Theobald Clark, Jennifer Walker, Lucy Willet, Jane Walton, Katie Wood and Lisa Yeats.

University of Canberra – John Greenwood, Robert Cooke, Marina Horvath, Stephanie Hume, Jessie Lewcock, Caroline Milne and Maree Whittaker.

The project continues in August. If you are interested in joining, please let us know!

Interviews with participants

Q. What was your favourite aspect of the RSL LifeCare Project?

A. Sophie Theobald Clark, University of Melbourne My favourite aspect of Narrabeen was being able to work in a group that was very open, respectful and democratic. Everyone felt that they had something legitimate to contribute despite limited experience and everyone's suggestions were listened to before we all reached an agreement on what was best to be done. Working in a group to care for a collection and get it on file was the best way to begin my hands-on experience in the first year of my Conservation Masters. It provided a very practical basis for the more complicated and intense aspects of conservation, such as treatments, and was a great way to become comfortable with handling cultural objects.

A. Lisa Yeats, University of Melbourne (LY) My favourite aspect was getting to do actual treatment on the museum objects, accessioning was good but it was when people were actually starting to notice a difference in the museum that I felt like we were achieving something. My second favourite aspect was being able to piece together an individual's story from previously unrelated items in the collection. For example finding pieces of a uniform, medals, military kit, or photos that had been donated by one individual or their family and being able to connect them and create some kind of meaningful narrative.

A. William Sit, University of Melbourne (WS) Having connection with the client and having a more holistic understanding of a collection that is about to face re-housing were my favourite aspects of the project. Getting to have some form of collection management experience outside of the University environment was invaluable to us students.

A. Lucy Willet, University of Melbourne (LW) I really enjoyed when the residents would come in and tell their stories about the objects. It really made the collection more interesting.

Q. Tell me about a collection item that captured your attention.

A. WS I was responsible for the accession of plane models from the WWI to post WWII period. The more we work on object details and condition, the more we got to understand the significance of these object. We'd also learned a lot about how to identify different aircraft types. The change in material used from wood and metals to plastic was also interesting and reflects the period of time in which they were made.

A. LY There was a lot that I found really interesting and wanted to learn more about, I can't just choose one and I can't explain why some objects spoke to me more than others. The objects that caught my attention the most were the items in the designated Japanese cabinet. Especially a little fabric doll labelled 'Japanese Booby Trap Doll'. It looks so delicate and innocent but the label suggests dolls such as this were scattered in fields by Japanese troops in Borneo where they would have been attached to a trip wire that would have been attached to a bomb. Whether the label is entirely accurate or not is not that important. For me the object symbolises the brutality of war and signifies war time attitudes towards the enemy. There are also a number of personal items such as wallet sized photos of family members, rings, belts, and a watch that once belonged to Japanese soldiers in the same cabinet. The personal nature of these items really affected me. I wanted to know more about the items, especially the ways in which they were procured and made their way to Australia. For this reason I have decided to focus my minor thesis on the Japanese textile collection at the RSL LifeCare Museum. Another different collection that comes to mind was a set of small black and white photographs from a soldier in the Middle East during WWI. He took a lot of portraits of locals, and everyday scenes. The collection is quite eerie. His notes on the back of the photographs were so blunt and casual, for example on the back of a photo of a number of people being hanged is written 'Turks

hanging Armenians'. Being able to see the world through the soldiers' eyes and see what he was actually seeing is pretty incredible. Also the little apple seed purse that was made in France during WWII.

Q. What did you learn in Narrabeen?

A. LW: I learnt about conservation-grade mount making and display of objects. I also learnt about what different medals can be made of and what they were awarded for.

A. LY I learnt a lot of new treatment skills in the workshops with Jessie and Claire from the AWM such as learning how to encapsulate flat and 3D objects, make fabric covered coat hangers, and hang flags. I learnt a lot about group dynamics also.

A. WS I'd learned that it was important to understand and assess the need of the collection and the nature of the job before making or performing any tasks required in order to accomplish goals effectively. It was also important to respect the historical integrity of a collection, including recent housing and display history of the collection, as the mismanagement of any aspects of a collection could lead to loss of information and provenance.

Q. Tell me about a resident that you met at RSL LifeCare.

A. LY It's difficult to single out one person but one of the interviews I did for my thesis was with a man named Roy Lascelles. Roy was a soldier in WWII and was a POW of the Japanese from 1942 until the war ended in 1945. I went over to his place and we ended up talking for a few hours about his time in the army and as a POW. He brought out a photo album that he said he hadn't looked at in years and we went through it. It was really nice how open he was about his experiences. I think most residents are more than happy to share what they know if you show some interest, and they tell you as much or as little as they are comfortable with.

A. LW Guy was an artist who lived at RSL LifeCare. He visited a few times and showed us his portfolio and some of his work. It was great having a chat with him, he was a real character.

A. WS Residents of the RSL LifeCare are very generous people who work very hard to ensure our stay at the facility is as comfortable as possible. I have not got one particular resident in mind, but whenever we had material and accommodation needs, residents were always quick to help out as much as they can.

Q. Has working on this project contributed to your personal goals in conservation?

A. LW It has made me understand the need for conservation in smaller institutions. It is something I would like to continue throughout my career.

A. LY Initially I wasn't sure that I'd really enjoy working with a military collection as I didn't consider it to be one of my areas of interest, however it has made me realise that at the end of the day although the objects themselves are important, it is the stories and meaning behind them that we are actually conserving and preserving. The stories of the people behind the objects brought to life what I first perceived as a potentially dry collection. It has also made me realise the potential of, or need for, conservation to go beyond the material aspects and incorporate the intangible / oral histories surrounding objects to gain a richer understanding of them.

A. WS It has definitely built my team working and collaborative skills when dealing with project based management. The experience provided me with a wider conservation experience.

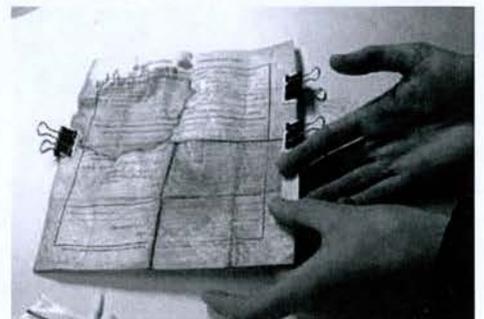
Jenny O'Connell
The University of Melbourne

Leaky Ceiling

In June a group of students from the University of Melbourne and the University of Canberra travelled to Narrabeen, NSW for the second stage of the RSL LifeCare ANZAC Memorial Museum Project. The first week was spent cataloguing a diverse collection of War memorabilia; from newspaper articles, soldiers' pay books and cartoons to miniature tool sets, airplanes and submarines crafted by soldiers and everything in-between. The collection sits in the heart of the RSL LifeCare retirement village and is cared for by a number of volunteers who have personal connections to the exhibits.

