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President's Report

Tamara Lavrencic

"As the peak body for materials conservation practice in Australia the AICCM has an ongoing interest in raising both the profile of the conservation profession and promoting the skills and professionalism of its members¹".

It should therefore be no surprise that the review of professional membership has been a high priority for the current council, in the belief that recognition as a professional member of AICCM will acknowledge to peers, employers and clients that the member has a commitment to developing and maintaining currency.

A discussion paper on this topic was considered at a National Council meeting on 19 October. Key to the revised model is the expectation that professional members will be required to demonstrate their ongoing commitment to continuous learning; renewal will not be automatic. Council is also agreed that there should be no monetary difference between the ordinary and professional membership levels. There are a few details still to clarify, but we aim to circulate the paper to the full membership in the near future.

Related to the reintroduction of professional membership is the listing of AICCM members in private practice on the AICCM web site. Members and colleagues working in allied organisations have expressed concern that the current list is not adequately vetted. It has been proposed that once the terms for professional membership are accepted, that conservators working in private practice will be required to hold professional membership in order to be included on the list.

With Continuing Profession Development being essential in sustaining professional membership, it is timely that AICCM has entered into an agreement with The Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation (CCMC) at The University of Melbourne, to manage the AICCM Continuing Professional Development Program (CPDP). Under this agreement, AICCM Special Interest Groups (SIGs) can request specific courses and activities, and the SIGs reserve the right to deliver programs independent of the CPDP. AICCM will contribute to the planning and development of the CPDP, but not the administration or delivery.

The Conservator of the Year Award is offered each year to recognize and reward an individual who has directly contributed to the raising of standards in her/his organization in Australia and/or to raising conservation standards as a whole. This year the honour was awarded to Kim Morris, an outstanding representative for the conservation profession.

Conservation training and employment, past and future, were the subjects of a survey undertaken by the Collections Council of Australia, the report of which was launched on 24 October 2006. Veronica Bullock gave a presentation on the survey report following the AICCM annual seminar on Sustainable Buildings, which was held in Sydney on 20 October. There is an article on the conservation survey included in this newsletter and I encourage you all to read the recommendations and provide feedback to both the Collections Council of Australia and to AICCM.

I take this opportunity to express my admiration of, and gratitude to, the outgoing members of National Council and to welcome the incoming members. The support, enthusiasm and productivity of this willing group of conservators is impressive. They all have demanding paid positions and volunteer substantial amounts of time outside of work hours to support the aims and objectives of AICCM and the conservation profession.

¹ AICCM website: <http://www.aiccm.org.au/public/content/ViewCategory.aspx?id=1>

from the editorial committee

Our feature article this issue comes from **Maria Kubik** who has provided a report on her research into the painting materials used by Australian artist Albert Tucker. The extensive details of the contents of Tucker's boxes could not be printed due to space restrictions, however the information can be obtained directly from Maria.

maria.kubik@artgallery.wa.gov.au

Members have submitted reviews of a number of recent workshops and meetings. **Tracey Golds** attended the seminar *Sustainable Buildings – Cost vs Collection Needs* and has provided a detailed report on the presentations. **Megan Phillips** reports on the workshop *Cleaning and Preserving Finishes on Furniture*, presented by Arlen Heginbotham, the Associate Conservator of Decorative Arts and Sculpture at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles. **Alison Wain** and **Deborah Lau** have provided an overview of the very recent series of Laser workshops where participants around the country had the opportunity to trial a conservation laser.

Veronica Bullock from the Collections Council of Australia reports on its conservation survey into the human and financial resources in Australia. The details of the survey can be found at <http://www.collectionscouncil.com.au/conservation+survey+report.aspx>

Vanessa Kowalski has provided a brief report on her summer internship at The Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Along with our regular reports from our President, **Tamara Lavrencic** and SIG reports, we bring you the minutes from the National AGM held at The Australian Museum in Sydney on 20th October.

Finally we would like to congratulate **Kim Morris**, 2006 AICCM Conservator of the Year and **Marika Kocsis**, 2006 AICCM Student Conservator on their awards which were announced and presented at the National AGM.

Alexandra Ellem, Jude Fraser and Helen Privett

AICCM 2006 AWARDS

At this years' AGM held on 20 October 2006 at the Australian Museum, AICCM National Council President, Tamara Lavrencic, presented the AICCM Awards for 2006.

CONSERVATOR OF THE YEAR

The 2006 AICCM Conservator of the Year was awarded to **Kim Morris**. Kim is currently Director of Art and Archival Pty Ltd. Over the past 20 years, Kim has made significant contribution to the profession, helping to raise the standard of Conservation and Preservation Education and Training for conservators, conservation students and other cultural professionals. He has developed, supported, promoted and instructed in Preventive Conservation, Disaster Training and Preparedness courses for employees of national cultural institutions and smaller heritage organisations, across Australia and the Pacific. Kim's commitment to employing students and recent graduates and mentoring them as part of his general business work rated highly with the selection committee; they further commented that "he quietly goes about things in a very professional manner, representing the profession in a way that we wish others would emulate". Congratulations Kim!



Kim Morris and President, Tamara Lavrencic

STUDENT OF THE YEAR

The 2006 AICCM Student of the Year is **Marika Kocsis**. Marika graduated from the University of Melbourne's Master of Arts, Cultural Materials Conservation program last year and is currently working in the Conservation Branch of the State Library of NSW. Marika's thesis, titled *Conservation of contemporary artists books: A perspective*, examines the historical background of artists' books, setting the context for the discussion of the current and future directions of artists books and conservation. Well done Marika!



Marika Kocsis and Tamara Lavrencic

The AICCM also thanks June Anderson and Jochen Letsch of Anderson and Shaw Associates for supporting the Awards program by beautifully framing the award certificates.

Tucker's Box: An overview of Albert Tucker's painting materials

M. E. Kubik

Art Gallery of WA

During research into the materials of the Angry Penguins, a surprise discovery was made in the form of three large boxes of Albert Tucker's paints and materials. Bequeathed to Heide Museum of Modern Art, the boxes contain oil paints, spatulas, palettes and brushes from the later phase of his working life. The variety and quantity of paints show Tucker's overcompensation for the sparse resources available during his early career, while supporting documentary sources show his insistence on quality. An inventory made of these materials provides an invaluable insight into Tucker's materials and techniques, which should be of use for investigating and treating paintings from the latter stage of his career.

A great deal of information about artists and their materials is available in the form of letters, interviews, diaries, and any remaining studio contents. These details greatly assist future conservation and analysis work, and may remove the need for invasive testing. In this case, documentary research was conducted into the materials of Albert Tucker with the aim of later confirming the information by means of scientific analysis of his work. Records of Tucker's materials may be found in letters to Joy Hester, transcripts of interviews, and many live discussions which were never recorded (Tucker, 2003). Shortly before Tucker's death in 1999, he and his wife Barbara left a large portion of studio materials to Heide Museum of Modern Art in Heidelberg, Melbourne. The inventory of these, and the documentary background are presented here in the hope that they will be of value to other conservators or curators wishing to further analyse Albert Tucker's materials and techniques.

History

Albert Tucker was born in Melbourne in 1914. During the height of the Depression, Tucker left school to take up a scholarship at a commercial art school, which provided him with some income (Burke, 2002). Unable to afford training at the National Gallery School, he was determined to teach himself, attending life drawing classes at the Victorian Art Society and studying art books in the reading room of the State Library. Gino Nibbi's 'Leonardo Bookshop' in Little Collins Street also provided him with books, illustrations, and reproductions (Mollison and Bonham, 1982), (Tucker, 1982).

In 1937, the Contemporary Art Society was founded, which brought Tucker into contact with John and Sunday Reed, who established a focus for many young artists at their home 'Heide' (Fry, 2000). The Reeds became Tucker's patrons soon after, buying his paintings and giving him a weekly allowance (Hawley, 1995), (Burke, 2002). The Reed's library further supported Tucker's studies, information which he would pass on to his friends Noel Counihan, Arthur Boyd, and John Perceval (Burke, 2002), (Tucker, 2003). Tucker attempted to avoid conscription by marrying Joy Hester in December 1940, and the two lived in a corrugated iron shed at Heide before he was drafted after all in 1942 (Mollison and Bonham, 1982). After the war, Tucker traveled first to Japan and then on to Europe, where he remained until 1960. Returning to Australia, Tucker met and married Barbara Bilcock in 1964. A long and productive period followed.

Materials

In his early career, Tucker saved on artists materials by making his own paints and varnishes, relying on his mentor Harry de Hartog and books such as Doerner's *Materials of the artist and their use in painting* (Doerner, 1949) and Mayer's *The Artists' handbook of materials and techniques* (Mayer, 1943). Pigments came from ICI, and Aquinol from Germany (Tucker, 2003). Perceval and Boyd adopted the same practice from about 1943 (Haese, 1981).

'In Melbourne I bought pigments from the importers; there were a lot of them around Fitzroy at the time. I had books from ICI on how pigments worked in different mediums, how they survived in light, the index factors for all of them, so I succeeded in accumulating a body of material which I took with me everywhere. Whenever I got extra money it would immediately go into materials' (Mollison and Minchin, 1990). I've still got paint that I made in the early 40's, I've still got some in tubes. Every now and then I'll pick up some and use some of it, it's all kept beautifully well, very well' (Tucker, 1988).

Preferring the permanence and tactility of oil, Tucker chose to use his few paints sparingly. Many of these earlier paintings were worked over later 'to fatten them up, as it were' (Tucker, 1988). This frugal practice seems appropriate against a backdrop of World War II rationing, where many artists were resorting to household paint or using whatever was available. However, Tucker did not compromise on materials, even if quantity suffered. Although it tended to remain his medium of choice, Tucker was not restricted to oils:



Figure 1: One of the muffin trays used to mix and store paint

'I played with it [tempera], with a gum Arabic tempera ... I even played for a very short while with egg tempera too. But again, it wasn't my cup of tea really. Oh yes, I like using pastel, I used it a fair bit in the early days ... Sunday bought a lot of Ripolin for Nolan and they gave me some too. But I finished up never using it. It was simply not my... you know, the quality of it. I did play with it in a few odd things, but not in many (Tucker, 1988).



Figure 2: A selection of oil paints, with multiple tubes of the same colour.

