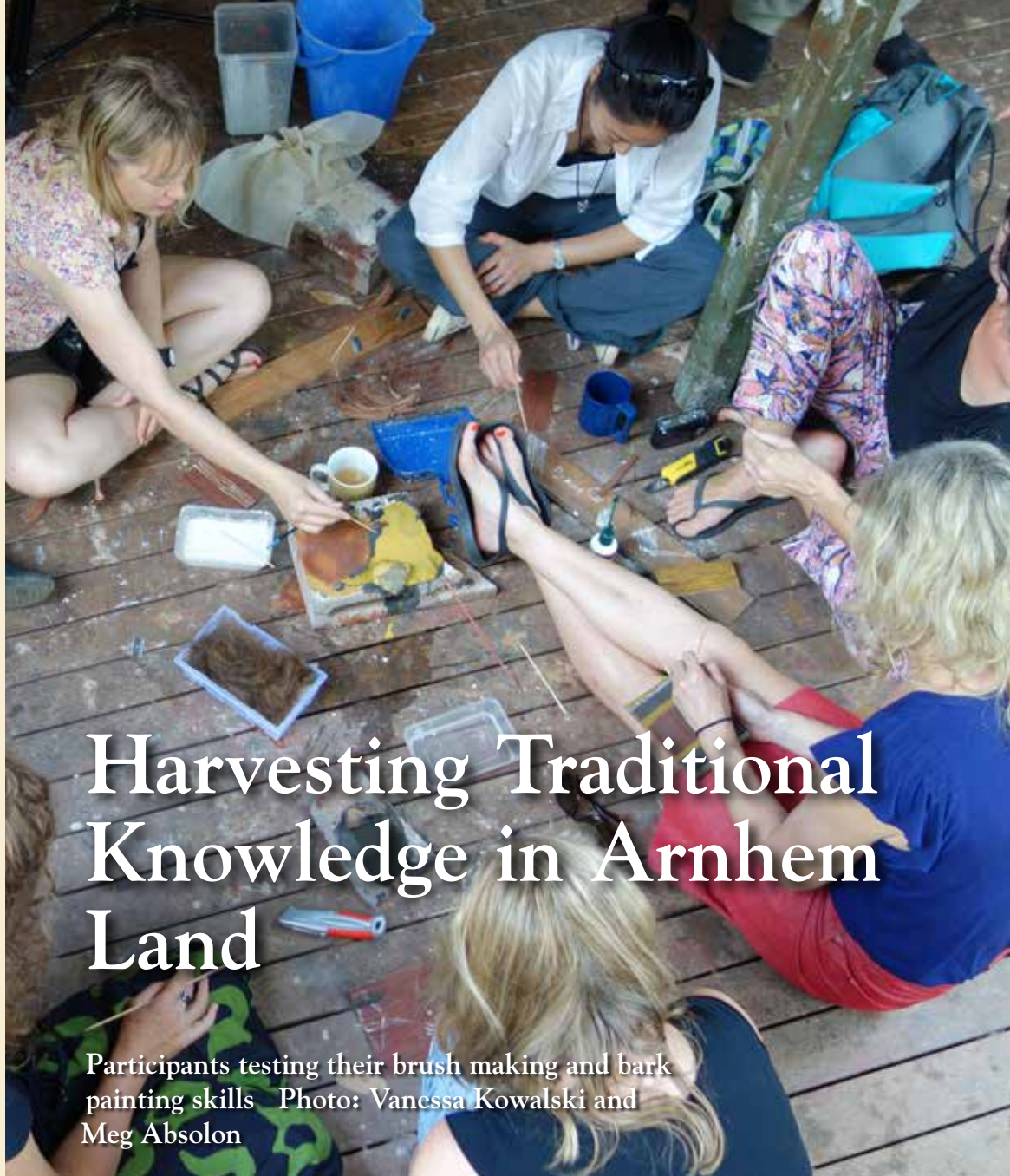


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Harvesting Traditional Knowledge in Arnhem Land

Participants testing their brush making and bark painting skills Photo: Vanessa Kowalski and Meg Absolon



New teaching Laboratory at UC



Eureka Flag installed at M.A.D.E.



Fluid Preservation in London

University of Canberra heritage course gets spiffy new lab!

The University of Canberra has just finished Building 27, a brand new, \$14M joint faculty laboratory building. The facility will house a whole swag of science-based disciplines, including chemistry, biology, pharmacology, ecology and most importantly – conservation! This places heritage studies at UC in the heart of a community of scientists, with access to a fabulous range of analytical equipment and the skills to go with it, and vastly increases opportunities for research collaboration across disciplines, through both formal and informal networks. (“Come up and see my etchings – I think we could do beautiful research together...”)

The lab features both cabinet and over-bench fume extractors, sinks for washing, storage areas for materials and objects, gas, compressed air and distilled water. Next door to the lab is a pleasant area for eating, drinking and relaxing, making mid-tute breaks so much more comfortable. The whole building is decked out in designer colour schemes, so I am just researching where to find lab coats in matching pastels...

We are really looking forward to teaching the conservation units in this new facility and will be inviting everyone to come and see the new lab early in Semester 2. This will of course involve testing the relaxation areas as well, with some well-chosen wine and nibbles. To whet your appetites, here are a couple of pictures of the new facility.

By Alison Wain



*The interior of the new conservation and heritage lab. Look at all the lovely fume extractors!
Photo: Alison Wain*



A place to relax after a tough tutorial... Photo: Alison Wain

AICCM National Conference 2013

Call for Lightening Talks

The AICCM is pleased to announce a new Lightning Talks Session format as part of the 2013 National Conference program. This session will be showcased on the Wednesday afternoon and offers conference attendees the chance to be entertained and engaged by the ideas and work of our colleagues.

What are Lightning Talks?

Lightening Talks are 5 minute presentations that focus on a key point be it practical, anecdotal or theoretical.

The key point might be:

- a challenging or confronting idea in the realm of conservation
- an invitation for collaboration on a project
- a quick tip or demonstration of a new technique or technology
- a cautionary story of things gone (almost) wrong or unexpectedly
- updating the profession on a project in progress
- an idea you want feedback on
- highlighting a question that you feel is not being asked in conservation

See examples here:

Koven Smith of the Denver Art Museum

(http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/13933930/highlight/166041?utm_campaign=smithsonian-webstrategy.wikispaces.com&utm_source=166041&utm_medium=social)

Margriet Schavemaker of the Staedlijk Museum

(http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/13933930/highlight/166044?utm_campaign=smithsonian-webstrategy.wikispaces.com&utm_source=166044&utm_medium=social)

How to give a Lightning Talk

(<http://vimeo.com/57965823>)

Why Lightening Talks?