On Friday morning of the first week seven of us were working away at the Museum and looking forward to our sit-down lunch with the residents. Yvonne Hearn and I were cataloguing a collection of newspaper articles, when out of the corner of her eye Yvonne noticed a drop of water. We walked over to investigate and discovered a hole in the ceiling from which water was dripping onto the display tables below. We quickly moved the table and cleared the items on display; unfortunately one document was badly damaged as it had collected all of the water drops.

After alerting everyone to the situation, we gathered around for a group discussion. The affected document was a certificate of discharge on parchment from WWI. It was severely distorted; the water left a large circular mark covering a quarter of the document, and had caused bleeding of inks and cockling. At this stage the priority was to dry and flatten the parchment document to

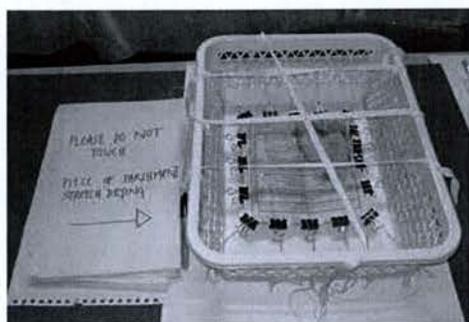


Carefully attaching bulldog clips to parchment with a barrier of cotton tape. Photographed by Elizabeth Ellis

improve its stability and reduce cockling. A treatment proposal was drafted and discussed with Nicole Tse, CCMC via telephone.

Nicole Tse informed us that parchment needs to be dried under tension, and positioned so that both sides are able to breathe. Nicole recommended suspending the parchment so that it could be adjusted as it dried. With the limited resources available at the RSL LifeCare Museum, we found a plastic basket, sixteen bulldog clips, cotton tape and string to create a contraption for the parchment to dry under tension. The cotton tape was cut into two centimetre pieces to provide a barrier between the metal clip and the parchment. Three clips were then attached along each edge and spaced out to provide even tension across the piece of parchment. Pieces of string were then tied to the bulldog clips, which were attached to the basket at an even height so that the bulldog clips were lifted just above the ground. First the four centre clips were attached, followed by the outer clips, and then the corners. This allowed the tension to be gradually increased across the surface, similar to the process of stretching a canvas.

Once suspended, the parchment had a flatter appearance, except for one part of the document on the face left edge. A bulldog clip was placed on the bend and a bamboo skewer was placed through all of the bulldog clips on the face left edge in an attempt to align the parchment. The bulldog clip did not reduce the disfiguring; it just made it bend in a different direction. Partial wetting had caused fibre contraction in the affected area, while the rest of the parchment remained unchanged, resulting in an uneven surface.

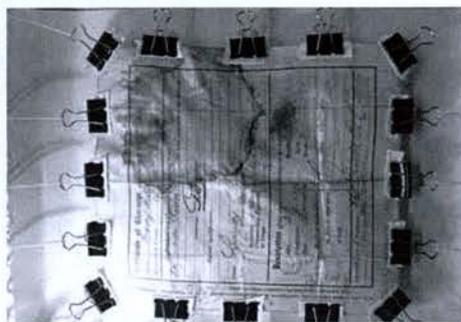


Parchment stretch drying in basket contraption. Photographed by Yvonne Hearn

The dark tide line was also cause for concern. Following advice from Sophie Lewincamp, we investigated using a 1:1 mixture of Methylated Spirits and water to reduce the staining subject to ink solubility. The mixtures did not affect the media nor did it reduce the staining so the technique was discontinued. It was noted that the affected area had a different appearance to the rest of the document, when viewed through transmitted light it was more translucent. This could possibly be due to the dirt on the document that was cleaned away by the water. However it also appeared to have a scale-like structure, similar to a leather surface, which was not visible in the rest of the document.

The parchment was then placed between two pieces of acid-free paper and pressed under a weight of books. After two days the parchment was observed to have lost some of the original cockling, which were presumably caused by the owner folding it up and placing it in his pocket. The slight reduction of these marks was undesirable, so the document was removed from the flattening press and rehoused in an archival folder.

Whilst carrying out this stabilisation treatment, neither Yvonne nor I understood why the parchment had to be dried under tension. There was no time to research methodologies of parchment conservation, we had to respond to the disaster and stabilise the parchment before it dried. After the event, literature was consulted and it was found that during production parchment is stretch dried under tension (Cains 1983, p. 15). However the same degree of tension can never be achieved on subsequent drying, therefore once parchment has been wet it will be



Parchment dried and about to be removed from basket contraption. Photographed by Katie Wood

inevitably altered (Woods 1995, p. 222). Chris Woods (1995, p. 222) further explains that water's high surface tension draws the fibres together when it evaporates from the parchment. This causes adjacent fibres to stick together, resulting in a translucent and rigid sheet. This explains the difference in both opacity and structure of the affected area.

Upon reflection, there are a few things we could do differently. Not many before treatment photographs were taken. We were in a rush to attend to the parchment and overlooked the importance of documentation. If there were more photographs a before and after comparison document could be made, assessing the effectiveness of the treatment. Also, when placed in the basket the verso was facing out, so we were not able to swab the recto. Overall, the treatment was successful as the original goal of stabilising the parchment was achieved.

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Acknowledgements

Thanks to Yvonne Hearn for working alongside me on this treatment and for continued input and advice. To all the students at Narrabeen who contributed to the group discussions: Emily Mulvihill, Fran Paterson, Elizabeth Ellis, Sophie Theobald Clark and Sarah Boundy. A special thanks to William Sit, who missed out on his Friday lunch to supervise Yvonne and I, and to Jane Walton for providing assistance, advice and relevant literature. Also to Nicole Tse and Sophie Lewincamp for their expert advice and thanks to Sophie Lewincamp and Jenny O'Connell for valuable feedback and editing.

Katie Wood
CCMC

Fragments from Narrabeen

While cataloguing at the War Museum in the RSL Life Care War Veteran's home at Narrabeen NSW, I came across a comic book titled *Fragments from France*. It was beautifully illustrated by Captain Bruce Bairnsfather, as part of a series of works by the Bystander first published in 1916 (Bristow 2012).