The Reeds assisted in a number of ways, saving up for oil paints that were preciously guarded. Tucker once caught Joy using his paints, for which she was strongly chastised (Tucker, 2003), (Burke, 2002). In 1954, Tucker moved to Rome and met the artist Alberto Burri, who introduced him to Vinyvil, a polyvinyl acetate (PVA) (Mollison and Minchin, 1990). Tucker was impressed by the new material and adopted it into his own works. Compared to oil paints, Tucker only started to use canvas late in his career because of its cost, instead resorting to scraps of cardboard and Masonite for the majority of his early work. One early source of canvas was through his father, who worked in the North Melbourne railway yards:



Figure 3: The contents of a smaller box of tubes

'Occasionally some of the canvas covers on the trucks there would be thrown out, so he'd cut out squares of this for me and bring them home and then I'd scrub them and wash them. And any very early paintings that I had on canvas, this is where the canvas came from'. (Tucker, 1988)

He always preferred using rectangle shape canvas which was placed flat, however he also used an easel at times (Tucker, 1988). Compared to this early frugal treatment of materials, Tucker later overcompensated by buying large stocks of paint and brushes (Tucker, 1982), (Tucker, 1998), (Tucker, 2003). Describing his studio and working methods in 1990, Tucker preferred to have his studio always at the ready (Mollison and Minchin, 1990). This was to allow any sudden inspirations to be put to paint, while often building up a painting over extended periods of time. This also required mixing up large pots of paint ready for use.

The studio bequest

Albert Tucker died in 1999, survived by his wife Barbara. Shortly before his death, the couple donated a large body of work to the Heide Museum of Modern Art. This bequest included paintings, works on paper, photos, sculpture, books, documents and ephemera, including several boxes of studio materials. The contents of three boxes of Albert Tucker's painting materials were catalogued and photographed during a visit to Heide Museum on 2 October 2003. Most of the material appears to be from the 1970s to 80s, and many of the paint tubes are unopened. According to Stephanie Crighton, the Registrar of Heide, other material, including large tubes of oil paint, were given away to his close friends and were not documented. Barbara Tucker also confirmed this, adding that the large quantities of materials stored up during the later part of his life were a direct compensation for his earlier skimping (Tucker, 2003). The Bequest contents shed an important insight into Albert Tucker's working materials; spatulas, charcoal, bristle brushes, chalk, stretching pliers, rags, sketchpads, knives, and muffin trays filled with dried paint (figures 1 – 3).

A full list of materials is available from the author. Manufacturers and paints are listed as written on the label. Tucker had used a number of different manufacturers, although *Marcus* and *Art Spectrum*, both from Australia, are well represented. Little is known of the manufacturer *Pure Oil Colour*, other than that it was made in Australia. Other manufacturers include *Van Dyck Colori*, *Bocour Artist Colors*, *Weber*, *Winsor & Newton*, *Reeves*, *Liquitex* and *Talens*. The manufacturer's name *Marcus* and *Premium* have been used interchangeably, but appear to be the same brand judging by the style of label. Unless otherwise specified, all paints are in metal tubes. Only a few non-oil tubes were found; *Winsor & Newton* alkyd and acrylic, *Reeves* Tempera polymer, *Bocour Aquatec* acrylic, *Marcus Art* Plastol enamel paint, indicating that Tucker was still predominantly using oils in the latter phase of his career.

Conclusion

To summarise, there is sufficient information available through documentary sources and remaining studio material to get a good understanding of Albert Tucker's materials. This should be of value to any conservator or curator wishing to further investigate his techniques. While I will not be undertaking more in-depth scientific analysis of his materials at this point in time, I would be happy to assist others with their treatments and investigations.

Acknowledgements

Thanks go to Stephanie Crighton of the Heide Museum of Modern Art for her invitation to inspect the Tucker studio contents. Thanks also to the Manuscript section of the State Library of Victoria, the Library collection of the National Gallery of Australia, and the Oral History section of the National Library of Australia for access to letters, interviews and transcripts.

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Biography

Maria Kubik is paintings conservator at the Art Gallery of WA. She has recently completed a PhD on pigment identification using non-sampling spectroscopic techniques at the Australian National University, and has a special interest in 20th century Australian artists. Email: maria.kubik@artgallery.wa.gov.au

People & Projects

ACT

Australian War Memorial

Within the past few months **Barbara Reeve** has written the Hazardous Materials Management Plan and revised the Memorial's Asbestos Management and Radioactive Materials Plans. Barbara is in the midst of working with the Head of Buildings and Services to develop a Request for Tender for a 25 year Strategic Accommodation Plan to be implemented at the Treloar Complex to resolve collection storage, non-collection storage, and work space requirements for the Memorial. The AWM hosted the Laser course in Canberra with a huge effort being put in by **Alison Wain** to get it up and running. In September, **Sarah Clayton** and **Ainslie Greiner** returned from their Antarctic adventure with all their fingers and toes intact and many stories to tell.

The Textile Lab has started treating items for the new Post 1945 Galleries. Sarah Clayton is treating one of Lawrence of Arabia's cloaks for the upcoming exhibition, *Lawrence of Arabia and the Light Horse*. **Jessie Firth** is working on some fragile hats as part of the Vulnerable Textiles program and **Jo Francis** has been diligently working on the freezer program and with the onset of spring has been occupied with a few insect problems.

The AWM Large Technology Objects and Vehicles Team have spent the majority of their time on the conservation and preparation of LTO's for the Memorial's Post 1945 Galleries. **Andrew Pearce** and **Andrew Schroeder** have undertaken conservation treatment of the M113A1 armoured personnel carrier and the UN Landrover. **Jamie Croker** has been working on the Iroquois helicopter, the nose of the Meteor jet aircraft, and other military vehicles destined for the new gallery. The treatment of the Bridge from the destroyer HMAS Brisbane is continuing under **John Kemister**. Some internal equipment retained by the Navy as being sensitive or in current use, has been replicated by **Lee Davies** to complete the internal fit out. Volunteers **Brian Ewings**, **John McNaughton** and **Dean Willis** have been preparing the external surfaces, and all staff have been involved in the repainting, including Ainslie Greiner (Now lost to the NMA. All the best Ainslie!). **George Bailey** has been ably assisting, in his spare time from the Objects Lab, with internal conservation and installation work and replication of Steyr rifle mounts. After completing the finer internal details (pencil sharpener, clinometers, Chinagraph pencils, charts, mobile phone, marine and CB radio, telephone lists, etc, etc - it's the detail that counts!) and painting the undersides of the Bridge

Wings, work will now focus on the Radar Equipment Room with **David Gordon**, and the Gun Director with Andrew Pearce. **Bridie Kirkpatrick** has been working on some of the upholstery from the bridge.

In the paintings lab, **Sharon Alcock** and **Ilaria Poli** are busy preparing over 60 paintings and their frames, not only for the Lambert Exhibition but also for a major loan and for replacements of works which will be removed from galleries during the exhibition. **David Keany** is on long service leave until early November.

The Paper Lab team has been joined by **Sophie Lewincamp**, fresh from her internship at the Library of Congress. This brings the lab back to its full complement of four conservators and one conservation assistant. Sophie has worked with us before and the Lab was looking forward to the return of her cheerful and enthusiastic presence. **Bernard Kertesz** presented a paper, *Vital, valuable or vulnerable; the construction of priority salvage lists*, at the Australian Registrars Committee's November conference, *Risky Business: Managing Responsibilities and Solutions*. Bernard has also posted the first of the DISACT seminar pages at the DISACT website, see <http://www.anbg.gov.au/disact/seminars.html>. Thanks are again due to the webmaster at the National Herbarium, Murray Fagg.

For the past eight months, the Photo Development Team of **Matthew Cramp**, **Thomas Fanning** and **Ian Fulton**, has been working on a number of projects. The most notable was the conservation treatment work for a book which is an overview of the collection held at the AWM and the photographers who took the photographs. One of the post 1945 Naval collections comprising over 25,000 negatives was cleaned and rehoused. Other projects included treatment of small works of glass and 35mm slides.

National Archives of Australia – National Office

Ian Batterham is on long service leave until February, with **Prue Mckay** filling in as Assistant Director of Preservation and **Sally Kneebone** filling in as Supervisor Conservator in the Laboratory.

The laboratory is presently preparing for the new Gallery display at Parkes. The new exhibition is called *Memory of a Nation* and will include some intriguing items such as the brief case Harold Holt had with him the day he drowned with its varied and unusual contents, and Kingsford Smith's

pilot license. As part of the exhibition treatments, **Caroline Whitley**, with the help of **Peter Bucke**, objects conservator at the NMA, is working on a plaster statue of Mae West, which had suffered damage leading to decapitation. As many of the documents going on display have ink pad stamps on them, **Ellie McFadyen**, **Alana Lee** and **Clair Murray** have commenced FTIR analysis and light fading tests on various colours of ink pad inks.

Sally Kneebone attended the laser-cleaning workshop at the War Memorial. **Cheryl Jackson** is planning to attend a photo conservation workshop entitled *Contemporary Photography: Digital Prints*. This Collaborative Workshop in Photograph Conservation is funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and will be hosted by The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. The workshop is fully funded by the Mellon Foundation, which also provided Cheryl with scholarship funds to allow her to attend. The workshop will cover process chemistry and identification, treatment options, preservation issues (for both hard copy and the digital file) and will include artists' talks and studio visits. One of the criteria for receiving funding from the Mellon Foundation is a commitment to share the information gained. Once back, Cheryl will hold an information session for the ACT Division, a professional development seminar at the NAA, and write an article for the AICCM Newsletter. Stay tuned...

NEW SOUTH WALES

Australian Museum

The team at the Museum are currently awaiting the construction of the new research and collections building, which begins early in November. **Colin Macgregor**, **Sarah McHugh** and **Susanna Collis** have been involved in the re-location of several large and challenging objects from the Pacific collections to off-site storage facilities. The collections unit bids farewell to Susanna, who will be greatly missed by us all. She has just moved to Brisbane to work at the Queensland Art Gallery.

The museum recently played host to the AICCM National Seminar *Sustainable Buildings- Cost vs. Collection Needs*. The seminar was a great success and included a presentation by Steve King, the Associate Director from the Centre of Sustainable Built Environment, University of New South Wales. Matt Morel from the architectural firm, Johnson Pilton Walker, whose firm designed the new Australian Museum building wing, presented an overview of the energy efficiency that could be achieved through the select placement of storage areas and innovative designs to make the most of natural elements.