The aim of the Lightening Talk is not to give detailed information about a process, treatment, theory or project but rather highlight the most important and significant aspects of your point that will challenge or inspire others. The shortened length of the Lightening Talk is perfect for:

- unfinished, proposed or in-progress projects to be made public – without the pressure of a 2000+ word paper

- a variety of projects, research, ideas to be shared
- new speakers to build public speaking experience and confidence

The Rules?

You have 5 minutes and 5 minutes only – so use this time wisely. Slides or props are optional.

How do I get involved?

Email your Lightning Talk proposal to maryjo.lelyveld@ngv.vic.gov.au by Friday 9th August with the following information:

- Your full name, title, organization, email address and contact number
- A short description of your talk (100 words or less)

The selection panel will evaluate all applications and make selections based on topic, content, and time available. All authors will be contacted by Friday 30th August regarding selection outcome. The Lightning Talks Program will be announced at the National Conference.

'Museum of Australian Democracy at Eureka'

(M.A.D.E) in Ballarat

On the weekend of 4–5 May 2013, Ballarat's refurbished and redesigned Eureka Centre reopened as the Museum of Australian Democracy at Eureka (M.A.D.E.). The new museum is located on the approximate site of the Eureka uprising of 1854, and is ideally positioned to explore the complex issues surrounding Democracy. Using touchscreens and interactive spaces, the objects on display and the local history of Eureka are brought into a global context that encourages meaningful discussion on the philosophical and political meaning of Democracy.

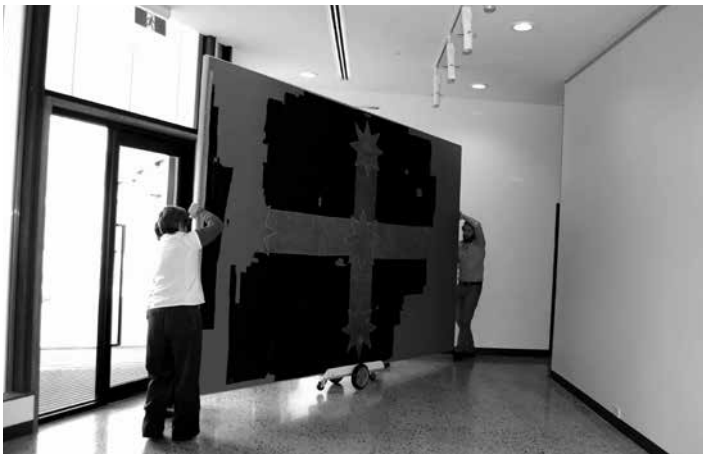
During the early months of this year a dedicated team of people was involved in the exhibition preparation and installation of the many objects on display at M.A.D.E. The team was comprised of the Curator Eithne Owens, Assistant Curator Gabriel Maddock, Collection Manager Annie Muir, and

Thylacine Technicians and Installers Caolan Mitchell, Shaun Kirby and Mark Worrall, as well as myself as Installation Conservator. Throughout this process an array of important historical objects and documents were installed, plus a number of quirky pop-culture objects that illustrate the links between power, influence and democracy (such as a Barack Obama bobble-head). However, the most high profile, and perhaps the largest and most precious, object that was placed on display is the Eureka Flag, which is generously on loan from the Art Gallery of Ballarat.

After travelling in a climate controlled truck under security escort, the Flag remained in its crate for thirty six hours upon its safe arrival at M.A.D.E to allow for acclimatisation. On the morning of 17 April, Artlab Australia's Principle Textile Conservator Kristin Phillips oversaw the moving of the very large

Eureka Flag into its temporary new home: a specially constructed glass case within a purpose built, light controlled room that is off the main exhibition space. A multidisciplinary team of eighteen people was required to ensure the success of the Eureka Flag shift and installation, including members from M.A.D.E, Artlab Australia, the Art Gallery of Ballarat, Lateral Projects, Tascho Australian Showcase Company and Thylacine. The successful installation of the Eureka Flag was the culmination of many months of meticulous planning, and a milestone event for everyone involved.

Lauren Keating, M.A.D.E



Brenda Wellman and Ben Cox from the Art Gallery of Ballarat guiding the Eureka Flag on a rolling support. Photo: Gabriel Maddock at M.A.D.E.



A group photo of the multidisciplinary team with the installed Eureka Flag. Photo: Gabriel Maddock at M.A.D.E.

Fluid Preservation Workshop

A few weeks before my scheduled holiday to the sunny Mediterranean, an email popped up before my eyes. Simon Moore's Fluid Preservation course would be taking place in June 2013. A quick look at my travel dates and I rushed talk with my manager and I found myself tacking on another week to my time away. The dates were perfect – all I needed to do was take the Eurostar from Paris to London. Such hardships we endure for Conservation.

For those of you who aren't aware, Simon Moore is a highly respected Natural History Conservator based in the UK. He is the go-to Conservator for all things Fluid Preservation. While squishy things in jars aren't necessarily my favorite aspect of being a Natural Sciences Conservator, I couldn't pass up this training opportunity.

Day one

Walking up to the beautiful Horniman Museum and Gardens, I was pleasantly surprised by the hot (relatively) sunny day London had put on. I met the other attendees and discovered they were not all from local institutions like I had thought. Norwegians, Swedes, Portuguese and Australians made up the majority of the ranks with only three

people from the UK. I also discovered I was one of only two Conservators on the course, the other being Felicity Bolton (previously at Museum Victoria, now at the Grant Museum London). After a lecture on all things fluid preservation we go straight into practical exercises. We all picked a poor dried out little specimen to lovingly rehydrate, which we simmered gently in a solution. While our little crispy critters were having a warm bath, we had a go at sticking snail shells onto glass plates using an adhesive that sets in alcohol. This proved very difficult as you have to gauge the setting times in air and gelling times when dunked into the alcohol solution. We finished the day by checking our crispy specimens, leaving them overnight to soften.

Day two

Another sunny day in London started with us checking on our sad dried out specimens, and we discovered they were not so sad and dried out! We rinsed our little creatures and moved them into a solvent ladder. Luckily most of us picked small specimens and we could progress our specimens through the solvent ladder rather quickly. Another lecture, this time on narcotisation,



Sheldon's finished Geckos. Photo: Sheldon Teare

historical sealants and pelagic mounts. Our practical time was spent learning the art of glass cutting (try cutting a glass circle, not fun), glass grinding, drilling glass and making glass needles. We attempted to make our rehydrated specimens sink by injecting them or repeatedly placing them in a vacuum chamber (poor things). Simon then grinned evilly and went into the fume cupboard. He emerged with a giant jar of discoloured liquid and told us that despite appearances there were specimens inside. It would be our job to pick one, discover what solution it was in, mount it on a glass plate, and ladder it into an 80% ethanol solution. Joy!