A quick search bought up the Bruce Bairnsfather website, which provided a history of the comic's publication and its reception by the soldiers.

In one edition of the Bystander it stated that; 'Letters we have received by the score from officers and men on active service in all the theatres, assure us that nothing since the war began presents the actual facts and feelings of the fighting men so realistically or so humorously as do these sketches by one of themselves....To get an immediate copy of *Fragments from France* is a duty you owe to yourself. No dug-out, billet or mess room will be complete without it. And if you ever feel in a generous mood towards the enemy, cheer him up too by hurling a copy over to his trenches. It will prove a high explosive of mirth, even to him.' (Warby 2009)

Items such as this comic book will provide visitors to the War Museum with a wider perspective of the realities of war, to glimpse a more personal understanding. It also reminds us that war is not just an event of the past, but a connection to our shared history, to enable us to better appreciate the sacrifices made for our country.

It was also comforting to discover that humour does not become out-dated. That despite the progress in the world, that you can still lighten the mood with an artistic hand and a bright mind. It re-emphasizes the ever growing need to preserve the objects of our past, so that future generations can be inspired by their history.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank the residents and staff of the RSL Life Care War Veteran's Home in Narrabeen NSW, Claire Champion and Jessie Firth of the Australian War Memorial, Sophie Lewincamp of the University of Melbourne, as well as my fellow students from the University of Melbourne, and the staff and students from the University of Canberra.

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Sarah Boundy
University of Melbourne



A minor success – photographed by Sarah Boundy



The tourists – photographed by Sarah Boundy

Technical Note

Remoistenable Tissue Recipe for the Repair of Corrosive Pigments in Islamic Manuscripts

The Chester Beatty Library, Dublin has one of the world's finest collections of Islamic manuscripts, and the most beautifully illuminated texts are in high demand for readers, exhibitions and loans. One of the most common conservation issues associated with this material is damage caused by the degradation of copper and lead-based pigments. Verdigris and lead deterioration can cause discolouration and darkening of adjacent pigments, weakening of the substrate especially along the inlay attachments of Islamic manuscripts, and severe deterioration can lead to fractures through the support.

The Conservation Department at CBL uses a number of methods to stabilise and repair damage caused by these reactive pigments. Acid catalysed

hydrolysis is the process by which verdigris and lead degrades. The main catalyst for this reaction is moisture; therefore it is critical to repair copper and lead-based pigments using the minimum amount of water.

Remoistenable tissues are extremely useful for carrying out repairs on moisture-sensitive paper and pigments. We have had good success using Kozo tissue prepared using Dow Methocel™ A4M in solution with wheat starch paste. A4M is a film-forming methylcellulose which is resistant to acid catalysed hydrolysis. Methylcellulose is strong and flexible making it ideal for paper repairs which need to flex, such as the inner margins in bindings. We use the following method to prepare 40 sheets of Kozo tissue pre-cut to 20 x 40cm. It is important to note that methylcellulose can leave a shiny residue on the surface of repairs; therefore care needs to be taken to ensure the tissue is prepared in the correct manner.

Method

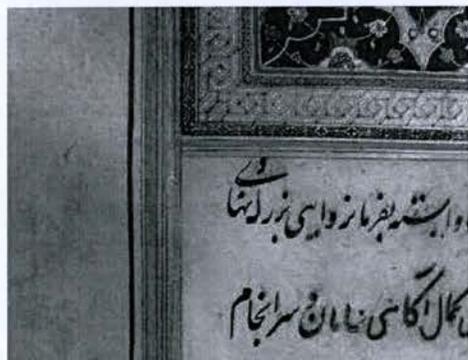
1. Prepare 300mL of 1% methylcellulose A4M in purified water. Allow the solution to swell overnight and stir well to ensure an even consistency.
2. Prepare 300mL of wheat starch paste using purified water (1:6 weight to volume solution). Simmer for 20-25 minutes to ensure the starch molecules have burst. When cool, sieve the paste 3-4 times until a smooth consistency is reached.
3. Select a light weight kozo, such as RK-0, and assess the colour in relation to the substrate. If necessary, tone the tissue to a suitable shade and allow to dry overnight.
4. Pre-cut the kozo into workable pieces according to the size of your folio e.g., 20 x 40cm. If using machine-made tissue ensure the grain direction runs head to tail. Cut 40 strips of medium weight Melinex™ (Mylar) slightly larger than the kozo sheets e.g., 30 x 50cm.
5. Mix equal volumes of the two adhesives together to produce a volume of approximately 500mL. Stir well to fully combine. The consistency should resemble pouring cream. Decant into a wide shallow tray.
6. Lightly dampen your work bench to help the Melinex cling to the surface. Using a wide Japanese pasting brush, brush a very thin layer of adhesive onto the Melinex using a smooth and even stroke. It may take some practice to achieve an even-coating. As a general rule, the brush marks will disappear and the film will coalesce when applied correctly.
7. Holding the tissue at opposite corners, slowly lower it onto the adhesive. Alternatively, roll the tissue up and lower it onto the adhesive whilst blowing onto it. Do not touch the surface of the tissue once it has made contact, as this may cause the adhesive to strike-through. If air bubbles form, gently blow them or tap with a brush until the tissue makes contact with the adhesive.
8. Leave the tissue to air dry on its Melinex backing sheet. Once dry, the tissue should be stored in a labelled and dated folder until needed.



This 16th century Qur'an had severe splits throughout the textblock caused by a combination of weakness along the inlay attachment and corrosive pigments used in the line borders (CBL Is 1558)

Application

1. To carry out a repair, cut a thin strip of tissue using a scalpel or needle and gently peel it off the Melinex backing sheet. The width of the repair will depend on the extent of the split and thickness of the folio. Typically, repair strips can be as small as 2-3mm wide, but thicker substrates may require a wider repair strip.
2. The positioning of the repair should be judged by the Conservator, and must take into account the potential visual disturbance the repair may have. The length of the repair will depend on the extent of the damage. In some cases, it may be prudent to consider full-length repairs as a preventive measure.