The building project presents an ideal opportunity to focus on the re-housing and treatment of some of the collection material. **Kate Jones** is continuing the second phase of the re-housing and treatment of the Pacific mat collection, and **Tasha Brown** is working on the upgrade of the Australian spear collection area. **Michael Kelly** has returned from a courier trip to the St. Louis Art Museum, where he installed some of the Australian Museum's Malagan works from New Ireland. Michael also has recently worked on the installation of *Ko Tawa*, which features 'taonga', Maori ancestral treasures. **Megan Dean-Jones** has completed an internship project on a magnetic vertical display system for bark cloth artefacts for the Museum Studies course at the University of Sydney. Megan will be giving presentations of her work to fellow university students and staff, as well as at the Australian Museum.

Elwing & Gurney Archival

Elwing & Gurney have had a full year with both of us having been working two days a week elsewhere, **James Elwing** at the Powerhouse Museum and **Jill Gurney** at State Records. Noteworthy projects included the completion of NLA Community Heritage Grants Preservation Needs Surveys for Eskbank House, Lithgow and for the KMT Archives (Chinese Nationalist Party). We gave workshops on care and minimum intervention and an introduction to preservation. Jill gave a workshop on the preparation of decorative book edges for design bindings to the NSW Guild of Craft Bookbinders. James is working on consolidation and repair of an 1880's time capsule letter and newspaper remnants, with paper like cigarette ash. The documents are connected with Sir Henry Parkes and Oberon Council. Throughout the year we have been blessed with those ubiquitous Victorian Family Bibles. Jill has begun work on some very interesting but severely mould and insect ravaged trade catalogues, and a set of a once grand 1902 Encyclopedia Britannica, with lovely marbled papers that are sadly affected by red rot.

ICS

Life-long learning is a process which conservators may yearn for but do not always have the opportunity to proactively follow. To date the only way of pursuing it has been by workshop and conference attendance, so ICS applauds the establishment of a joint agreement between AICCM and the Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation at the University of Melbourne to provide a Continuous Professional Development Program.

Meanwhile, ICS staff have been participating in a number of conferences. **David West** attended the APT (Association for Preservation Technology) International Annual Conference in Atlanta, and we congratulate him

on being elected to their board. He is the only Director from outside North America currently on the board. **Fiona Tennant, Miriam Wormleaton** and **Skye Firth** participated in the Textiles SIG meeting in Adelaide, and Fiona Tennant and **Doug Rogan** were part of the Australian Registrars Annual Conference in Hobart. **Julian Bickersteth** attended the annual Museums Association (UK) Conference in Bournemouth, UK and lectured at the Natural History Museum, London as part of their webcast Nature Live program on ICS' work in Antarctica.

David West also took part in the laser cleaning workshop organised by Alison Wain at the AWM in Canberra. ICS is now considering the potential for the technology in the private sector, and is considering investing in the equipment subject to sufficient interest in the provision of laser cleaning services to other conservators.

The final batch of Key Elements artworks at Parliament House, Canberra was successfully treated and conservation plans completed. This sees the end of this major project. Doug Rogan has led the ICS team out of Canberra with Fiona Tennant managing the conservation plans and **Adam Godijn** leading the conservation works, ably assisted by **Anna Diakowska-Czarnota, Arek Werstak** and **Myra Pastuch**, and working with Art & Archival, Carmella Mollica, and South East Conservation.

Powerhouse Museum

Several years ago, the Powerhouse Museum and the National Museum of China in Beijing began negotiations for the development and preparation of *Great Wall of China: dynasties, dragons and warriors*. In September, the involvement of the Preservation Department culminated with almost all staff being involved in the preparation and installation of this exhibition. The exhibition charts the history of the Great Wall from its inception as a series of discontinuous long walls built by warring states (from 475 BCE), to the building of the iconic sections of Ming dynasty (1368-1644) walls to the north of Beijing. Among the objects are a life-size terracotta warrior from the mausoleum of Qin Shihuang, the first Emperor of China (who reigned from 221 BCE – 210 BCE); inscribed wooden slivers excavated from the ruins of ancient beacon towers and military structures in the Gobi Desert from the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220); a gold headdress ornament in the form of an ox head with deer antlers worn by a noblewoman of the Xianbei people unearthed in present-day Inner Mongolia but dated back to the Northern Dynasties (386-581); a beautifully painted Ming dynasty plan of a section of wall outside Beijing inscribed with detailed information about its use as a military structure; and a rare painting of the Manchu-Qing Qianlong Emperor (who reigned 1736-1795). The large size and fragile nature of many of the objects, combined

with a difference in approach to the measurement of objects and incorporated supports, kept staff and colleagues from the National Museum and the Palace Museum on their toes during the intensive weeks of documentation, condition checking, and crating in Beijing, the courier run and finally the exhibition installation at the Powerhouse Museum.

Another exhibition occupying the team was *Other histories: Guan Wei's fable for a contemporary world*. Contemporary Chinese-Australian artist, Guan Wei, and his team of assistants spent four weeks in the Museum's Asian Gallery, painting murals to complement the exhibition that was inspired by one of the Museum's most mysterious objects - a small figure of the Chinese God of Longevity unearthed in Darwin in 1879. **Tim Morris, Gosia Dudek** and **Skye Mitchell** prepared and installed objects for the exhibition and **Nadia de Wachter** mounted and framed 32 of Guan Wei's amazingly creative drawings.

The simultaneous presentation of preservation workshops focussing on the care of agricultural machinery and tools by **Graham Clegg**, and the preservation of textiles by **Mary Gissing**, proved a success with the Museums Australia Chapter gathering in Lockhart, NSW. **Suzanne Chee** presented a paper at the Textile Special Interest Group Symposium in Adelaide. Focusing on two costumes that are displayed in the exhibition, *Inspired: Design through the Ages*, Suzanne spoke about the conservation of Mary Piper's ball gown and the reproduction of a lost button for a Victorian Mourning gown. Suzanne also prepared costumes designed by Jenny Kee for a display which coincided with the book launch *A Big Life* by Jenny Kee.

The Museum's Regional Services held an annual open day at our Castle Hill collection storage facility. This day is an opportunity to meet colleagues and friends from regional and community organisations and to consider ways we might work together in the future. Many of the Preservation staff are highly sought after as tour guides for these visits, due to their interesting stories founded on intimate knowledge of the collection.

Frances Fitzpatrick returned from maternity leave and is working on outgoing loans, including those for the National Museum of Australia with objects related to surfing; the Australian Tennis Museum; and the Museum of Sydney for *Bridging Sydney*, an exhibition of objects relating to the construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Following the visit to the Museum of two Fijian interns and as part of the Fiji Museum's grant for this project, **Kate Chidlow, Keith Potter** and Mary Gissing organised a shipment of conservation materials to the Suva based museum. After protracted "Fiji time" negotiations with Customs officials, the Fiji Museum finally took possession

of their much needed and greatly anticipated shipment. Kate also continues work on 'del.ici.ous', the conservation folksonomy (the result of personal free tagging of information and objects - anything with a URL). This rapidly expanding list of conservation websites will eventually be posted on the Museum's website.

State Library of NSW

We would like to celebrate the completion of the Toganmain rehousing project which commenced in 2004 and was lead by **Aileen Dean-Raschilla**. The Toganmain collection is part of the Manuscript Collection of the State Library NSW and includes books, letters and maps to the total of 17,987 items. Toganmain was one of a group of major Riverina pastoral properties which fronted the Murrumbidgee River between Darlington Point and Hay in NSW. The collection documents pastoral activities of the Robertson family dating back to 1824. The station records provide a graphic picture of day to day running of a large pastoral property, highlighted with incidental information relating to life and conditions in rural NSW. Due to poor storage conditions on the station, the collection was heavily covered in Hay Plains' dust, which prevented public access. Therefore the Toganmain project began – all items were brush cleaned and rehoused in polypropylene boxes. Due to the quantity of dust, most of the work was undertaken in a fume cupboard. The size of the project and its repetitive nature required a team of three – Aileen, **Martin Bongiorno** and **Marika Kocsis**.

We would like to welcome our new senior conservator, **Tracey Golds**, to the Collection Preservation team. Tracey is currently responsible for a major international loan to Rio de Janeiro, departing our shores in November. The Rio loan comprises over 30 items including watercolours, journals and sketches and will be on display at Centro Cultural Correios. Tracey was previously working at the Sydney Office of the National Archives of Australia.

Two departures from the Collection Preservation Team - **Catherine Thomson** has been seconded for a few months to the **atmitchell.com** Project which aims to digitise collections from the Mitchell Library and make them available online. Cath is developing and coordinating the production processes that will be involved. **Heather Mansell** continues to work at the State Library of NSW but is now Manager of Innovative Projects. At the moment she is leading the Strategic Planning and Engagement Process for the Library and is finding it very enjoyable, if somewhat challenging. Heather says, "This is a really exciting position for me. Of course, I do miss my conservator colleagues and that side of work, but it was time for a change for me. It's also great to know that 'conservators' can be recognised as being able to do other things..."

Congratulations to Marika Kocsis for receiving the AICCM 2006 Student Conservator of the year for her thesis, *Conservation of Contemporary Artists Books: A Perspective*. We are very proud of Marika and delighted that she has joined the Collection Preservation team.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Artlab Australia

After an illustrious career at Artlab, from the very beginning 21 years ago, **Keith Fernandez** has moved to new pastures at CSIRO. Keith has been appointed to the position of Manager, Operations, Land and Water, covering all of Australia but remains based in Adelaide. Keith's friends and colleagues all appreciated the tremendous contribution he has made over two decades, both to Artlab and to the conservation profession as a whole. We wish him every success and happiness in his new role. **Andrew Durham** attended the IIC Congress in Munich, visiting colleagues in Singapore and at the Getty Institute en route to explore future collaborative partnerships. **Sarah Feijen** is currently completing a Masters of Business (Arts and Culture) and undertook a four-week work placement with Adelaide Thinkers in Residence in November.