Day three

The sun keeps shining! We continued attending to our menagerie of specimens (I had a pile of Gekos to play with) and preparing jars, which turned out to be the hardest part of the whole process. We learnt how to stitch our specimens onto our cut glass plates, and use goat skin paper for labeling. Those of us with specimens needing repair used glass needles and adhesive to reattach limbs. Simon showed us a number of



Fluid Preservation Workshop participants. Photo: Sheldon Teare

methods for sealing jars, but we all used gelatin to seal ours. I discovered that stretching polypropylene rods is harder than stretching glass rods. We used the polypropylene rods as a bung for the top of our glass lids.

Day four

Yes, still sunny. Final check on specimens, and we discussed any problems noted. Our seals are checked, more gelatin is added if needed. Final lecture on transparencies, jars, labels and storage areas. We returned to the lab to finish up, try any technique again and get lots of photos, including a group shot.

While most of the participants in the course were collection managers working with this type of collection on a day to day basis, I believe this course is worthwhile for conservators who have to work regularly with wet collections. There was a lot to learn in the course, and I think you would need to apply it regularly to maintain the skills. I would recommend this course to conservators like myself, who are called upon to work with fluid collections, or those with an interest. While the course is very interesting and was very helpful for me, I don't think it would be all that applicable to general objects conservators.

Sheldon Teare, Australian Museum

AICCM trade fair stand at Art and Frame 2013 – Call for volunteers

The organiser of the Art and Frame 2013 exhibition and trade fair has very kindly offered an exhibition stand to AICCM. The exhibition will be held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, September 13-15, from 10:00 to 5:00. The AICCM stand will be in the public area of the exhibition and will be a great opportunity to showcase AICCM to the public and also the framing trade. If anyone would like to assist AICCM by minding the stand for 1-2 hours on any day please let me know by sending an email to me at: loubradley@bigpond.com. We will also need material to display at the stand, for example conference posters, small objects or perhaps a microscope and a few pests for examination. Send me an email if you have any ideas.

Louise Bradley
AICCM Conservation framing SIG convener

Harvesting Traditional Knowledge Workshop

– Yolŋu-led two-way learning in the production and conservation of bark

In mid-May 2013, the Association of Northern, Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists (ANKAAA) in partnership with Buku-Larrnggay Mulka, Yirrkala and the University of Melbourne's Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation, presented a two-way learning workshop on the production and conservation of bark paintings. The workshop was unique as it offered a face-to-face, hands-on learning experience on-country at the Yirrkala Art Centre, in Arnhem Land, Northern Territory.

The workshop took place over two and a half days. The aim of the workshop was to encourage two-way learning between Indigenous knowledge holders and participants with an interest in the care and conservation of Indigenous cultural material. One of the desired outcomes of the workshop was for knowledge custodians to pass on their expertise to non-Indigenous people caring for Indigenous cultural collections. Non-Indigenous participants included conservators from private practice and national institutions, as well as art centre workers from across the Northern Territory linked with ANKAAA.

After a welcome to country by senior artists, and introductions, the program kicked off with a trip out bush. Senior artists and Buku-Larrnggay Mulka art workers discussed and demonstrated the techniques for identifying good trees, removal of the bark and heating of the bark on-site to remove excessive moisture and start the flattening process. The Yolŋu artists made light work of the harvesting process, making it look straightforward, but of course once the conservators had an axe in their hands they realised how difficult it actually was to chip away at the bark and create a cut from which to peel the bark off in one continuous piece. It was also surprising to feel how damp the bark was when removed from the tree.



*Meg Absolon from the NGA harvesting bark.
Photo: Vanessa Kowalski and Meg Absolon*

Additional activities that took place over the two and half days were pandanus weaving and dyeing, digging for ochre and grinding ochres for paint preparation, and making paint brushes from human hair. The opportunity to see the manufacturing process first hand was invaluable, enabling a better understanding of the objects we are entrusted to care for.

In conjunction with the harvesting and art production demonstrations was a practical session focusing on treatment of barks. Groups of conservators and artists worked together to discuss typical condition problems, treatment options and material choices for the treatment of bark paintings. Paintings from Yirrkala Art Centre that exhibited some of the typical problems encountered, such as cracking in the bark support and flaking of the paint layer, were used to drive the discussion. This enabled open dialogue between the participants, focusing on how conservation treatment might best be approached



*Conservation participants and Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Arts Workers.
Photo: Vanessa Kowalski and Meg Absolon*



Participants testing their brush making and bark painting skills.
Photo: Vanessa Kowalski and Meg Absolon



Samantha Hamilton (MusVic) and Penny Nolton (AusMuseum) discuss conservation issues with senior artists. Photo: Vanessa Kowalski and Meg Absolon

by conservators. Conservators valued this opportunity to talk to artists and custodians about these issues. It was the chance to start such conversations and make connections that inspired many of the conservators to attend the workshop.

The structure of the workshop, with open discussion and practical sessions, was a success. It was not a series of lectures that stipulated techniques and theories. It was about watching, listening and doing. The structure of the workshop offered the opportunity to take the time to learn and teach, which was important for building relationships and sharing knowledge.

The workshop enabled conservators to think further about the approaches to conservation treatment of bark paintings, and established valuable links with Indigenous artists and art centres. It is hoped that the relationships and connections formed will be ongoing, increasing knowledge on both sides, while ensuring that indigenous voices are central to the preservation process. The workshop also raised questions for conservators relating to possible

conservation issues that may stem from the preparation process of the barks and the painting materials employed, creating ideas for potential future research. From here, it is hoped that a five-year work plan for research into the production and preservation of bark paintings in Australia can be devised and implemented.

For me, it was a valuable experience on many levels. The three days on-country enhanced my understanding of people's connection to country, and highlighted how important and significant art practice is in linking people to country and keeping culture strong. Seeing the production process and the origins of the materials, gives me a better understanding of conservation and preservation issues relating to these objects, and how conservation treatment might be approached. I think that all participating conservators felt that it was a unique and valuable experience. Participants were grateful for the knowledge shared and the trust placed in them to continue to care for these cultural artefacts.

Rico Adjrun from ABC's Radio

National AWAYE! program documented the workshop over the two and half days. Excerpts from the workshop and interviews with participants and traditional knowledge custodians can be found at the following link: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/awaye/written-on-a-bark/4762442>

A further workshop will be held at Mowanjum Art Centre in mid-September 2013. Artists from the region will share their skills on materials such as boab fibres, ochre, pearl shell, boab nut carving, boomerang and spear making.