CBL In 03 Akbarnama during and after repair using remoistenable tissue

3. Once the repair is correctly positioned activate the adhesive by brushing a very small quantity of purified water onto the tissue using a size 0000 brush. If necessary, gently press the repair down using a bone folder through Bondina (Reemay). Leave to air dry. If the substrate is highly burnished it may be necessary to activate the adhesive using a 0.5% solution of methylcellulose A4M in water, as this will form a stronger bond. The use of Bondina and soft weights can also aid adhesion if necessary.
4. For large repairs, it may be useful to activate the repair tissue prior to application. Place the tissue with the adhesive side facing upwards onto a sheet of Melinex. Activate the tissue by brushing a small amount of purified water or 0.5% methylcellulose A4M solution onto the tissue. Using tweezers gently lift the repair tissue and place in the desired position with the adhesive side down. Gently press with a bone folder or soft weights if necessary.
5. A single layer of remoistenable tissue is generally sufficient to support most splits. However, in some cases you may need to apply further layers. Repair strips can be applied to both the verso and recto of a split, or layers of tissue may be applied on one side of the folio only. If you decide to layer the strips, stagger the repairs to prevent a hard edge from forming, and ensure each layer is dry before the next is added.
6. The repair tissue can be very lightly burnished when dried to better blend with the substrate.

7. To reverse remoistenable tissue repairs, re-activate the adhesive with a small amount of water or 0.5% A4M using a small brush and gently remove the tissue with round-tipped tweezers.

(Please note this technique is not suitable for repairing substrates damaged by iron gall ink degradation. For further information on how the CBL Conservation Department repairs damage in association with iron gall ink corrosion please contact the author).

Methylcellulose A4M is supplied by The Dow Chemical Company <http://www.dow.com>

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Institutional News

New South Wales

Art Gallery of NSW

The Conservation Department have been hosting a series of seminars on *Caring for the Collection* for Gallery staff and volunteers to increase awareness of risks to the Gallery's collection and to generate discussion about what the Gallery can do to improve its risk management systems.

In Framing Conservation, the major treatment of the frame for Sydney Long's *By Tranquil Waters* has been completed, and the painting is now on its way down to Canberra for the upcoming S. Long retrospective exhibition at the National Gallery of Australia. **Stephanie Limoges**, who was working on this project, has now taken over the responsibility of looking after frames for loan and exhibition requests. This has freed up **Malgorzata Sawicki**, Head of Frames, to concentrate on

the next big project which is the restoration of the frame for Etienne Dinet's *The Snake Charmer* – one of the most popular 19th century works that is on permanent display here at the Art Gallery of NSW. A new temporary frame has been constructed to house the painting, so that it can remain on display throughout this period.

Barbara Dabrowa is nearing the end of an eight month treatment on the frame for W. C. Piguénit's *The Flood in the Darling 1890*, a massive undertaking which has required all of the Frames team to lend a helping hand. **Sandra Hodgen** has also been volunteering one day per week to assist in completing this project, as well as taking on some of the furnishing loan requests.

In Paper Conservation, **Carolyn Murphy** has been treating a group of Charles Bayliss albumen photographs recently acquired by the Gallery and **Sarah Bunn** has been preparing works for the upcoming exhibition, *Flatlands: photography and everyday space*. Paper Conservation have hosted a number

of interns recently, **Sara Freeman** from the University of Canberra course, **Abigail Handley** from the University of Melbourne and Ellen Smith from the University of Sydney. **Asti Sherring**, a recent graduate from the University of Melbourne course has been volunteering in Paper Conservation and is currently working on a group of prints by Syd Ball.

Paintings Conservation have completed three major conservation projects *The flood on the Darling* by William Piguénit (funded by the Bank of America) conserved by **Andrea Nottage**, *By tranquil waters* by Sydney Long, (funded by the Art Gallery Society) conserved by **Julia Sharpe** and *Esther* by Jean Portaels conserved by **Kate Wilson** and **Kristel Smits**.

State Records NSW

Elisabeth Hadlow mentioned in the March Newsletter that she would be taking maternity leave.

Early March saw the much welcomed arrival of Ella Rose Anne just shy of International Star Wars Day. We wish them well but do look forward to her return as the rest of the conservation team are finding out how much was done to keep the lab running smoothly. We have all stepped in to take part of Elisabeth's workload as well as keeping the various projects running as planned.

Dominique Moussou has taken over the reins of managing the inspection and repair of the Crown plans being readied for digitisation. Of the 5,500 we have now completed 21%. As we all contribute to this project, we are now telling ourselves we are seeing a glimmer of light at the end of this particular tunnel.

Over the past few months **Paul Smith** has developed a pest inspection database



AGNSW Conservation 2012 Personnel

that will, when implemented, give us a clear overview of the monitored storage areas. He is also managing the environmental monitoring program as well as responding to internal and reader requests.

Carol Marsh is always busy with readying files for the Department of Community Services on demand. She is also overseeing our ongoing Volunteer conservation projects of cleaning and rehousing Deceased Estate files and Colonial Secretary letters.

Clara Cesarone our box magician is also involved with the agency retrievals, crown plans and has been delving into the mysteries of parchment treatment with Dominique.

Jill Gurney has been having a meaningful relationship with statistic gathering, annual reports, extreme oversize boxmaking and tracking and treating items destined for our online digital gallery.

Preservation Australia

The team at Preservation Australia has expanded recently with the welcome presence of two interns, **Ana Margarida** and **Hoa Huynh**, joining our long term intern **Alex Robinson**. Both have been assisting in the lab with various treatments and rehousing projects. Hoa has been cleaning and rehousing a collection of council books. Hoa is just beginning her conservation career and is looking to study next year in Melbourne. Ana worked closely with **Beate Yule** on more than 25 architectural plans that were adhered to backings. The backings were removed using a variety of techniques dependant on the adhesive identified. The plans were then rehoused and returned to a very happy customer.

Beate has also been working on a small collection of artworks and books from a fire. The works unfortunately have a mix of soot, ash, water and handling damage, however it is surprising that they even exist considering the location of the fire and its intensity.

Of course our intrepid traveler and director **Kay Soderlund** has been travelling around the globe again. First to sunny Queensland to deliver our regular workshops and then to Perth for disaster workshops. In between times she has been doing Preservation Needs Assessments and assisting with writing disaster plans for a small historical society. And travel was completed with a holiday in Alaska spotting bears!! In amongst all this travel paper conservation treatments have included a string of Japanese scrolls and screens – perhaps everyone has been to the AGNSW to see the Japanese design exhibition.

While Kay was bear spotting **Tegan Anthes** kept the home fires burning with local visits around Sydney and the Blue Mountains for a series of custom workshops for a small organization, along with several trips out to Liverpool to assist in writing a disaster plan which was facilitated through meetings, workshops and hands on experiences. The disaster planning and preparedness trend continues with Tegan reviewing and editing plans for two other organisations, customising disaster recovery workshops and ensuring that all are prepared.