An Artlab crew consisting of **Joanna Barr, Charlotte Park, Elizabeth Murphy, Martin Deckys, Rita Bachmayer, Bee Flynn, Ian Page, Michael Veitch, Sarah Babister, Helen Szuster** and **Anna Austin** have been working on one of Adelaide's oldest churches. North Adelaide Christ Church has been receiving treatment on its stained glass windows. The conservation treatment has included cleaning the exterior and interior glass surfaces and completing in situ repairs with epoxy on areas where the glass had broken. Artlab has been working in partnership with 'Almond-Glass' to complete the structural repairs on selected windows. There have been some very difficult access issues to reach windows in confined spaces inside the Church. The project has been especially challenging with windows reaching up to ten metres high. Painting conservators, **Eugene Taddeo** and **Marek Pacyna**, have been working on the painted altar at Christ Church. They have been removing surface dirt from the altar as well as consolidating paint and retouching where required.

Meanwhile back at the lab, **Gillian Leahy** has treated some Hans Heysen oil paintings on canvas adhered to board. Heysen completed the studies while travelling in Europe. Gillian has had to remove aged and discoloured varnish from the paintings as well as consolidate and retouch the works in some areas.

Elizabeth Mayfield is currently working on four privately owned sketchbooks. The books have a fascinating history, having been found down a well in the French countryside by an Australian soldier during World War One. They were obviously well wrapped while down in the well, as there are no signs of water damage or mould stains. However they are deteriorating with use and age. The books contain small watercolour, gouache and graphite sketches on paper that have been adhered to the sketchbook bound leaves. The book's pages are unfortunately quite degraded, and the weight of the pasted inserts is causing stress and breaks around them due to the weight of the images. Liz has had to carefully strengthen the areas around the images with Japanese paper without obscuring the artist's work or causing tide lines in the discoloured paper. She will prepare custom made folders and boxes for the books prior to their return to the client. **Colin Brown** has been treating a 16th Century Lutheran Bible, which is constructed with alum-towed skin and has metal embossed clasps on the cover. The entire bible has been relief printed from carved wood blocks and the images are hand coloured. The weight of the front cover was causing stress to the binding of the front sections of the book. The sections were coming loose and Colin has added new cord material to aid in the resewing of the sections. He also added a parchment strip lining to the block to strengthen around the joint.

Fred Francisco and Charlotte Park have been working large recently. Together they have put together a treatment proposal for a six-metre, surveyor general map of South Australia and the Northern Territory, dated 1877. The map has been rolled and is severely discoloured and weak with losses and creases around the edges. It has been proposed to remove the weakened lining, and to wash and separate the five pieces of which the map is composed. After being washed, each piece will be lined on Japanese paper prior to an overall support to realign the work. The map will then be prepared for storage. Charlotte and Fred are also working on a 2.2 x 1.7 m work titled *Dark Shadow No. 9* by Gilbert and George. The work is owned by the Art Gallery of South Australia and is being sent to Tate Modern in London early next year. Charlotte and Fred are removing the 19 silver gelatine prints from their current acidic backboards to remount and frame them separately for safe travelling and exhibition.

Kristin Phillips has been working on the c.1900 Wallaroo Waterside Workers Trade Union Banner in the textiles lab. The 3.5 x 3.5 metre banner had a previous lining adhered with starch paste. The adhesive was staining the banner in some areas. Kristin has begun removing the previous lining and adhesive stains with solvents on the suction table with significant success. Following aqueous treatment, the banner will be lined with a new secondary support and have repairs as required.

The Objects team has been preparing items for the reopening of the Pacific Gallery at the South Australian Museum. Approximately 30 artefacts originating from different Pacific Island nations had been in storage. These items are to be displayed in the newly renovated gallery, which opens to the public in December. All of the artefacts are organic, with delicate pigmented surfaces, and required cleaning, treating, and mounting for display. It has been a big undertaking, and we have been helped in this endeavour by textiles conservators, **Charlotte Jenkin**, Kristin Phillips, and Bee Flynn and paper conservator, Charlotte Park. **Justin Gare** attended the recent *Conservation of Furniture Finishes* workshop in Melbourne. **Sophie Parker** has been managing the conservation requirements for the exhibition, *Yingarti Jilamara Art of the Tiwi Islands*, which has opened at the Art Gallery of South Australia. **Anna Taddeo** is close to finishing a beautiful gold leaf repair on a 12th century Chinese ceramic bowl. **Mary Anne Gooden** has surveyed furniture from a heritage listed building in Adelaide.

State Library of South Australia

Thanks to a combination of new reformatting technologies and traditional conservation skills, facsimiles are becoming a significant preservation strategy at the State Library. A large format colour printer (Epson Stylus Pro 9800) allows scanning operators **Steven Liu** and **Toby Woolley** to produce facsimiles on Photo Rag and German Etching Paper using Epson Ultrachrome K3 ink that are of exceptional quality with a display permanence rating of about 100 years (Wilhelm Imaging Research, www.wilhelm-research.com).

Conservation Officer, **Deb Heames**, has primary responsibility for the subsequent fabrication of the facsimiles that are replacing at least 350 original items on display in the Mortlock Chamber's exhibition bays. The goal is to reduce the number of original items to about 150, or 30 percent. This will greatly reduce the schedule of rotations and the risk to originals on display in what is primarily a functions venue. At the same time, guests at functions that include banquets and wedding receptions will still be exposed to a broad representation of the library's heritage collections.

The majority of items are flat, but a number of three-dimensional objects have posed some complex challenges. For instance, the *Children's Tableaux* is a moveable book dating from the 1890s, which features in the display of the Children's Literature Research Collection. Each page comprises three layers that separate when opened to produce the three dimensional effect. The original was dismantled so that each layer could be scanned. The scanned illustrations on each layer were carefully cut out by hand; a painstaking task because the tableau

selected for display is a leafy forest glade. Each layer was then mounted on top of the other using thin manila tabs to replicate the 5 mm layering of the original.

Other facsimiles have required distressing processes akin to those undertaken in the antiques trade. These involved a lot of sandpaper, some lead pencils and dropping the odd box on the floor to replicate dents, much to the horror of other staff who thought that heritage items were being mishandled. It also demonstrated how realistic the facsimiles are in appearance.

There are of course ethical issues to be grappled with in the display and interpretation of facsimiles, but the Library is keen to promote the preservation benefits to regional and local institutions where the environmental conditions in exhibition areas vary and much harm can be caused to permanent displays.

An ideal forum for such community education is the GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums) Cross-Sector Training initiative of the Library, Artlab Australia, History Trust of South Australia and Country Arts SA. In October, Senior Conservator **Peter Zajicek** collaborated with colleagues from Artlab to present the first three-day GLAM 'Caring for Collections' workshop at Goolwa for the Fleurieu Peninsula region.

VICTORIA

Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation, The University of Melbourne

In early November, CCMC hosted the 2006 Postgraduate Student Research Colloquium where students presented the findings of their Thesis research to CCMC staff and students, University collection managers and local and interstate colleagues. The keynote address was delivered by Sir Gustav Nossal, who spoke eloquently on the topics of art, heritage and science and his passion for research. The student projects presented were:

- **Ahmad Abu Baker**, PhD candidate: Investigating new corrosion inhibitors for copper based artefacts.
- **Tammi Lye**: Identification of the media used on bound Hawaiian pre-colonial tapa specimens from Alexander Shaw's book; *A catalogue of the different specimens of cloth collected in the three voyages of Captain Cook, to the southern hemisphere*, published in London, 1787.
- **Danielle Smelter**: Australian Television News: Public and Private Histories.
- **Georgia Harvey**: Indonesian and Malay keris: manufacture, preservation and significance, with guidelines for culturally appropriate storage, handling and display.
- **Debra Parry**: West meets East: On Textile Mounts for Thangkas.

- **Kate Shepherson**: The potential use of alkaline substances to prevent the development of Byne's Efflorescence in bird egg collections.
- **Di Whittle**: Kinetic Art – the conservation of motion.

Robyn Sloggett's contribution to the development of the academic programs at CCMC has been acknowledged by her appointment as Associate Professor within the Faculty of Arts. Along with **Marcelle Scott's** Dean's Teaching Award for her inspirational leadership in the development and delivery of interdisciplinary education and training in conservation, this gives an indication of the success and standing of the conservation course within the Faculty. Congratulations to CCMC graduate, **Marika Kocsis** on her AICCM Conservation Student of the Year award, which was presented at the recent National AGM at the Australian Museum in Sydney.

Vanessa Kowalski is extending her leave and will commence a 12-month fellowship in paintings conservation at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York in December. During the fellowship, Vanessa will conduct a pilot study of a group of works by Vassily Kandinsky. The project will include thorough technical examination, complete documentation and scientific analysis of the materials and techniques of the group of paintings. In addition, Vanessa will further her knowledge and skills in the conservation treatment of modern artworks.

Projects of note in the paintings lab include **Caroline Fry's** lengthy cleaning and varnish removal treatment of a large, detailed landscape, *Sandhurst, View from Camp Hill*, (Sandhurst is now known as Bendigo) painted in 1866. The weather never looked better there! **Cushla Hill** and **Mary Jo Lelyveld** have been consolidating and cleaning some of Albert Tucker's works for Heide Museum of Art's 25th Anniversary exhibitions. **Alexandra Ellem** has worked on a Sidney Nolan for Heide, and on some Howard Arkley's paintings for the exhibition of his works at the NGV. She devised a three step cleaning process to safely reduce the dust adhering to the craggy topography of the airbrush painted surfaces.

In the paper lab, **Louise Wilson** and **Nick Selenitsch** have been preparing petitions for the Public Records Office's exhibition, *And your petitioners humbly pray... 150 Years of Petitions in Victoria*. In the meantime, **Travis Taylor** has been working on items from the University Art Collection and continues with his research on Japanese calligraphy papers.

Following her debut in Munich at the IIC Congress and visits to European and Singaporean conservation labs, **Holly Jones-Amin** has returned to undertake new projects. She will be coordinating a training day for the See Yup

community on cleaning wooden memorial tablets held in the See Yup Temple. MA student, **Isa Loo** will assist Holly. There are approximately 8000 wooden tablets in the Memorial Hall, which was built in 1856 and is actively used for worship. The temple is the oldest and biggest in the Southern Hemisphere and it is Heritage listed. The early tablets date from 1856 but were installed in 1900. The tablets commemorate members of the See Yup community who died and are buried somewhere in Victoria. It is understood that some of these tablets are the only Australian written records of these community members. The community wishes to clean the tablets so they may then translate and document these records, offering a more accessible record of those individuals. A major issue with the tablets is that they are difficult to access. The tablets sit adjacent on narrow, long tiered shelves in rows, with small gaps between the rows. The shelves start at waist height and extend up to the high ceiling, and they are positioned along three sides of the room. The tablets are covered in over a century's worth of dirt and incense ash, which is obfuscating the inscriptions on them. Holly is also managing the treatment of beautiful stained glass windows from the former Victorian mansion in Parkville of Professor Kernot, the first Professor of Engineering at The University of Melbourne. **Raaf Ishak** and **Jordi Casasayas** are assisting her in this treatment, which will involve removing old splashes of paint and epoxy from previous restorations.