By Vanessa Kowalski, CCMC

Warmun Art Collection Project

– Completion of the conservation treatment and its return to the Warmun Community

'The Warmun Art Project', published in AICCM Newsletter No. 118, July 2011, discussed the evacuation of the community art collection from Warmun, in the East Kimberley, after flash flooding occurred in March 2011. The flood destroyed most of the community buildings and infrastructure. The Warmun Art Centre and the art collection also suffered considerable damage and loss.

In March 2011, Marcelle Scott and Lyndon Ormond-Parker (CCMC) travelled to Warmun to assist in the evacuation of the collection, which contains significant early works by prominent artists such as Rover Thomas, Hector Jandany and Queenie Mackenzie, among others. Approximately 190 artworks were taken to Melbourne for conservation treatment, carried out by CCMC staff and students.

After much consultation with members of the Warmun community, the conservation treatment of the paintings and objects is now complete. Senior elders and artists from Warmun gave conservators and students a better understanding of some of the stories behind the paintings and their



Warmun Art Centre staff member Rosaleen Park and senior artist Rusty Peters documenting and unpacking collection in new storage area. Photo: Marcelle Scott

significance in Gija culture, as well as discussing appropriate approaches to conservation treatment.

Prior to the works returning to Warmun, a symposium to celebrate the conservation project was held at the University of Melbourne on

18 May 2013. Gija artists Patrick Mung Mung, Churchill Cann, Betty Carrington, Shirley Purdie, Mark Nodea and Roseleen Park spoke about Warmun art and Ngarranggarni (The Dreaming) surrounding the creation of the paintings on display during the symposium (see image).



Sophie Lewincamp unpacking collection works on-site. Photo: Marcelle Scott



Sophie, Rosaleen and Rusty documenting and unpacking collection in new storage area. Photo: Marcelle Scott

In late May-early June 2013, the collection was returned to the community, with the assistance of International Art Services. Marcelle Scott, Sophie Lewincamp and Vanessa Kowalski travelled to Warmun to assist in the relocation of the collection to the new storage facilities. The new storage facilities are located in an elevated building, above the flood level. The room is environmentally controlled and the collection is stored in new horizontal plan drawers. The relocation of the collection was completed together with Warmun Art Centre workers and senior artists, to ensure that all works were stored appropriately, according to Gija culture.

To celebrate the return of the collection to the Warmun community, a Joonba (corroboree) was held. Senior artists, dancers and singers, together with children from the community, performed Gija Dreaming stories, which represent the many facets of their lives and beliefs. It is through these artforms – dance, singing and painting – that the Gija people keep their culture and their stories strong. With the return of the historical collection to the community, the link back to their stories is restored.

In interviews with ABC radio presenters (see radio links below), Marcelle discusses how this project gave conservators and students an increased understanding of the materials used by artists in the East Kimberley region, and the resilience of the materials, especially after suffering such damage. The project was a unique learning experience for both conservators and students, from a treatment aspect, but also from a wider, community engagement aspect, reminding us why and for whom we conserve cultural heritage.

The project has enabled a particularly strong relationship to grow over the past two years and has resulted in the development of a new partnership between Warmun Art Centre and the Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation. The Gija Two-Way Learning Program is currently in development and will facilitate ongoing programs between the two Centres, which will contribute to the preservation of Gija culture and provide further avenues for two-way learning.

All those involved in the project have been grateful for the opportunity to participate. We thank all the

institutions and individuals that have supported the conservation treatment of the Warmun community art collection to date.

ABC Radio National Programs:

- AWAYE! with Daniel Browning
<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/awaye/the-great-warmun-art-rescue/4779208>
- Bush Telegraph with Cameron Wilson
<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/bushtelegraph/handling-back-a-cultural-treasure/4752328>

Vanessa Kowalski – CCMC
Sophie Lewincamp – CCMC
Jonathan Kimberley – Warmun Art Centre

Microcrystalline wax – joint bulk purchase

The Australian War Memorial is considering importing a tonne of Microcrystalline Wax (2095). This is the minimum amount the importers will import, but it is far in excess of our projected needs. Expressions of interest are being sought from other cultural institutions and private practice to purchase small or large quantities of the wax at cost price, plus freight. The cost price is expected to be approximately \$7.00 per kg (ex GST), with probably a minimum order of 5 kg. Interested parties please email george.bailey@awm.gov.au

Institutional News

New South Wales

International Conservation Services

ICS has ended the financial year on a high with the successful completion of wide variety of jobs. Critical to their success has been the involvement of our new Operations Manager **Ruth Thompson**. Ruth joined ICS at the beginning of the year from a university administration role at UTS, and has settled quickly into the vagaries and peculiarities of the conservation profession.

Sofia Lo Bianco, Arek Werstak, Karina Acton, and student interns **Bronwyn Tulloh, Maree Whittaker**, and **Daniel Kelly** spent a week in May at the National Library of Australia working on the Tom Bass lintel sculpture. Photographs of the team working can be seen on the National Library's Facebook page. Sofia and Karina have also been working with **Sarah-Jane Rennie** of the Historic Houses Trust at Rose Seidler House. Karina has been on site for most of the last few months working on sculptures in Sydney and Canberra. Smaller objects in the lab have kept us busy with Sofia conserving a number of small Indochinese figures collected in the early 20th Century.

In the paintings conservation team, **Adam Godijn** has been cleaning an 18th century Italian oil, while **Claire Heasman** has done some beautiful work on a complex tear repair on a modern landscape. **Matteo Volonte** has had his head down in the fume cupboard removing extensive overpaint from a Dutch Cavalry painting.

After 3½ years, **Kate Papierniak** left ICS in April. The paper department has been busy with plan drawings. Under the watchful eye of **Jennifer Anderson** and **Wendi Powell**, **Gail Hamilton** and **Katie Wood** (final year student from University of Melbourne) have been cleaning, flattening and consolidating the plans. Wendi and Jenny are also currently finishing treatment on a collection of 1901 electoral documents, two large Japanese Moyama screens, a rather large photographic mayoral group portrait, and various other small artworks on paper.

The furniture conservators **Oliver Hull**, **Eoin O'Sullivan** and **Kat Edghill** have been enjoying work on some quality pieces including a collection of regency furniture, a satinwood secretaire by Gillows of Lancaster and an early Georgian bureau bookcase. Adam and Oliver joined their furniture and paintings conservation skills to complete a major restoration with Arek Werstak on a ship's figurehead for HMAS Penguin, which received some good media attention when reinstalled at the entrance to the base in Balmoral. They join up again in July to work on some ornately carved and painted Buddhist altarpieces in far north Queensland.