The Preservation Australia studio was delighted to be able to share our extra space with **Artcare** and **Heritage Heights Conservation**. Artcare had a number of large outdoor works that were conserved over a period of weeks. And then **Tess Evans** joined us for a couple of weeks while back from the UK to continue work for her Australian clients.

The Powerhouse Museum

As well as exhibitions and loans the Powerhouse Museum Conservation team have recently been working on some important collection care projects.

Looking at ways to house our rich and diverse collection of dress accessories has always been a constant challenge. Our fan collection is currently stored in

commercially purchased polypropylene trays that sit inside metal cupboards. Unfortunately, after 25 years the appearance of these shelves has become less attractive and the over use of tissue paper appears undesirable. Suzanne Chee assisted by interns has begun the task of rehousing the fan collection. Their first task was to reduce the use of two trays per shelf with one custom sized tray fabricated from single wall blue-grey corrugated cardboard. To prevent the fans from sliding within the new cardboard tray, Suzanne used a system of adhering strips of the same corrugated cardboard outside the perimeter of each open fan. An image of each fan along with its registration number was important for effortless identification.

Kate Chidlow and other members of the Australian Dress Register (ADR) team went to Broken Hill for a few days to deliver a workshop and visit some of the many museums and galleries out in that creative town. They met wonderful people and found some great stories behind the dresses that the workshop participants are going to put on the ADR. Also, they have just published the ADR Resources book which is available on the Powerhouse website. It is a great resource which provides lots of information about how to document and care for historic dress collections.

As part of the TAM collection maintenance project **Rebecca Main** has begun cleaning and repairing several framed hand coloured albumen prints from the Juliette Henry collection and has also treated or rehoused some individual objects from the large collections being photographed by Conservation Photographer **Michael Myers**.

These include the museum's 2,000 piece lace collection, and the Julian Tennison-Woods Collection of 19th century Japanese artefacts and mineral and botanic specimens. Many of these photos are now on-line on the Powerhouse website.

Bronwen Griffin, **Tim Morris**, a piano tuner, 2 organ builders and 2 pianola specialists have been carrying out

maintenance on the Powerhouse Museum's Fotoplayer.

This is an upright player piano with an effects box containing organ pipes, whistles, drums, castanets and a chime. It was made to accompany silent movies and was restored to playing condition by the Mastertouch Pianola Roll Company for the opening of the Powerhouse Museum.

The Fotoplayer has been maintained as a working object ever since in the Museum's Kings Cinema and is demonstrated by Education and Volunteer staff.

Sue Gatenby has been analysing a painted plaster fictile which has been off gassing a rotten egg smell. Analysis has shown that the Plaster of Paris is deteriorating and producing hydrogen sulphide. The paint used was lead white and its appearance has changed to a light grey colour. Sue is investigating methods to measure the H₂S in ppm and what OH&S risks could be present for its treatment and future storage.

Sue has also been involved in the analysis of cellulose nitrate samples from the PHM's archival collection using the FTIR spectrometer. The samples are at various stages of deterioration.

To top it all off Sue Gatenby has completed a draft list of recommended conservation materials for use in PHM's Conservation Display Guidelines which, when finalised, will become part of the department's Display Guidelines for Exhibitions.

In other general Powerhouse news the 'All is not Lost' salvage flip book will be ready at the beginning of August. It contains basic information about disaster preparedness and how to carry out basic disaster salvage. It will be distributed to many regional NSW museums. It will also be available for sale on the Powerhouse website shortly.

International Conservation Services

Exhibition work has consumed the ICS labs for the last few weeks, the two significant ones being the David Boyd retrospective at the SH Ervin Gallery, Sydney and the new Supreme Court in Brisbane.

David Boyd was a prolific artist working across a range of media, so **Matteo Volonte**, **Anna Diakowska Czarnota** and **Claire Heasman** have been cleaning his paintings, **Kate Papierniak**, **Wendi Powell** and **Michelle Stoddart** treating two of his works on paper, and **Karina Acton**, **Ian Miles** (whom ICS welcomes to the team after recent stints at the Australian War Memorial and the Science Museum, London) and **Sofia Lo Bianco** treating his ceramic works.

Meanwhile the paper team did a great job getting a range of legal papers and memorabilia ready for a permanent exhibition in library of the new Supreme Court in Brisbane. **Gail Hamilton** treated the textiles and **Skye Firth** spent a week on site installing. It is a building where ICS has undertaken other consulting, including **Adam Godijn** advising on the ceiling mural in the foyer, and **David West** acting as the technical consultant and project manager on the major public artwork in the plaza by the revered Japanese artist Kusama. It consists of dozens of black and white eyes of differing sizes with pronounced eyelashes, and has already drawn extensive (if not always favourable) media coverage.

Adam Godijn has also been busy with **Arek Werstak** rehanging the famous Goatcher Curtain in Kalgoorlie – Boulder Town Hall, which ICS treated some 8 years ago. It had been temporarily removed from the building whilst earthquake remediation work was undertaken.

On site work over the last few weeks has also included **Karina Acton** and **Eoin O' Sullivan** treating a life size equestrian bronze by Arthur Murch in Rockhampton, which had had an unfortunate encounter with vandals

armed with a chemical fire extinguisher, and **Karina Acton** and **Oliver Hull** relocating a scarred tree on a mine in the Hunter Valley. **Karina Acton**, **Oliver Hull** and **Kat Edghill** also treated and prepared the bronze ANZAC badges for reinstallation during refurbishment work to the ANZAC Bridge in Sydney.

Australian Museum

Heather MacKay has been working on the first stage of the Indigenous Australians Gallery rejuvenation project. Many objects have been 'retired' after a long time on display and will be replaced with a new selection from the collections with **Megan Dean-Jones** assisting in the preparation of these objects.

Heather is also coordinating the conservation of the Lord Howe Island diorama. Built in 1922, the diorama is comprised of seabird and egg specimens and a painted plaster and wire rocky outcrop. Although most of the conservation work will be carried out in the lab, in August the 'on show' component will commence where cleaning the diorama continues in the gallery during opening hours. Megan is also working in, on and under the diorama in the Skeleton Gallery during its refurbishment.

Silvia da Rocha is cleaning the diorama birds' very grubby feathers and repairing feet. She is continuing the avian theme with the renovation of a donated showcase full of taxidermied birds, as well as the repair of several decapitated bird specimens.

Michael Kelly recently installed the exhibition *Beauty from Nature, the Art of the Scott Sisters* at the Tweed River Art gallery. This is the first venue of an extensive tour through regional NSW. He is currently preparing PNG ethnographic objects for display in *Frank Hurley: Journeys into Papua* to be displayed at the Whitlam Institute, University of Western Sydney.