Petronella Nel, Ahmad Abu Baker, and Alexandra Ellem attended the laser cleaning workshop held at Museum Victoria's Moreland Annex. It was an excellent introduction to the process with numerous applications in conservation.

Museum Victoria

The conservation department recently hosted the Laser Cleaning Workshop and is busy preparing for the *Conservation of Geological and Paleontological Collections* in early December 2006.

Catherine Lovelock has been away in Canada for most of October attending the ICCROM *Preventive Conservation: Reducing Risks to Collections* course. In her absence **Michelle Berry** has been acting as manager of conservation, and driving some renovations to our labs at Melbourne Museum. Michelle has also been formulating a set of light and display duration guidelines and deinstalling the *Victorian Trade Union Banner: A Proud Tradition* exhibition. In addition Michelle has been preparing objects for the upcoming permanent exhibition *Mind*.

Helen Privett, **Karina Palmer**, **Melissa Gunter** and **Alayne Alvis** completed work on a large exhibition of modern design objects called *Freestyle*. The exhibition features around 600 items and is scheduled to travel to a further 3

national venues over the next 12 months. Helen has also been working on the preliminary assessment of approximately 600 objects scheduled for display in the redeveloped Australia Gallery at Melbourne Museum. This exhibition is largely based around the social history of Melbourne, though it does feature natural science objects such as Phar Lap. The gallery redevelopment will require several large-scale treatments, including restoration of a Big Dipper carriage and a Cobb and Co Coach. Karina has been working on a number of outward loans, including works for the *Ednaville* exhibition.

Angeletta Leggio has been treating and preparing a number of drawings by Ludwig Becker and lithographic plates for a travelling exhibition titled *Murray Cod- Biggest fish in the river* and preparing works for change-over in exhibitions at Melbourne Museum and Immigration Museum. **Phil Masters** has been working on the MV AV collection including motion picture film, magnetic audio and video and assorted documentation. Phil has been examining the motion picture film, preparing it for long-term storage, in addition to examining magnetic media and ensuring that it is wound and stored to archival standard.

National Gallery of Victoria

The end of 2006 comes with the end of an era at the NGV. **Tom Dixon** has retired from the position of Chief Conservator. Tom came to head the Conservation Department in 1984, appointed by then Director, Patrick McCaughey. The Department at the time consisted of five people - one each in Paper, Textiles, Objects, Paintings and Framing. Tom oversaw the development of the Department for the next 22 years, where it grew to a staff of 20 fulltime positions. Tom's contribution to the Department, to the Gallery as a whole and to the development of Conservation as a profession in Australia is measured by the scope and quality of the Department he has left behind. We all owe Tom something of our individual success, but the Gallery as a whole is the better for his singular pre-occupation with making conservation relevant to a collection and the particular responsibilities of a relentlessly active art gallery.

The paper lab is extremely happy to announce that **Ruth Shervington** has been appointed as the Senior Paper Conservator, following **Jan Begg's** return to the sunny shores of Sydney. During this time of change in the paper lab, **Sallyanne Gilchrist** has been back-filling the paper conservator position, and, among other things, has been working on inlaying a selection of Buddhist Tsakli pictures to hang in the Asian galleries in December. **Pip Morrison** continues to work on mounting techniques for large format colour photographs, and has completed work using various techniques for the exhibition *Light Sensitive: Contemporary Australian Photography from the Loti Smorgon Fund*, currently on at NGV Australia.

In early October, the Frames and Furniture section bid farewell to **Noel Turner** who has resigned to wander, work and surf the globe. Noel contributed a great deal to the life and output of the section, making a major impact on the conservation and presentation of numerous paintings and furniture items in the collection. **Holly McGowan-Jackson** and **Suzi Shaw** spent much of late August and early September preparing the nuts and bolts for the *Cleaning and Preserving Finishes on Furniture* workshop presented by Arlen Heginbotham (Associate Conservator at the J. Paul Getty Museum, L.A.). See the review elsewhere in this newsletter. They have since returned to their day jobs, so-to-speak, and are preparing for the reframing of several Australian Impressionist paintings as well as tending to other treatment requirements for this important show.

Bronwyn Cosgrove and **Kate Douglas** from the textile lab have been busy with the final preparations and installation of two exhibitions *Ikat: Asian Resist Dyed Textiles* and *Thomas Harrison, Milliner*. Both exhibitions are now open and look fantastic. **Christina Ritschel** carried out a short term contract conserving 17 new acquisitions for the *Ikat* exhibition. We also had the assistance of **Catherine Shannon**, who spent many hours stitching display heading cloths and **Annette Soumilas** who made a beautiful calico undergarment for a 19th century costume. Christina's contract has now finished but she has been carrying out tests on Drimarene dyes and is preparing trichromatic reference charts. These dyes can be used on both cotton and silk and recent conservation literature suggests they are more stable than Direct dyes. Bronwyn and Kate are now preparing works for the December light sensitive changeovers in the antiquities, Decorative Art and Asian art galleries, and starting to photograph, survey and treat items for three upcoming exhibitions. *From mourning to night: Black in Fashion* (NGV International) and *Black* (NGV Australia) will open consecutively late 2007, and *Katie Pye: Clothes for Modern Lovers* opening in June 2007. These exhibitions should ensure a very busy year to come.

The Paintings Conservation studio has expanded with the appointment of **Raye Collins** and **Melanie Vella** as Hugh Williamson Foundation Paintings Conservation Fellows. The exciting two-year program will give Raye and Melanie the opportunity to develop their treatment and analytical skills as well as be involved in a variety of other gallery activities. They are currently assisting **Michael Varcoe-Cocks** with technical analysis and treatments for the Australian Impressionism exhibition. Melanie is currently working on Charles Conder's *The Farm, Richmond*, whilst Raye is working on a small Arthur Streeton panel titled *Hawkesbury River, Autumn*. Michael has commenced a major treatment on Tom Roberts' *Shearing the Rams*.

Carl Willis is performing major structural treatment on the Italian panel, *Profile Portrait of a Lady* (c1475), and **John Payne** has continued in his role as Acting Chief Conservator.

Catherine Earley and **Janelle Borig** continue to work on exhibition preparation for a range of exhibitions including sneakers, Howard Arkley paintings, Blackman paintings and Manga drawings. Some much needed help has been supplied by volunteers/casuals Christina Ritschel, **Danielle Smelter**, Sallyanne Gilchrist and **Linda Waters**. Catherine attended the AICCM National Council meeting as SIG convenor for Exhibitions Conservation. The SIG has just become active, so watch that space.

State Library of Victoria

Conservation at the State Library is now firmly ensconced in its 537m² new purpose built laboratory. The space has been designed to be flexible in configuration and includes a gas detection system, two fume cabinets and a mobile fume extractor, deionised water on tap, a secure registration store, a frame store and all our equipment consolidated in one spot and adjacent to our conservation materials store. An AICCM Victorian Division tour of the new facility has been scheduled for early January.

The biannual changeover of the two floors of exhibition spaces in the Dome is upon us and staff are fully occupied with preparing new material selected for exhibition for the next 12 months. The book structures in particular are being monitored to quantify what effect lying open for an extended period has.

Alice Cannon coordinated the conservation requirements of the Australian comics exhibition, *Heroes and Villains* now on display. For this exhibition we trialled a new method of attaching two-dimensional works to the wall. The individual comics were strapped to mount board supports, cut to the exact size of the comic, using strips of polyethylene and attached to the wall with adhesive Velcro. For added strength the wall mounted strips of Velcro were also stapled directly into the wall. Shallow Perspex boxes were fixed over the top of groups of comics to finalise the display technique. This design has proved to be both economical and effective and will replace a previous method of using split batons for mounted but unframed material. The pre-cut polythene strips in various widths were purchased from overseas, but will soon be available from a local conservation supplier.

The oil painting *Black Thursday 1851* painted by William Strutt in 1864 is now undergoing analysis prior to treatment by **Virginia Dahlenburg**. Given its size of 106.5 x 343 cm some planning prior to moving and treating this significant painting was required.

Jean Holland has been coordinating the *History of the Book* changeover with over 200 items being selected and prepared for exhibition. That translates to over 100 custom-made book cradles being constructed by the book team, assisted by **Thomas Rawlins**. A huge range of books have been selected from artists' experimental book structures, first edition Beat Generation poetry and novels, to a 1431 example of early printing with movable type, a very fine, early 16thC illuminated Pontifical and a large volume of Piranesi prints.

Jane Hinwood has coordinated the conservation requirements of over 170 items selected for the *History of Victoria* exhibition changeover. The items range from 1965 Olympics to Edna Everage material. One of the items selected, which Jane is treating, is a blue-back hygrographic chart from 1836 of Port Phillip Bay. The significance of the blue manila paper backing was not known initially, but on further research it was discovered this was a common method of treating English nautical charts and was used from the 1860s up until the 1970s.

David Harris has mounted and framed a large parchment and ink address, presented to Lieutenant General La Trobe by the Legislative Council in 1851. **Eve Sainsbury** and **Peter Block** continue to handle the mounting and framing of items selected for the exhibition changeover.

The *Press Dress*, a silk dress previously worn to the Lord Mayors Ball in 1866 has come out of storage for examination and treatment. The dress is made of several panels printed with newsprint from the various Victorian newspapers of the day. The costume is in a delicate state and will be treated in house by a contract textile conservator.

Catherine McFarlane, conservation registrar, attended the Australian Registrars Committee two day conference in Hobart and was invited to participate in an expert discussion panel. Our book conservators gave a book conservation clinic at the *Between the Sheets* Rare Book activity day held in November. The day included a behind the scenes tour of the laboratory.