Julian Bickersteth spoke to the Museums Australia conference in Canberra in May on the issue of the increasing complexity of the museums and galleries environmental control debate, an issue that The Australian newspaper picked up. Julian is coordinating a joint IIC and ICOM CC taskforce on the issue which he will be reporting on at the AICCM Conference in Adelaide in October.

Julian Bickersteth
Managing Director

Heights Heritage Conservation

Tess Evans ACR is now coming to the end of her two year sabbatical in England, returning to Australia at the end of September. She successfully gained Professional Accreditation with ICON in February, and has recently completed certificated courses in the conservation of feathers, given by Allyson Rae ACR at the British Museum and Leather Conservation through the Leather Conservation Centre in Northampton, held at West Dean College. She attended the ICON PF13 Conference at Glasgow University in April, which was titled *Positive futures in an Uncertain World*, a fantastically inspiring three days of multidisciplinary papers and a Ceilidh! Tess is continuing with her research project on mould removal from historic objects with trials happening at Knole House (National Trust) and Dover Tunnels (English Heritage), so far with fantastic results and will be looking to continue with trials in Australia, so if anyone has a collection affected by mould, who would be interested in participating, please let her know. In her spare time, Tess has been volunteering for the V&A, helping with making bespoke underpinnings for the costumes in their next temporary exhibition, *Club to Catwalk* and is now half way through her Masters in Museum Studies.

Powerhouse Museum Conservation Department. April, May, June 2013

New exhibitions

The Conservation exhibition team has been working towards the *Beatles* exhibition that opens in September. This has included a large scrapbook, compiled by a teenage fan, that includes multiple clippings on each page, with failing Perkins Paste and adhesive tape. Due to a valuable loan from the V&A of John Lennon's suit, we are carrying out Oddy tests on the LED lights that will be used in this exhibition. Much work is being done for the *Jewellery* exhibition, which opens in December and has over 800 objects, many of them loans.

Outreach

As part of the Australian Dress Register team, Kate Chidlow went to Canberra for the ADR annual Advisory Committee meeting that was held before the Museums Australia National Conference in May. With the new rebuild of the ADR working very well, we were able to showcase the upgraded website. We have now begun the process of making it a national website and have extended the date to include significant dress before 1975. We have ADR representatives in nearly every state to help us roll out the project. The meeting also gave us the opportunity to interest Canberra-based institutions in the website.

In June, Dave Rockell visited the world's first commercial solar power station in White Cliffs, 300 km north of Broken Hill, to undertake a conservation assessment and feasibility report. The solar receptors at this station originally generated high-pressure steam that drove a steam engine and generator; later the system was converted to a photovoltaic battery charging system. The local community would like to have the system in operation again and plug it into the grid to generate income for the town.

Publications

'All is not Lost – the Collection Recovery book' is selling well, with 200 copies going to Te Papa Museum, Wellington. They intend to distribute the book to regional museums throughout New Zealand. Kate is currently writing a resource book on caring for farm machinery. Four information sheets have been updated for the Conservation Resources web page and two have been updated on the ADR Resources page.

Collection work

Collection work for this period includes photographing, rehousing and treating the Bromley collection, and making other assessments of still and movie films with vinegar syndrome in other collections. We are currently making plans for a cold storage area in our new store at Castle Hill. The TAM team, Rebecca Main and Michael Myers, spend their time working behind the scenes on collections most in need of conservation work, taking thousands of photos which end up on the Powerhouse website and re-housing and treating numerous collections that have been neglected.

Suzanne Chee has been continuing her work in rehousing the Joseph Box shoe collection. The shoes were stored in polyethylene trays in metal cabinets. The trays were very tight fitting and



hard to pull out easily. Suzanne has made simple, acid-free cardboard housing for each pair of shoes. The shoes don't need to be handled to view them and can be seen from most angles (see photos).

We have come across leaking batteries in some objects recently, so Vanessa Pitt is going to do a battery survey of the basement and the Castle Hill stores soon.

Castle Hill

Carey Ward is the supervising conservator in charge of the Castle Hill stores. We have received funding for a new store (three floors) to be built on the site, which we are sharing with Sydney Living Museums and the Australian Museum. Two new conservation clean rooms are being built and an old store is being demolished, so a lot of restructuring and object movements need to be done to make way for the new store. The Powerhouse Discovery Centre has been a very successful cultural asset for Western Sydney and having the other museum collections on site will enhance the site even more.

Steam

The Great Train Expo on the June long weekend was very successful. Over 3,600 people rode on steam trains and 5,000 visited the train displays. Locomotive 3265 was on static display at Central Railway station. Museum staff and volunteers were in attendance over the whole weekend, offering members of the public the opportunity to look into the cab to see how a steam locomotive operates.



Research and development

Sue Gatenby has been busy analysing several objects within the collection using X-ray fluorescence and the FTIR machines. She also tested plastic storage bags and pool noodles which both turned out to be polyethylene.

Sue recently attended a Laboratory Safety seminar which outlined the coming of the Global Harmonised System of Classification (GHS) for labelling chemicals. She also attended the Micro Fading Workshop held at the Art Gallery NSW, which demonstrated the equipment used to determine light sensitivity for materials.

Australian Museum

Sheldon Teare has returned to reality after a five week holiday. Sheldon was lucky enough to extend his time away by a week in order to attend Simon Moore's Fluid Preservation workshop. This year's workshop was held at the Horniman Museum and was a brilliant learning opportunity. Sheldon has already managed to put his new found skills to use, dealing with a few wet specimen issues. After a two year run of non-stop Natural Science-heavy exhibitions, Sheldon will hopefully get a chance to attend to a backlog of remedial treatments mainly from Terrestrial Vertebrates and Ichthyology collections.

Megan Dean-Jones has been fully engaged in preparing the natural history specimens to complement this year's Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition. Megan took over this project after having been abandoned by Sheldon. This has involved everything from organizing the weighing of a female Black Rhino and transporting her as well as a lion, a leopard, a black bear, and a tiger offsite for freezing treatment, to creating a fake ear for a sea lion. She photographically recorded the entire process to use in social media and created iPad touch screen content to explain to the public our behind-the-scenes work at the museum.

Heather MacKay and **Penny Nolton** recently attended the Harvesting Traditional Knowledge bark paintings workshop in Yirrkala in Arnhem Land, NT. This was a 2½ day workshop focusing on bark paintings, their production and conservation. The workshop provided a unique opportunity for some hands on experience, and knowledge sharing and highlighted the need for more consultation between artists and institutions.

Penny has been working a number of upcoming outward loans to galleries and museums in NSW, QLD and Victoria and one international loan to the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum in Cologne in Germany who are borrowing 11 historic and contemporary bark cloths from Vanuatu.