Sheldon Teare and Silvia prepared and installed specimens for the *Deep Oceans* exhibition which opened in June. This included cleaning and refitting the fins to a giant sunfish collected 130 years ago. They also carried out transfers of ethanol preserved specimens into glycerol solutions, which greatly improved their appearance for display.

At the request of the State Library of NSW, Silvia and Sheldon are working on a treatment programme and recommendations for Governor Macquarie's collector's chest of natural history specimens.

Colin Macgregor prepared material for the seminar about sustainability and museum climate control in early July. The experiments in air-conditioning control are starting to pay dividends and it was great to share information with similar projects around the country.

Kate Jones has been busy with the condition assessments and storage of a range of new acquisitions for the Pacific Collections. She is also completing a project to reshape and roll mats from the Pacific collections.

While examining and rehousing several painted plaster busts and figures in the collection, **Penny Nolton** made an unusual discovery. Two extremely lifelike 'plaster' death masks donated from the Anatomy Museum at Sydney University which are thought to have been cast around the 1920s, are not painted plaster at all but rather, a sweet-smelling, dense, translucent, homogenous, black gel which has so far proven impossible to identify by the usual methods including FTIR, flame test, solubility tests and microscopic examination. In independent FTIR scans, the material closely resembles degraded cellulose nitrate but displays virtually none of the other chemical and physical properties of this material. Furthermore, the diphenylamine test did not detect any CN present in the samples. The search continues...! Penny would love to hear from anyone who has come across similar objects or death masks made from materials other than plaster or wax.

Australian National Maritime Museum

The ANMM is undergoing organizational re-structure as a prelude to further site redevelopment and future redevelopment of core galleries. The Conservation section remains unaltered but is now part of the renamed Collections and Research division, with Temporary and Travelling Exhibitions being moved to another division. The changes are yet to be finalized, but should be in place by mid-August.

This is an exciting time for the museum and perhaps a little daunting as well, knowing what a massive undertaking such re-development entails. However, we're looking forward to working with our colleagues in other sections and divisions in contributing to the redevelopment.

Jonathan London attended the Sustainable buildings for sustainable collections workshop held at the Australian Museum on 5 July. In addition he has been developing the section work plan for the year ready for performance agreements to be signed off with section staff.

We recently welcomed back **Victoria Bramwell-Davis**, who is working part-time as objects conservator. Sadly though, we have farewellled our wonderful and talented volunteer **Henri Holekamp**. After nearly 4 years with us, she is returning home to Cape Cod Ma, USA with husband Harry. We thank her for her excellent work with the collection, for sharing so many great stories, and generally enriching our lives!

During the last quarter **Julie O'Connor** re-housed 156 textiles from the collection for the textile storage project. Two new volunteers, **Cheryl McArthur** from Department of Education and Training and **Jan Russell** have been helping on the project. We have also out-sourced some of the sewing to Pavionine Pty Ltd in Marrickville. Following a textile survey conducted by **Sue Frost** and Julie O'Connor the textiles were prioritized according to

storage requirements. At the end of the last quarter, 58% of the collection had been re-housed.

Caroline Whitley has recently assisted the exhibition team with the preparation of works and the installation of the Fish in Australian Art exhibition. She is also doing many treatments on, as part of the rehousing project for many paper-based collection items.

Rebecca Dallwitz has been working on the demount of ANMM's oldest gallery, Commerce. Many of the durable objects and large technology items have been in Commerce as long as the Museum has been open, and now require a range of conservation interventions. She continues to treat maritime archaeological materials raised during Silentworld/ ANMM expeditions from wrecks including the Cato, Mermaid and Royal Charlotte. She has started to write entries for the Museum's blog, and is working on a project to conserve small vessels and their engines in storage.

The Senior Conservator – Objects, position remains vacant and will be re-advertised later in the year.

Tasmania

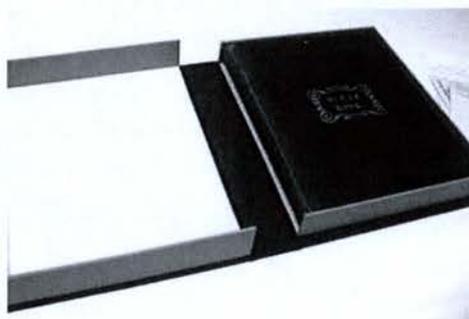
Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office

The Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts has acquired a number of significant items recently including a watercolour by the convict artist Costantini; the manuscript of Elizabeth Fenton (1826 to 1850s) and the fishing rods and licences of Morton Allport who introduced salmon fishing to Tasmania. **Stephanie McDonald** has been involved in preparing these for the acquisition display case.

The Conservation section will be preparing the next exhibition in the Allport to mark the 100th anniversary of the Mount Lyell Mines disaster of 1912 where about 40 miners died following a fire. The original photographs have been prepared for digitisation and Stephanie has continued work to remove some of the photos from the chipboard they were mounted on. She is also treating plans of the area of the disaster from 1912.

Recently Stephanie presented a public talk on "Looking after your family photographs" as part of National Family History Week.

Penny Carey Wells completed the 2011-12 specialised boxing project for the Allport including custom boxes for 32 sketchbooks by members of the Allport family; an album of algae from the D'Entrecasteau Channel and the collection of buttons and charity badges.



Allport Boxing Project – badges

South Australia

Artlab Australia

Even after the passing of the financial year-end the team of paper conservators at Artlab remains busy. We're fortunate to have **Fred Francisco's** consulting expertise both to help in completing treatments but also in imparting knowledge and skills onto others. With a total of nine people fulfilling various roles there exists both a broad skill base and a lively atmosphere. At present no major exhibitions are dominating the work schedule giving the team an opportunity to complete treatments on unique objects rather than those forming part of larger collections.

A trip to the airport... where are the Projects team heading to?! Sadly no passports are needed as the team is only travelling to the airport's long-stay car park to treat the Dowie stone memorial to the Vickers Vimy aircrew. However Project's most recent recruit, **Nick Flood**, is about to travel to East Timor to commence a University of Melbourne grant project. In cooperation with the cultural development group Many Hands International, the project is designed to establish a museum collection in Lospalos. Much closer to home, in Elder Park, Projects has recently completed the cleaning and refurbishment of a small memorial drinking fountain to Fireman Gardner and has been fortunate enough to benefit from valuable consultation advice and the practical expertise of Sydney Artefacts Conservation's **Anne Cummins** recently, when tackling some tricky localized re-patination of some outdoor statuary and large heritage copper-sheeted doors.