Summer Internship at The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Vanessa Kowalski, The Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation

My interest in modern and contemporary art was ignited while studying at secondary school. Since then, the contemporary art world has continued to attract and fascinate me, especially the issues and challenges it can present to the conservator.

Since becoming a conservator, my enthusiasm for the conservation of contemporary art has continued to grow, and was heightened when I attended the IIC Conference in 2004, *Modern Art, New Museums*. The IIC conference inspired me to gain further knowledge and skills in the conservation and preservation of modern paintings. As a result, in early 2006, with the support of the Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation (CCMC) and the Besen Family Foundation, I applied for a summer internship at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York.

The diverse summer program at MoMA not only enabled me to work in conservation, but also familiarized me with other departments, such as the curatorial departments and

education, as well as the operational systems of the museum. These inter-departmental interactions revealed how all of the Museum's departments come together to present large, world-class exhibits.

Within the MoMA conservation lab, I treated, examined and analysed a number of paintings in preparation for loan or exhibition. Outside of the conservation lab, the summer internship program lectures and field trips introduced me to other small and large institutions, museums, foundations, resources and practicing artists. This opened up the contemporary artworld to me even more and enhanced my experience of New York. These experiences also added to the invaluable knowledge gained when approaching the conservation of modern artworks. Overall, the internship was culturally and professionally rewarding and highly recommended for those interested in the conservation challenges presented by modern artworks.

Sustainable Buildings – Cost vs Collection Needs

20 October 2006, Australian Museum

Tracey Golds, State Library of NSW

This seminar, organised to coincide with the AGM, focussed on the sustainability of buildings used to house and display cultural materials, exploring both economic and environmental sustainability.

The keynote speaker was Steve King, Associate Director at the Centre of Sustainable Built Environment, University of New South Wales. Steve is an architect specialising in the technical performance of buildings with a particular interest in passive environmental control and sustainable development, including appropriate design and alternative technologies for museum buildings. He is actively engaged in research and consultation, monitoring and reviewing museum environments and buildings. He was involved in preparing the *Guidelines for Environmental Control in Cultural Institutions* published by the Heritage Collections Council, Canberra, and accessible at Australian Museums On-line http://amol.org.au/publications_archive/collections_management/environmental_control.pdf

Steve's paper focussed specifically on environmental control rather than the broader issue of sustainability. He began by pointing out that most architects and consultants are used to dealing with the comfort of people within buildings and can find it conceptually difficult to provide for the needs of collections as well. Buildings that house cultural materials require specialised air conditioning – standard systems cannot provide appropriate conditions.

Steve used several case studies to show how improperly designed or inappropriate air conditioning systems can create more problems and wider fluctuations than if there was no air conditioning. In one case, monitoring studies showed that the 'window rattler' style of air conditioner is inappropriate – in addition to causing wide fluctuations in temperature and relative humidity, local effects caused mould problems. In general, in a building with sufficient mass, and allowing for seasonal drift, the internal conditions are more stable without air-conditioning.

Even with very high quality air conditioning systems, stringent conditions are rarely maintained in practice. Relaxing set points to allow wider tolerances and seasonal variation can result in huge energy savings with little effect on most collections. Steve suggested reasonable and realistic conditions as:

- 22-28°C and 55-70% RH in hot humid climates;
- 22-28°C and 40-65% RH in hot dry climates; and
- 18-24°C and 45-60% RH in temperate climates.

Relative humidity has the greatest effect on most materials and is therefore more critical than temperature. A tolerance of $\pm 10\%$ RH represents a low risk to most organic materials, whereas a tolerance of $\pm 20\%$ is dangerous to most composite objects and $\pm 40\%$ is destructive.

Steve discussed four primary activities to consider when planning environmental conditions in museum buildings: display; storage; study and conservation. Each of these activities has particular environmental requirements. For example, display environments have high visitation rates and conditions are determined by the need to see. Storage environments have low visitation – the conditions should be ideal for the artefacts within them. Study environments have low visitation rates and controlled access. Planners can take advantage of these differences to make buildings more economically and environmentally sustainable by creating different zones with different conditions.

Steve finished by listing some important principles. These included using insulation; selective natural heating and cooling; and limiting air exchange as much as possible. When planning a new building we need to ask why we are controlling the environment and what level of stringency is required. We should start by analysing the needs of the collection and then categorising the types of spaces required. The design could then incorporate different zones. A layered design with a buffer space around the outside and the most controlled environments in the innermost parts of the building was recommended.

Six other speakers then presented ideas about sustainability and collections – some focussing on environmental and economic sustainability in buildings and others on the sustainability of collections.

Matt Morel of Johnson Pilton Walker talked about the design for the new building at the Australian Museum in Sydney. In line with Steve's approach to have the most controlled areas in the most well buffered parts of the building, collection storage areas will be in the lower levels. Thermal

modelling has been used to design the air handling system to reduce energy use. Some specific initiatives include:

- Air purging of office and lab spaces at night to reduce heat build up;
- Solar panels on the roof to preheat water;
- Lighting with efficient lamps and timers;
- A double layer construction on the northern façade of the building with the space between the layers creating a convection chimney to draw hot air up and away; and
- Showers on each floor to encourage staff to ride their bicycles to work!

Elizabeth Hadlow, State Records NSW, talked about Stage 6, the new storage facility at the Western Sydney Records Centre. The facility opened in late 2005 and provides 15,000 square metres of space for semi-active records. See Elizabeth's article in the June 2006 issue of the National Newsletter for more detailed information.

Elizabeth gave an interesting history of earlier buildings (Stages 1 to 5) which showed the different approaches taken in previous decades. These ranged from the high cost building of the 1970s (Stage 1) that could maintain conditions in closed compartments even when the air conditioning broke down, through to the warehouse-style buildings of the 80s and 90s which had low start-up costs but high running costs. For the new building, a decision was made to accept high up front costs in favour of reducing running costs. It features:

- The largest geo-thermal air conditioning system in the southern hemisphere with seventy geothermal bores sunk 100metres into the ground. This has resulted in energy use of 42.6 kWh/m² compared with 118 kWh/m² for some of the earlier buildings.
- An external envelope designed to have better thermal performance with a high thermal mass in the concrete walls and well insulated roof and wall spaces.
- Air exchanges reduced to 0.5 exchanges per hour with positive pressure to reduce influences from external air.
- 'Ultra white' surfaces to increase reflection and reduce lighting costs.
- Lights activated by movement sensors; and
- Landscaping designed to support local fauna.

Bill Speirs, the Council Heritage Officer and Museum Manager at the Temora Rural Museum and Community Archive shared some insights into revitalising what was originally set up as a historical society. Public liability insurance issues made running the historical society difficult so a Section 355 Management Committee was set up with the local council to provide professional administrative support and side-step the insurance issues. A VIN grant from Museums and Galleries NSW enabled a review of the museum's vision and management while retaining the volunteer base. Now there are 15 volunteer curators dealing

with 15 specialist areas of the collection. By allowing more responsibility and engagement among volunteers, a more sustainable level of care and interest has been created to ensure the continued survival of the Museum and Archive. Council contributed \$30,000 towards a storage area for the Archive and fundraising efforts made up the rest. A well-waterproofed underground storage area was built to create an energy efficient facility. Initially, humidity levels were unacceptably high at 90% but this was fixed simply and economically by retrofitting a pipe from the internal space to the outside to act as a vent. Since then, environmental conditions inside the Archive have been extremely stable.

Neville Quick is Manager of Collection and Research Facilities at Museum Victoria. Neville talked about plans to develop a storage facility at Spotswood in Melbourne as part of the proposed State Collections Integrated Storage Project. Earlier this year, Neville went on a study tour to the UK and Canada to look at environmentally sustainable design initiatives. Some of these included:

- A solar wall and inflatable roof at the Natural History Museum in the UK.
- Space efficient storage furniture, limited air exchanges and a roof that reflects sunlight at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in the UK.
- Reclamation of a contaminated site, use of rainwater tanks, solar interactive power and recycled materials at Locomotion – The National Railway Museum at Shildon in County Durham, UK. The building also uses local stone to create thermal mass. The landscaping is designed to provide habitat for a local species of butterfly.
- Buffer corridors at the Glasgow Museums Resource Centre to separate storage areas from external walls and to enhance security and IPM.
- Use of a reclaimed site, recycled materials and a green roof planted with local grass species at the new Canadian War Museum. See their website at www.warmuseum.ca for more information.

Back in Australia, some of the sustainable initiatives being considered for the Spotswood development are:

- Regeneration of a brown-fields site;
- Geo thermal systems, photovoltaic cells and wind turbines to provide power;
- Passive environmental control with zoned areas and buffer corridors, increased insulation and a green roof;
- Recycling greywater; and
- Using recycled building materials.

The reasons for this approach are to align the project with government objectives and to strengthen the funding argument, as well as to provide a better and more sustainable future for the collections. The 'whole of life' costing is expected to be more economically sustainable in the longer term.

Kylie Scroope, Director of Preservation at the National Archives of Australia (NAA) talked about plans to build a new Preservation Centre in the Canberra region. The NAA differs from many other collecting organisations. About 95% of the collection consists of paper files with a constant rate of accrual. Exhibitions are not the main form of access but the repositories are far from being low activity areas – in the Canberra facilities alone, about 10,000 items are retrieved from storage and accessed every month. Increasingly this access is being provided via online services.

Preliminary research for the new facility has included:

- Staff surveys to identify positive and negative attributes of existing facilities and to map interactions and interdependencies of different staff groups.
- Reviewing environmental standards, particularly the work of Stefan Michalski, Tim Padfield and Jean Tetrault.
- Simulation studies comparing the performance of the Mitchell repository (a purpose-built facility) with the Greenaway building (essentially a warehouse).
- Examining packaging as a way of buffering the effects of the environment.

Kylie recommended the work of Donald Sebera which focuses on how the isoperm method can be used as a tool to plan and manage collection environments. See <http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/tools.html> publication 46 *Isoperms - An Environmental Management Tool* by Donald Sebera. Kylie has compiled an annotated bibliography of useful resources and is investigating ways of making it more widely available.

In his paper, Eric Archer, Manager of Conservation at the National Museum of Australia questioned the sustainability of collections. This was based on the premise that a museum's core business is, or should be, telling stories and maintaining memories rather than maintaining collections. This represents a shift from object-centredness towards something more experiential. Eric questioned the sustainability of allowing collections to grow continuously, drawing on the work of Suzanne Keene and Keith Thomson. He stressed that we need to question the purpose of collections and why and for whom we conserve them.