Kate Jones has been documenting and housing a large number of new acquisitions, one of which is a contemporary piece: a woven blanket made by an artist's collective from Darnley Island in the Torres Strait. The blanket is woven from reclaimed fishing net and rope that washed up on local beaches and explores the importance of the sea and its wildlife to local communities. The item will be on display in the atrium from August this year.

Colin Macgregor presented a summary of the Museum's approach to risk assessment for the collections at a session of the Museums Australia conference in Canberra. He also scanned two rhino horns and commissioned 3D printed replicas which were attached to the rhino in the Wildlife Photographer exhibition. This was necessary due to the recent spate of thefts of rhino horns around the world. Colin has also been coordinating the relocation of the collection of large canoes in preparation for the new building of the new offsite storage at Castle Hill.

Preparations are underway for the Museum to host a one day seminar about quarantine and non-toxic pest control in October in partnership with AICCM Preventive SIG.

Michael Kelly continues working on the NSW regional tour of the *Beauty from Nature – Art of the Scott Sister* exhibition, currently on display at the Western Plains Cultural Centre, Dubbo. He is also carrying out a storage project, involving a range of treatments, on a number of 19th century UK Admiralty maps of Australian coast lines, held in the museum's Research Library collections.

When not experimenting with new lab tools for cutting Ethafoam in ways never before dreamed possible, **Wendy Richards** could be found unrolling, inspecting and rerolling the dozens of textile lengths – mostly batik or screen printed – from the Indigenous Australian collection. As well as fulfilling pest management requirements, the opportunity was taken to rehouse the textiles with better support materials and to enlarge the capacity of the existing rolled storage rack.

Volunteer **Rebecca Barnett-Clements** has successfully completed treatment to repair a cast resin replica Neanderthal skull belonging to Public Programs which had been dropped, shattering into many fragments. Rebecca has also been assisting with processing new acquisitions.

Intern **Isobel Harcourt** is at the Australian Museum for three weeks as part of her master's degree in Materials Conservation at the University of Melbourne and is finding it both enjoyable and educational. She is gaining hands on experience in the management of natural history specimens (a particular area of interest for her), and helping with the preparation of a collection of swords and knives for relocation to the new offsite storage facility. For a change of focus she is also treating a badly cracked Papuan penis gourd and challenging her understanding of organic materials and adhesives in the process.

ACT

National Archives of Australia

The sad news is that we have lost our wonderful laboratory manager, **Tania Riviere**, who has been snaffled by the NMA to be Deputy Manager in their Conservation section. **Cheryl Jackson** is currently acting lab manager and doing a fantastic job filling Tania's very large (figuratively speaking) shoes.

Our Jikji Scholar **Caroline Milne** has completed her six month scholarship and has moved into a permanent assistant job in the laboratory.

Our Services work for the Reading Room has been a bit slower this quarter, which has given us the opportunity to get into our Intensive Treatment Projects. **Sally Kneebone** has uncovered some fantastic potential Australian flags. A great one with a big purple bat (see picture), or perhaps one with all the best Australia has to offer – greyhounds, beer, footy and more (see picture).

Emily Birks has cleaned some wonderful panorama photographs like one of the Grand Parade at the 1909 Royal Agricultural Show, Sydney, showing the best cattle the state had to offer. And **Steve Willett** has been flattening and rehousing thousands of plans on blue drafting linen.

Rajani Rai is looking forward to moving back in to her newly renovated chemistry lab, with funky down lighting over the benches and an ergonomic workstation in the corner. Everyone else in the lab is enjoying their ergo workstations as well, thanks to a last ditch effort by Tania to get rid of the unergonomic lab benches we used to have to use for the hot desk computers. Everyone in the lab now has their own workstation and chair which can be adjusted to their individual needs. Yay for Tania!

Australian War Memorial

Things are quite hectic at the Australian War Memorial. Our major focus is the redevelopment of the First World War galleries for the upcoming 100th anniversaries, but we've also had to cope with a major accommodation restructure which has seen relocation of several relic stores, not to mention half of the Collection Services Section of which Conservation is a part. Three other lesser exhibitions are also being prepared, and we are servicing an increasing number of loan requests from other institutions, both large and small, as they start planning their own the First World War centenary displays.

In the Paintings Lab, Alana Treasure, Janet Hearne and David Keany have been preparing various loans, paintings for our new senior management's offices and starting treatments for the upcoming large travelling exhibition

of Second World War art 'Reality in Flames'. Janet is also enjoying working on and travelling for our latest official war artist's exhibition 'Ben Quilty: After Afghanistan' currently touring Australia. Jocelyn Evans, Nicholas Flood, Kasi Albert and Helen Gill have joined the Memorial team this year to work on the First World War diorama conservation project led by Alana. The team are working on 18 small and 10 larger dioramas undertaking extensive cleaning, repairs and movement over the next 18 months during the FWW galleries refurbishment. A blog has been started for the public to follow the progress on the dioramas while the galleries are closed until late 2014 <http://www.awm.gov.au/blog/category/first-world-war-centenary/>

In Large Technology Conservation, Jamie Croker, Kim Wood and Martin Tanti are continuing work on the Hudson Bomber refurbishment. Work on the Japanese Ha Go tank has been completed, with John Kemister spending the rest of his career tidying up the paperwork for the project. John will retire in December. Andrew Schroeder and Dean Willis have started work on the big objects required for the new First World War galleries.

In Preventive Conservation, Eliza McKenna has been developing an anoxic system as a pest treatment for some logs from Gallipoli, a stuffed horse and camel. Eliza and Jen Brian are researching an ongoing showcase fogging problem, and assessing the deterioration of the sandstone gargoyles



in the Roll of Honour courtyard. Both Jen and Eliza are also working part time in the Objects lab.

The Textiles Lab has just finished freezing 1500 uniforms as preventive measure, as part of the accommodation restructure. All Lab staff are also working on items for the First World War galleries, a new “Afghanistan” gallery, “Salute” and “Anzac Voices” temporary exhibitions, and Hall of Valour changeover material. Jessie Firth is also working on our collection database to enable condition and hazard images to be linked.

The Objects Lab has a similar work programme to the Textiles Lab, with hundreds of objects demounted from the original First World War galleries being condition reported – some for the first time, and not least of which was a tin of fake jam with real flies! Eileen Procter assisted in the demounting of the Long Tan Cross and packed it for shipment back to Vietnam. Claire Champion continues to survey new acquisitions, and we welcome back Laura Curtis. Unfortunately for us, Laura will be leaving us in mid-July to resume full time study.