Most of the Objects Lab has been involved in the preparation of the South Australian Museum's loan the "Images of the Interior" exhibition to the Charles Darwin University. During this period we have had the pleasure of **Magalie Debarnot's** assistance. Magalie is studying Conservation

and Restoration of Ceramics at the Conde School in Paris. She has been at Artlab for two months as part of her final year internship. Her fantastic skills have been put to great use in the conservation of Mildura's Community mural by Douglas Annand amongst other things. Object's Team wishes her well in her future career.

The Preventive team are continuing their usual cycle of environmental reports and pest checks across the SA state collections, as well as moving along quickly with the updating of their disaster plans for 2012. More collections risk assessments will also be on the cards, especially with the commencement of the major project for the South Australian Museum to freeze, clean and rehouse the significant entomology collection.

The extensive preparation for the SA Illustrated exhibition, which recently opened at the Art Gallery of South Australia included full conservation on many of the gallery's historical collection. The Paintings team is currently very busy with several projects including cleaning large portraits in the house of assembly chambers in the South Australian Parliament House with the Adelaide City Council and the Supreme Court also providing us with numerous portraits for cleaning and frame conservation.

The Textiles team are continuing work on the Coachbuilder's Trade Union Banner belonging to the Australian Manufacturers Union. They have also been dreaming of galaxies far, far away while working on Andy Thomas' space suit, which has been loaned to the South Australian Museum by NASA.



Projects conservator Nick Flood cleaning the John Dowie Vickers Vimy memorial at Adelaide Airport

Victoria

National Gallery of Victoria

In the textiles lab **Solitaire Osei**, **Kate Douglas** and **Skye Firth** are enjoying the challenge of working on deteriorated Art Deco costumes with lots of problem solving along the way. **Bronwyn Cosgrove** is experimenting with some exciting new techniques to provide in-fills to lost silk on the bodice of the Balenciaga *Infanta* gown. The textiles' lab has Bronwyn, Kate and **Annette Soumilas** continuing and now joined by Solitaire and Skye on part time casual contracts. We have also recently had **Kate McClaren** from the University of Melbourne, carrying out her placement in the lab. Annette's position as textile display specialist has recently been made permanent (three days a week). We are delighted to report that **Christina Ritschel** who worked in the lab for four years (and now lives in Denmark) has recently given birth to a big healthy boy called Oskar.

In the paper studio, **Ruth Shervington** has developed and innovative display and storage system for an oversize, three panel, charcoal work on paper by Melbourne artist Tom Nicholson. Developed in consultation with the artist, **Gervais Battour** (NGV Conservation Art Technician) and NGV art handlers, the system involves float mounting the work onto Dibond which has a recessed timber strainer attached to the verso. **Sarah Brown** has been working with Ruth on this project amongst other projects, and has joined us for a part time contract. We have recently welcomed **Sarah Noble**, a student from the MA Fine Art Conservation at Northumbria University in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, who is assisting us for four weeks with day to day activities as well as undertaking a variety of treatments. **Louise Wilson** is continuing her technical examination of William Blake's watercolours from the *Divine Comedy* series in order to determine the

materials and techniques of each work in the NGV's collection. **Pip Morrison** is re-examining and re-tensioning large works that were mounted with reversible systems in the last 10 years, assessing the effectiveness of the system and the changes made to it over this time.

In the paintings conservation studio a number of major conservation projects are underway: **John Payne** is cleaning the first panel of the *Triptych with the Miracles of Christ*, a Flemish altarpiece painted in Brussels between 1470 and 1495. The two wings or doors of the triptych are painted on both sides, so the work actually consists of five separate paintings by at least three separate artists – a complex and time-consuming project. **Michael Varcoe-Cocks** is working on two paintings from the Joseph Brown Collection: *Almond tree in Blossom* by John Peter Russell, and *The Bathers* by E. Phillips Fox. **Carl Willis** is working on the Gallery's newly acquired *Madonna and Child with Infant St. John the Baptist* by Correggio, painted around 1519.

Lucy Willet, a Masters of Arts (Cultural Materials Conservation) student from the University of Melbourne, is undertaking her placement with Senior Conservator of Metals and Conservation Science, **David Thurrowgood**. Lucy is assisting David with the preparation of bronze sculptures.

In the Frames & Furniture conservation studio, **Suzi Shaw** continues work on various Buddhist works with lacquer coatings in preparation for the new displays in the redeveloped Asian galleries. Thanks to the skills of Senior Art Technician **Gervais Battour**, she now has a wonderful wooden frame, for utilising the *shimbari* technique of applying gentle pressure to the three-dimensional lifted surfaces using wooden sticks spanned off the frame. **MaryJo Lelyveld** completed the major treatment of the c.1710 frame for Nicolas Poussin's *The Crossing of the Red Sea*, which along with the recently restored painting, was unveiled at a media launch in early May. MaryJo was

interviewed by the ABC, *Herald Sun* and *The Age* discussing the significance of the frame and its treatment, and contributed an article to the NGV mini-book Carl wrote on the painting's analysis and treatment. MaryJo and the frame are on the cover of the June issue of *Australian Wood Review* magazine. MaryJo also worked with **Holly McGowan-Jackson** on the trophy frame for the painting by Ward *Josephine signing the act of her divorce* (1853), prepared to coincide with exhibition *Napoleon: Revolution to Empire*, by reducing dark modern patination, replace losses to the ornament, and matt bright modern gilding on the slip. French couriers to the exhibition were fascinated by the original British-made frame from the 1840's which features an unusual combination of French revolutionary and empire symbols.

Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation, The University of Melbourne

CCMC have recently updated their commercial services website. Since April 2010, CCMC-Commercial Services has been managed by UoM Commercial Ltd., a company of the University. The Academic activity is still part of the University's Faculty of Arts. The new website reflects this administration change and expands on the commercial services offered by CCMC. The website is still a work in progress, and will be added to over time. See www.commercial.unimelb.edu.au/ccmc-commercial-services/

The teaching laboratory on campus was open to the public for tours as part of the University's Cultural Treasures Festival in late July. Both CCMC academic and commercial services staff hosted the popular tours.