The seminar finished with questions and a panel discussion. Some conservators questioned whether in accepting broader parameters or wider tolerances, we are accepting accelerated deterioration in collections. The general consensus was 'probably not'. Firstly it was acknowledged that many of the standards we have been using were arbitrarily determined when they were first introduced. Secondly, research and experience in the past decade or so seems to indicate that *most* collections are not affected by relaxing environmental tolerances. Of course some materials are more sensitive than others and do require more carefully controlled environments. The new approach seems to be to assess the risks to particular groups of materials and make savings by utilising a variety of environments rather than applying the most stringent conditions across the board. By creating different zones within buildings to accommodate different sensitivities, risks can be managed and energy use and costs can be lowered without endangering particularly sensitive materials.

The issue of loan requirements was also raised – many loan conditions are very stringent and organisations may need to retain zones that can meet these conditions. Alternatively, the international community will need to agree on a set of standards with wider tolerances.

A quick poll in the lecture theatre indicated that many organisations have already relaxed their set points to achieve savings without noticeable effects on collections. The seminar seemed to herald a new lively debate in the profession. Congratulations to the organisers.

As a final note, The AICCM Code of Ethics is one of the few that has a professional conduct clause that relates to the natural environment. Point 6 of the Code of Practice states:

The AICCM Member shall recognise the potential for conservation activities to cause environmental damage. Accordingly, without endangering the welfare of cultural property, she/he should endeavour to undertake conservation treatments, or use materials, which have the lowest potential to pollute; unnecessarily waste resources; or otherwise damage the natural environment.

Cleaning and Preserving Finishes on Furniture

19-22 September 2006, National Gallery of Victoria

Megan Phillips

Arlen Heginbotham guided twelve workshop participants through four days of intense learning about the conservation of furniture finishes. The participants travelled from the A.C.T., South Australia, New South Wales, Victoria, and Singapore. Arlen is the Associate Conservator of Decorative Arts and Sculpture at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, and has built up an immense body of experience and knowledge. Many of the participants were also very experienced furniture conservators and restorers, and this enriched the general learning experience of everyone. I enrolled in this workshop hoping to meet some 'furniture people', and to soak up as much knowledge as I could. Not only did I achieve this, but I was also able to return to Melbourne and the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) into the bargain! This gave me the opportunity to see old university and work friends.

Arlen covered a very large body of information over the four days. In retrospect he was trying to teach as much as he could about each stage of a furniture conservation job; put simply, surface characterisation, cleaning, removal of specific layers, and recoating.

Arlen talked through the history and origins of the huge variety of varnishes, finishes and waxes. Modern furniture finishes such as polyurethanes and their increasing appearance in conservation labs were also discussed. Surfactants and chelating agents and their great usefulness in cleaning and removing varnishes were experimented with, as were solvent gels.

I was reintroduced to Teas charts, which while painful at first, ended up being very worthwhile. Arlen's conservation methods relied upon having a complete set of testing solutions. The testing kits we mixed included Triammonium Citrate (TAC) and Keck solutions 1-4 in varying percentages and pH's, as well as various solvents. By using the testing kits, it was possible to characterise surface finishes and position

them on the Teas chart. This gave a good indication of what might remove or soften the finish layer. Arlen showed us how chemical mixes can be created which can be as harsh or gentle, slow or fast evaporating, polar or non-polar as you like. Obviously this has applications in all areas of conservation.

Arlen demonstrated how UV examination aids varnish removal, revealing how many layers of varnish or dirt had been removed, and giving clues as to the identity of the surface finish.

Recoating surfaces once they had been cleaned was experimented with extensively, and was great fun. Seeing old foggy, cracked varnish layers being cleaned and re-saturated using the science we had learnt was very satisfying.

Each morning of the course, Arlen would emphasise the importance of reading recent publications relevant to our field (as those of us who had not completed our readings winced). It is so easy to let the reading pile up, or not even make the effort to source articles. Interestingly, many of the articles Arlen recommended came from paintings conservation research, high-lighting the need to read and research widely.

Many thanks to the NGV conservation department for hosting the workshop and allowing us to commandeer their staff tearoom. **Holly McGowan-Jackson** and **Suzi Shaw** did an amazing job organising the workshop; their meticulous preparations meant that practical sessions were never accompanied by moments of 'making do' or 'bodging something up to simulate something else'. In fact their preparations were so good that some of us even got to take home the remaining materials to experiment with in our own time. Finally, thank you to Arlen for coming to Australia, and tailoring his presentation to our interests and needs. I sincerely hope that other courses will be run covering furniture related issues as this was an extremely enriching professional experience.



Arlen examines a degraded seat surface before treatment



Justin Gare, Jenny Dickens and Steve Jackson (L-R) carefully formulating a gel

Laser Cleaning for Conservation: A Review of the Australian Workshop Series

October – November 2006

Deborah Lau, CSIRO, Clayton, Melbourne, Deborah.Lau@csiro.au

Alison Wain, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Alison.Wain@awm.gov.au

The Workshops

People have been talking about lasers for conservation in Australia for some time. In 2002 Deborah Lau attempted to conduct a series of laser cleaning workshops, which unfortunately did not eventuate because of the high cost of bringing a laser to Australia. However, in September 2005 Alison Wain attended the LACONA VI conference on the use of lasers in conservation and made contact with two conservation laser manufacturers who were interested in sending a laser unit to Australia at more reasonable rates. Alison and Deborah proceeded to plan a new series of workshops, to be held in four different states to allow people in different parts of the country gain access to the technology. In order to keep registration costs down, ultimately only one laser was able to be used in the workshops, the Compact Phoenix Nd:YAG laser produced by Lynton Lasers of Liverpool in the UK. Consequently laser cleaning technology finally arrived on our shores.

Deborah and Pam Hoobin (also from CSIRO) conducted the workshops. They already have laser safety accreditation and previous work experience with lasers and were brought up to speed on the Compact Phoenix by Andy Charlton of Lynton Lasers, who came out to Australia with the laser and assisted at the Canberra and Perth workshops.

Each day-long workshop consisted of theory (light, lasing, safety and the cleaning process), case studies and hands on practical time. Participants had an opportunity to bring their own samples or explore a range of materials provided. Workshops were conducted in the AWM annexe in Canberra (17 – 19 Oct), Art Gallery of WA in Perth (25 – 26 Oct), Museum Victoria annexe in Melbourne (1 – 2 Nov) and Artlab in South Australia (8 Nov) with a total of 61 participants (including one from Hong Kong) attending over 8 days. Andy also organised a video link-up with Dr Martin Cooper and Helen Thompson of Conservation Technologies, National Museums Liverpool, who have extensive experience in using lasers for conservation. This was a great opportunity to see them discuss some of their projects, and to ask questions. A recording of the link-up is available on DVD for anyone who is interested.

The Process

For those who have not been eating, sleeping and dreaming lasers for the past month, laser cleaning is a way of removing contamination using pulses of light. This has the obvious advantages that it doesn't use solvents, detergents or water, doesn't abrade the surface, and allows materials to be cleaned in situ, without disassembly. Materials which can be removed include rubber, demoulding agents, oil, grease, dust, organic pollutants, oxides, paint, varnish, atmospheric pollution and biological or radioactive particles and many others.

Parameters such as wavelength, pulse duration and energy density can all be varied to optimise the cleaning process for each different contaminant and substrate, the aim being to ensure that the contaminant is removed without damage occurring to the underlying substrate. While this all sounds very scientific, it quickly became apparent in the workshops that it was as much art as science, and that "getting a feel" for the instrument was just as important as understanding the theory. For instance, science tells us that dark materials absorb energy more readily than light materials, and therefore it should not be possible to remove a layer of light coloured contaminant from a dark substrate, as the substrate will absorb and be damaged by the energy before the light contaminant is removed. However in practice, several light coloured contaminants were removed from dark substrates, until Andy ruefully declared that anything he said seemed bound to be proven wrong and he wasn't going to offer any more scientific predictions!

Throughout the workshops, the cleaning process was found to be extremely effective on stone surfaces (marble, sandstone, limestone, mortar and brick), which corresponds with the way the technique has been used most often overseas. Results on painted and corroded metals (aluminium, steel, bronze and brass) were also excellent, and with properly controlled application it was possible to retain the desired underlying patina. Cleaning dirt and grime off ceramics and glass was effective, as was the removal of the dark stone matrix from a paleontological specimen and the surface cleaning of various polymers (rubber, acrylic and polycarbonate).

Some participants were interested in removing excess adhesive, sealant or consolidant from objects. In most cases this was unsuccessful, perhaps due to the elasticity and inherent strength of the material, or possibly to the contaminant failing to absorb energy at the wavelengths of the laser. The Compact Phoenix can actually produce two wavelengths – a near infra-red wavelength (1064 nm) and a green wavelength of 532nm (double the wavelength of the near infra-red beam). The green one seemed to be more effective than the near infra-red in removing some organic contaminants. In one instance some yellowed "Sello tape" residue was almost completely removed from paper. Mixed results were observed with marks and stains on other materials such as paper, fabric, parchment, gilded objects and various organic materials.

Generally it seems that most applications met with at least some degree of success in removing stains and contaminants without any obvious damage to the substrate. A couple of things were definite no-gos – such as the gelatin sequins which we managed to comprehensively fry, and the glass beads with silver on the inside which quickly ended up with no silver on the inside. Another key realisation was that any contamination which has penetrated into the pores or fibres of a material cannot be removed, as the laser would have to remove the substrate material to remove the contaminant inside it. However where the bulk of a contaminant is sitting on the surface of the material, we were mostly able to remove that, which often significantly reduced the visual effect of a stain.