Victoria

National Gallery of Victoria

In March the paintings conservation studio announced the two successful appointees to the H.D.T. Williamson Fellowships: **Sandi Mitchell** and **Johanna Ellersdorfer**. Sandi has already commenced with us and will be joined by Johanna in September upon her return from work in the United States. Sandi's first projects have been the completion of work on *England* (1850) by the British painters Thomas Creswick and Richard Ansdell (a treatment she has shared with **Alex Ellem**), and the cleaning of *Harem Scene* by Juan Gimenez-Martin. Sandi has also repaired the frame of

the Ansdell/Creswick painting. **Carl Villis** has begun a major conservation treatment of Peter Lely's 1660 portrait of Sir John Rous. This has involved consolidation of vulnerable paint, removal of varnish, overpaint and old fills, and (with John Payne) repair of the stretcher. Having completed the work on the Flemish Triptych with the Miracles of Christ, **John Payne** is preparing recently acquired Indian paintings for display. **Michael Varcoe-Cocks** has prepared numerous works for the exhibition *Australian Impressionists in France*, including a group of works by John Russell and Rupert Bunny. He has now commenced work on *Head of a Man*, a painting which has been attributed to Vincent van Gogh.

Suzi Shaw is tackling the treatment of an Edo period suit of Japanese armour and its accompanying parts, all 33 of them including saddlery, providing many challenges to stabilise complex multilayered composite lacquer coated structures. **MaryJo Lelyveld** has completed the finishing and toning of six reproduction frames in time for the June opening of the *Australian Impressionists in France* exhibition. These simple white painted, raw timber and passe-partout frames are based on original frames used by Impressionist artists working in France in the late 19th century and will be a radical departure from the traditional gilded salon and dealer frames usually seen on the works of these artists.

Bronwyn Cosgrove initiated discussions with Bruce Ford from Art & Archival regarding microfading analysis of key textile, photographic and furniture works in the NGV's collection. This analysis was carried out in March with encouraging results. With several permanent collection rehangs and minor textile exhibition installations complete, the textile lab has turned its focus onto our major textile exhibition for this year, *Art Deco Fashion*. Several major treatments were highlighted for this exhibition and the unusually long lead-time has enabled us to accomplish them. **Kate Douglas** has been tirelessly

working on a c.1926 silk evening cape with beautiful beaded design. The entire lining and collar have been adhesive lined and the outer silk (unable to be adhesive lined due to the bead work) is now receiving stitch treatment to the numerous splits and tears. **Solitaire Osei** is close to finishing the treatment of a c.1925 silk lamé coat with a highly degraded silk georgette lining. The treatment employed newly acquired techniques of spraying adhesive onto net, and solvent reactivation on a large scale. These and several other major treatments undertaken will enable never-displayed costumes to finally be exhibited. **Annette Soumilas** has been meticulously adjusting a mannequin to fit a beautiful beaded *Callot Soeurs* evening dress with train, and is constructing several bias cut slips to be displayed under the sheer dresses in this exhibition.

In the Objects Lab, **Marika Strohschnieder** has just completed a stabilisation and aesthetic infill treatment on *The Derision of Christ*, a badly compromised 15th century polychrome wood sculpture. **Trude Ellingsen** and **Di Whittle** have welcomed a number of challenging new acquisitions into the collection including a Kohei Nawa work fondly referred to in the lab as the 'Bling Deer', and a complex Jompet Kuswidananto kinetic installation, as well as continuing long-term research and trials for repair and consolidation treatments for degraded sheepskin à la Les Kossatz (a work that would be familiar to a number of local conservators). Otherwise, the team have all been busy with an accelerating cycle of changeovers and acquisitions.

Exhibitions Conservation has expanded by one with **Janelle Borig** and husband Hakan welcoming their little girl Alev Florence into the world on Easter Sunday – congratulations both! In Janelle's stead **Catherine Earley** spent three weeks de-installing the *Origins* tour at Musee du Quai Branley, Paris and speaks well of this museum. We are fortunate to have the assistance

of **Cait Burgoyne** who has joined the Exhibitions team one day a week as a volunteer and, although trained in paper conservation, she has been helping with loans made of textiles, wood, and paintings. **Helen Casey** has been co-ordinating the prep and install of the Australian Impressionist in France. She and Catherine are working through specifications for contract conservators to follow when condition reporting artworks before travel into the gallery. In particular, the quality of condition report images has become problematic as they are often blurred or too small to bring up detail as required, or are not reflective of current condition. Helen is continuing work on the encapsulation of framed works for display and has had success with trials of up to six months in non-ideal environments. Catherine is working towards an Exhibitions SIG conference in March 2014 – more information will follow when a proposal is written and accepted by Council.

Museum Victoria

Sadly, **Davina Hacklin** has resigned from her role as Manager, Conservation. Davina has embarked upon a career change, enrolling in new study at University of Canberra. She is enjoying study and being closer to her family. Davina played a great role with the Museum Victoria team and we miss her but wish her all the best for her future career.

Helen Privett was recently appointed as Manager, Conservation. Helen attended a course in Sydney in April called Diploma of Law and Arts Management, run by the Australasian Registrars' Committee (ARC) and the Institute of Arts Law. The course was led by Norman Palmer, an amazing and engaging speaker with a wealth of international and Australia knowledge regarding bailments and acquisitions of cultural materials.

Sam Hamilton recently attended the *Harvesting Traditional Knowledge* workshop at the Buku Larrnggay Mulka

Art Centre in Yirrkala Arnhem Land from the 14-16 May. The workshop was a result of collaboration between the Association of the Northern Kimberly and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists (ANKAAA), Buku Larrnggay Mulka and the University of Melbourne, Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation. Work is also winding up on the Bunjilaka Redevelopment Project with the new exhibition *First Peoples* set to open in early September.

Karina Palmer continues to fine-tune an Environmental Monitoring Report spreadsheet that is being used to produce preservation statistics for all our collection stores and exhibitions – making regular meetings with the Building Engineer increasingly productive.

Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation – The University of Melbourne

In mid-May **Robyn Sloggett** and **Vanessa Kowalski** took part in the inaugural 'Harvesting Traditional Knowledge' bark painting workshop at Yirrkala Art Centre, in north-east Arnhem Land, Northern Territory. The workshop provided a two-way learning opportunity, discussing the production and conservation of bark paintings. The workshop was unique as it offered a face-to-face, hands-on learning experience on-country at the Yirrkala. See the detailed review elsewhere in this Newsletter.