The paintings team are continuing to work on a collection of paintings from a private collection damaged in a fire, as well as flood damaged items

from a public collection. The fire-damaged treatments involve wet and dry cleaning, consolidation and minor reintegration. The treatment of the water damaged paintings, coordinated by **Cushla Hill**, largely address mould, heavy soil on the surface, distortions and delamination of plywood layers. **Vanessa Kowalski** has recently been working out in the Western District of Victoria in a Heritage-listed Memorial Hall. The Hall houses two theatre backdrops that were donated to the Hall c. 1923 from the Princes Theatre in Melbourne. The backdrops measure approximately 3 m x 5 m each, and are painted on heavy-weight canvas. The two large theatre backdrops were generally sound and in good condition, as they are usually rolled and rarely in use. The treatment involved brush vacuuming of the heavy surface grime, as well as localised wet cleaning of accretions and bird guano. Tears were repaired with polyamide welding powder and heat set. Polyester-sailcloth patches were attached to the verso with Beva 371 film over areas of small holes and tears. Small losses were filled, and losses and abrasions inpainted. The work was undertaken on-site at the Memorial Hall. **Caroline Fry** has recently delivered a Colour Intensive course to CCMC second year Masters students.

The paper team recently bid farewell to **Belinda Gourley** who has been back-filling **Libby Melzer's** position of Senior Paper Conservator while Libby has been on study leave. We'd like to thank Belinda for her hard work and wish her well for the future. The paper team (**Libby**, **Briony Pemberton** and **Katy Glen**) have been working on a range of material recently, including prints from the University's Baillieu Library print collection and two large framed works each consisting of 72 albumen photographs. An unusual project underway is the removal of wall fabric from the Japanese Room in the Architecture Building on campus. The Japanese Room, a traditional timber construction, was built within the Architecture Building by Japanese artisans in the 1960's. A visiting

Japanese professor arranged the gift to the University, to showcase traditional Japanese construction techniques. The interior walls and the foyer are lined with a paper-backed fabric. At the end of the academic year, the Japanese Room will be dismantled prior to the demolition of the building. As part of the construction of the new Architecture Building, the Japanese Room will be re-assembled. **Jude Fraser**, **Libby Melzer**, **Marika Kocsis** and **Katy Glen** developed a technique for the removal of the fabric. The paper lining is effectively being treated as a sacrificial layer. Once the edges of the panels were mechanically lifted, an edge of each panel was temporarily taped to a cardboard tube to facilitate removal from the wall by rolling the fabric onto the tube. This technique ensured that an even tension was maintained across the width of the panel and limited any stretching of the fabric. The panels will be treated back at the laboratory in preparation for re-installation once the Japanese Room is reconstructed. **Marika Kocsis** and **Nick Selenitsch** prepared material for the exhibition, "We saw the Queen", in the foyer of the Victorian Archives Centre. Two special guests were sighted at the exhibition opening – two local corgis.

In the objects lab, **Carmela Lonetti** has been treating a range of objects: a metal umbrella stand with corrosion problems; a wooden sculpture with broken components; an insect infested textile wall hanging; an artwork in the form of a large metal hanging mobile. **Jordi Cassayas** has developed a hanging system for the large circular textile.

Museum Victoria

We recently welcomed **Erina McCann**, **Max Strating** and **Jill Lythgo** to the team. Erina worked with us last year as an intern then in a short term contract and has been a welcome addition to the Bunjilaka redevelopment project. Max is backfilling the Conservation Assistant and comes with a background in fine arts and many years working at

Museum Victoria in the engineering workshop and Discovery Centre. Jill is with us for 5 weeks on internship from the CCMC and is being passed around the team to experience as wide variety of tasks as possible.

It is with much sadness we farewell two of our colleagues, **Sarah Gubby** and **Felicity Bolton**. Sarah joined us in February 2010 as our inaugural Conservator, Paper, Images and Audiovisual and has worked hard over the past two and a half years to establish innovations in these areas. A highlight for our team has been the commissioning of a sound studio where we can record interviews and digitise a wide variety of media. Felicity joined us in April 2009 as our inaugural Conservator, Natural Sciences and has begun work on the very large natural science collections, with projects in the wet specimens, pyrites and marcasites. Sarah is leaving to spend time with her family and pursue personal projects and Felicity is returning home to England. We will miss them and wish them both all the best with their future endeavours!

Karina Palmer is subsequently busy with recruitment!

Helen Privett has been working on a small display of personal items from a family of taxi drivers. The Eid family migrated to Australia in the late 1960's and their migration story is being told in 'Behind the Wheel' at Immigration Museum.

Elizabeth McCartney will take time out of a holiday in Europe to travel to Paris for the installation of the Tjukurrjanu: Origins of Western Desert Art. While overseas she will also attend the IIC Vienna Congress.

Samantha Hamilton has recently been appointed the conservation representative on the Museums Australia (Victoria) Museum Accreditation Program (MAP) Advisory Committee; she is very excited by this opportunity.

Trawling the Internet



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

This time we have a number of sites to let you know about:

The Graphics Atlas
(www.graphicsatlas.org/) An online resource provided by the Image Permanence Institute providing extensive print identification information.

The Bank of America Art Conservation Project
(museums.bankofamerica.com/arts/Conservation)

The Bank of America Art Conservation Project provides grants to nonprofit museums throughout the world to

conserve historically or culturally significant works of art that are in danger of degeneration. The program, introduced in 2010 in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, has been expanded to the Americas, Asia and Australia.

Public Art Research
(publicartresearch.wordpress.com/) Focused on collating, disseminating and reflecting upon academic, professional and practice-led investigations into the history, discourses, practices, and effects of art in public spaces.

Textile Conservation Catalog
(www.conservation-wiki.com/w/?title=Textiles) Records current conservation treatments and practices for artistic and historic textiles.

The Art Newspaper
(www.theartnewspaper.com/) An online newspaper aimed at "keen exhibition viewers, museum professionals, collectors, artists, lawyers specialising in cultural property issues, arts administrators, policemen, dealers and auctioneers". It publishes breaking news, investigates issues and campaigns on behalf of heritage at risk. It includes a section on conservation stories.

This is a regular newsletter segment. If anybody knows of sites that may be interesting to the membership please let us know.

Submissions for the newsletter

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

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

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

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

Thank you

Advertising is accepted.

Positions vacant

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

1/2 page*	\$220 inc. GST
full page#	\$300 inc. GST

Discounts

10% for 2 issues, 15% for 3 issues, 20% for 4 issues.

Inserts

Positions Vacant	\$110 inc. GST
Commercial	\$220 inc. GST

Advertisers must supply their own inserts.

Classifieds

\$0.88 per word including GST.

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

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

Notices pertaining to AICCM activities are free of charge.

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

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List of SIG Convenors

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

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

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

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

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

Tegan Anthes
SIG Coordinator

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