In early July, the Association of Northern, Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists (ANKAAA) Arts Worker Extension Program will be hosted for a week at CCMC. The ANKAAA Arts Worker Extension Program is an intensive nine-month development program for Indigenous arts workers to increase their knowledge, professional skills and networks. The program involves hands-on training, one to one mentoring and industry

placements. At CCMC, the eight art workers: Stanley Taylor (Mowanjumb Arts), Betty Bundumurra (Kira Kiro Art Centre), Edward Yunupingu (Munupi Art), John Peter Pilakui (Jilamara Arts and Crafts), Barayuwa Munungur (Buku-Larrnggay Mulka), Marcus Pascoe (Maningrida Arts), Evangeline Wilson (Djilpin Arts), Sharon Anderson (Warnayaka, Lajamanu) will undertake workshops and training sessions to develop their conservation skills. While in Melbourne, the arts workers will also visit other cultural institutions and organisations such as Museum Victoria, Koorie Heritage Trust and the National Gallery of Victoria. This program provides an avenue for art workers to network with conservators and museum professionals in Melbourne and engage in two-way conversations about the long-term preservation of Indigenous art.

The Shrine of Remembrance, off Melbourne's St Kilda Road, is undergoing a major re-development, which will see an increase in exhibition space, education areas and storage space. In preparation for the construction work, the 45 Colours and Guidons hanging in the Crypt at the Shrine have been removed and put into safe storage for the duration of the construction work. In May, a team of CCMC conservators (**Holly Jones-Amin, Reyhane Mirabootalebi, Vanessa Kowalski, Jordi Casasayas, Libby Melzer** and **Noni Zachri**) led by project manager, **Jude Fraser**, and with assistance from two recent graduates (**Blake Fox** and **Stephanie Smith**) from the CCMC Masters course, removed the Colours and Guidons from their hanging systems, cleaned the flags and the pikes, prepared condition reports and packed them all for storage. The flags are boxed, four per box, in Archival Survival made-to-measure boxes, interleaved with Tyvek and Cellaire sheets. The pikes have been wrapped in Tyvek, with cotton tape securing the cords attached to the pikes, and then wrapped in bubble wrap.

The paintings team of **Caroline Fry**, **Cushla Hill**, **Catherine Nunn** and Vanessa Kowalski, with frame conservator Jordi Casasayas, has been working on the Royal portraits from the Victorian State Parliament. These are two extremely large portraits of Queen Victoria (mid-nineteenth Century, by William Corden after Franz Xaver Winterhalter) and Prince Albert (1896, by Gordon Coutts, also after Winterhalter), which preside over the ornate formal surrounds of Queen's Hall in the Parliament building on Spring St. The frames required extensive bronze paint removal and re-moulding of ornaments, while both paintings underwent full cleaning and restoration. The job was made more complex by the fact that the paintings were too large to fit down the staircases in Parliament, which necessitated the use of scaffolding and pulley systems to lower the paintings over the balcony of Queen's Hall and out of the building through the front doors on Spring Street. Grace Art Removals managed this part of the project, overseen by CCMC conservators. Fortunately the frames, which are beautifully made with detachable ornament and dismantlable mitres, could be deconstructed and brought down in a lift. The process was reversed for re-installation. Working on such large, complex treatments was also made more challenging by the tight deadline (nine weeks) and the usual logistical obstacles encountered when cleaning and retouching oversized paintings. The paintings and frames are now hanging resplendently back in their location, having been switched over in their pairing orientation to align with Royal protocol (Queen on the right!).

In the paper section, **Briony Pemberton** has been treating a series of nine collages from 1976 comprised of newspaper and magazine cutouts and Letraset. The conservation has involved reducing dark orange stains caused by rubber cement adhesive and reassembling the collage elements onto new pieces of archival paper using appropriate methods. Treatment was complicated by the varying solubilities of the different component parts such as the Letraset, the artist's signature and the printing inks. The works have now been completed and are going on exhibition.

Blake Fox, a recent graduate of the CCMC Masters course has completed a project for the University Archives. Over 200 letters, dating from 1799 to 1851, from the Hayward collection have been treated in preparation for digitization. The treatments involved standard humidification and flattening, tear repairs, reinforcing areas of fire damage, some mould and mud removal, and adhesive tape removal. Book conservator **Marika Kocsis** stabilized a book from the collection, repairing the broken cover joints.

Second year CCMC Masters student **Melanie Kerr** has recently completed her placement in the Objects lab, working with Reyhane Mirabootalebi and Holly Jones-Amin. Melanie worked on a range of ceramics repairs and material for the Narrabeen Life Care Museum project. Marika and Reyhane have both recently spent a week each at Narrabeen supervising the students working on-site. Academic staff member, **Sophie Lewincamp**, is coordinating the student involvement in the project.

Western Australia

ArtWorks Conservation

Vanessa Wiggin and new assistant **Jerry Michalek** have been busy with outdoor work this year. A major project has been working in the historical East Perth Cemetery on the gravesite of John Septimus Roe, the first Surveyor-General of Western Australia. The cast iron railing was repaired, missing pieces recast and then repainted. The concrete plinth was also cleaned and patched. The conservation work was completed just in time for a ceremony to be held at the cemetery by the Roe family.

Vanessa and Jerry also worked on several sculptures for the City of Joondalup, including replacing tiles in a mosaic at a children's playground, repatinating bronze plaques around the library and repairing and repainting two steel sculptures in the form of trees.

Repainting seems to be the order of the day, and the ArtWorks team are now quoting to paint a ten metre high sculpture. Fortunately, Jerry originally trained as a spray-painter and has proven to be a valuable addition to the ArtWorks team.

Vanessa recently travelled down to Margaret River with historical archaeologist Gaye Nayton. Vanessa and Gaye are preparing a conservation plan for the Old Settlement Museum which has been closed for a number of years. The Museum has now been taken over by a historical society and hopes to reopen soon.

Trawling the Internet



Once in a Whale

(<http://onceinawhale.com/>)

This blog follows conservation work on five whale (cetacean) skeletons, suspended from the roof of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History.

Western Australian Museum MuseumConservation Blog

(<http://museum.wa.gov.au/explore/blogs/museumconservation>)

This blog follows recent conservation activities of the Materials Conservation department. Includes information on major restorative work on the HMAS Ovens at the Western Australian Museum – Maritime.

Art Conservation Research

(<http://conservationresearch.blogspot.com.au/>)

This is a collection of resources related to conservation and restoration research that found by Rui Bordala while browsing the internet.

Replicating the tomb of Tutankhamun. Conservation and sustainable tourism in the Valley of the Kings

(<http://www.egyptological.com/2013/04/replicating-the-tomb-of-tutankhamun-conservation-and-sustainable-tourism-in-the-valley-of-the-kings-11253>)

Discusses issues associated with the closure of the tomb of Tutankhamun and its possible replacement by an exact facsimile created by the company Factum Arte.

Gelatine glass negative pathologies

(<http://glasnegspath.wordpress.com/>)

This blog, created by Mauro-Julián Mazzini, comprises images of pathologies found in silver gelatine glass negatives. It is intended to encourage discussions and assist with their identification.

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

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