Table 1: Laser workshop exit survey summary

QUESTION	ANSWER	TOTAL
Would you like to use a laser now?	Yes	47
	No	5
What material would you like to use it on?	Stone	15
	Metal	13
	Paper/parchment/leather	9
	Organics/textiles	8
	Archaeological/paleontological	3
	Mixed media	3
	Wood: including frames and furniture	3
	Ceramics	3
	Modern materials	1
	Plaster	1
Where would you use it most?	Lab	35
	Field	17
How many times per year do you think you would use it?	1-3	7
	3-8	12
	9-20	16
	more	6
What arrangements could suit your company?	Send objects out to a commercial company offering laser treatment services	9
	Hire a laser and a trained operator to do the work for you in-house/onsite	19
	Hire a laser and have yourself/your staff do the work	34
	Buy a laser and have yourself/your staff do the work	23
	Collaborate with other companies/institutions to buy and share a laser and have yourself/your staff do the work	33
	Collaborate with other companies/institutions to buy and share a laser and have one person trained to do work for all the participating organisations	17

It became very clear that we need access to a laser to become practised in using it and judging the correct level of energy, distance from the substrate, number of pulses per second and so on. Water can also be used to assist the effectiveness of the laser cleaning and the suggestion of trialling other solvents or chemical treatments in conjunction with the laser was also made. We also need to do a lot of research to work out just how different materials react to laser treatment, both in the short term, and over longer periods. There are many interesting questions here, many potential student projects, and a lot of new treatment possibilities.

The Outcomes

Participants were asked to fill in an exit survey at the end of the workshops. It is rewarding to see that there is a huge interest in this technology – of 53 responses, 47 said that they would like to start using a laser immediately in their work if it was available. The responses to the survey are summarised in Table 1, and a more detailed version separating the responses out by state and giving feedback comments will be posted on the AICCM website. Please remember though, that as lasers are completely new tools for Australia, many people were uncertain what would be the best arrangements for their institution or company to use a laser if it was available. Estimates of how often they would use a laser and on what materials are also obviously very broad guesses given that there remain many questions about how effective the technique will be on different materials. Having said that, the responses do give a general guide to people's level of interest, and the types of arrangements and uses people feel have most potential.

Much discussion at the workshops centred on how to get the funding for leasing or purchasing a laser. Arrangements can be made with almost any manufacturer for purchase or lease, and these arrangements could involve either individual companies or institutions or collaborative arrangements, though it was noted that collaborative arrangements need to be very carefully set up to work well. People definitely felt that it was important to get access to a laser as soon as possible, as too much time between getting training and using the instrument would result in a loss of skills. Deborah and Alison are keeping track of people who are interested in leasing or purchasing lasers, and will do their best to put people in contact with each other and facilitate information exchange.

The first definite news in this area is that the Art Gallery of NSW have purchased the demonstration unit that was used in the workshops. Although they will be keeping the unit in Sydney, they are most happy for other people to contact them about visiting to conduct trials and research with the laser.

Any groups wanting to use a laser, of course, need to ensure that staff are trained in laser safety and that they have suitable safety facilities in place. It was also recognised that it will be very important to maintain a strong network of people who are working with lasers, so that knowledge and discoveries can be quickly shared and built upon. This could be facilitated in a number of ways – ideas so far include an AICCM working group, a blog which people can contribute to rapidly with photos and comments, and a database into which people can log materials tested, the parameters they used and the results they achieved. If you have any other ideas or would like to help organise one of these information portals please let Alison or Deborah know – we would love to hear from you.



Andy Charlton conducting laser cleaning trials on the rear of a United Nations vehicle (AWM Annexe)

The Future

Deborah is currently investigating areas where laser cleaning research projects may be valuable and plans to undertake a research project on surface enrichment of copper in laser cleaned alloys which will (hopefully) be presented at the LACONA VII conference. Input and collaboration are welcomed. The ARC group looking into short pulse (ultra-fast lasers) is also hoping to present a paper at the LACONA conference.

Alison and Deborah will also present a paper at the 2007 AICCM conference including:

- An update of outcomes following the laser workshops held in October 2006 (and any subsequent developments)
- Some key issues and ideas from the LACONA VII conference, including Deb's work
- An update on progress in the ARC project on short pulse (ultra-fast lasers)

We also intend setting up an information exchange with Liverpool Conservation Centre to build on the introduction brought about by our mutual involvement in the workshops. If anyone is interested in establishing some joint research work with Liverpool please let us know and we will do our best to help facilitate the initiative.

Just getting a conservation laser to Australia has been the culmination of a long-held dream for us. It has been really exciting to see our enthusiasm shared by so many people, and particularly rewarding to get news of the first purchase of a conservation laser in Australia. We both feel that lasers have huge potential for conservation in Australia, and offer many opportunities for groundbreaking research. Thankyou to everyone who helped make the workshops a success, and good luck with all your future laser projects.



Joanna Barr, Artlab (right) and Pam Hoobin, CSIRO (left) cleaning a bronze statue

Conservation Survey 2006 Report – Implications for the AICCM

Veronica Bullock, Development Officer, CCA

The Collections Council of Australia published its study of human and financial resources in Australian conservation and preservation on 24 October 2006. The report, which presents information for 2003-2008, is available at: <http://www.collectionscouncil.com.au/conservation+survey+2006+report.aspx>

During 2005, the Collections Council's Development Officer, Veronica Bullock, liaised with members of the AICCM regarding the development of the research and questionnaire designs for the study, in addition to other stakeholder groups for the Collections Council, i.e. experts from each of the four major collecting domains, archives, galleries, libraries and museums. The study was conducted this year, and Veronica was invited to present aspects of the study to the AICCM National Council (with SIG group representatives) on 19 October 2006, and to the AICCM membership on 20 October 2006.

A simplified finding of *Conservation Survey 2006* is that there is a demonstrated shortage of suitable conservation and preservation workers in the Australian collections sector. In its recommendations, the Collections Council urges collections sector organisations to work together to achieve integrated systems of education and training, in addition to workforce planning, in conservation / preservation. The organizations that can help achieve these recommendations include collections sector professional organisations i.e. Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material, Australian Society of Archivists, Australian Library and Information Association, Museums Australia and the Australian Registrars Committee. It is important to mobilise now to take advantage of current social policy agendas, ranging from the skills shortages campaign to the national roll-out of broadband internet access.

The Collections Council presentation to the AICCM National Council on 19 October 2006 was shared with Joy Suliman of the Collections Australia Network (CAN). Joy and Veronica found common ground amongst certain objectives for their respective organisations during 2006, and formed their presentation around their shared need for accurate, up-to-date and comprehensive information on conservation resources in Australian conservation / preservation. This includes information about the full range of courses available to each collecting domain in each state and territory that teach a basic conservation / preservation

sensibility, through to preventive conservation, and on to professional conservator training. Seminars / workshops given by private conservators to small collecting groups would form part of this comprehensive listing. It is likely that the AICCM will want to create a structure for effectively differentiating between the range of learning opportunities available, similar to the structure developed by the American Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC).

Both the Collections Australia Network (CAN) and the Collections Council of Australia are receiving significant numbers of requests for such information, but we have both found that the resources currently available, from any source, are patchy and out-of-date. We feel that this information deficit handicaps the potential growth of conservation / preservation and the collections sector.

CAN and the Collections Council are each aware of funding opportunities for online learning resources and would like the collections sector to take advantage of these opportunities. We feel strongly that raising the online profile of conservation / preservation is likely to lead to better resourcing for the care of collections, as more people inside and outside the collections sector become aware of the vibrancy of the field.

Regarding the online environment, the Collections Council's Digital Collections Summit in August 2006 showed the exciting range of collection-based projects being developed by individual collecting organisations, and highlighted the benefits of collaborating to share hard-earned knowledge of working with different collection and organisation types. The Summit also presented unequivocal evidence from the *National Broadband Strategy Implementation Group* and the *Digital Content Industry Action Agenda* that digital content of significant quality and quantity is required from the collections sector to aid the broader governmental goals of supplying Australian information to the Australian and International communities. The federal government is working to achieve broadband connection to every Australian, and there is a strong motivation that Australian school children access the stories and treasures of Australia's collecting organisations before, or at least at the same time, as they access those of overseas collecting organisations.

For conservation / preservation this means that the field be effectively showcased on many websites. Certainly the AICCM can take the lead in this showcasing, but each of the professional organisations in the collections sector could promote conservation / preservation in similar ways on their respective websites. The Collections Council has announced that it will host a conservation / preservation showcase on its website from 1 February 2007. This could effectively be a gateway to other organisations like the AICCM and CAN, but we would also like to provide a location for interested organisations or individuals who are not yet members / partners of these other sites.

The Collections Council is also aware of opportunities for the collections sector to contribute to the work of other groups like the *Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences* (CHASS). Established in 2003 with federal government funding, this body has been successful in raising the profile of humanities, arts and social sciences research in Australia. CHASS regularly conducts surveys to which collections sector organisations can contribute, thereby raising awareness of our work in allied sectors. This means having resources well organised and ready to draw on when CHASS survey and showcasing opportunities arise. The Collections Council can advise when these opportunities arise, and can help coordinate responses. However, it is important for collections sector organisations to integrate their resources so that the Collections Council is not regarded as favouring one organisation over another, or one domain over another, but instead is seen to present equitably information that relates to the collections sector as a whole.

The Collections Council is preparing to embark on a project to characterise the condition of each facility that houses collections in Australia. The connections that will be made through this process with collections enthusiasts are a rich potential source for expanding the membership base of professional organisations. It is possible for professional organisations to structure their membership requirements to cater for the needs of both fully trained professionals and also interested members of the public. In order to take

advantage of the many opportunities currently arising for the field of conservation / preservation in particular, and the collections sector in general, it is important to expand the resource base. This kind of expansion can be aided by government grant, but must essentially come from motivated and well-organised professional and peak-body organisations in the collections sector.

Please read the Conclusions and Recommendations of *Conservation Survey 2006* and decide where your contribution can best be made to enhancing the role of conservation / preservation in Australia today. You may decide that you would be best suited to organise a risk assessment / management approach of your organisation's collections, and thereby provide input into the *Further Research* recommendation of *Conservation Survey 2006*. Certainly, the collections sector needs more integrated and sustainable ways of interpreting collection needs, and the way that these needs impact upon staffing.

Alternatively, you may decide that you would like to join a particular committee of the AICCM to help with (e.g.) a membership drive, recognition of education and training, showcasing or research .

The Collections Council presentation to the AICCM membership on 20 October 2006 included a short powerpoint slide show of some graphed results of *Conservation Survey 2006* and addressed the role of the Collections Council in Australia, touching on the themes mentioned above. Particular reference was paid to the sustainability agenda, and to Eric Archer's paper on the same day about achieving sustainable conservation practice. The Collections Council was established to ensure the stability and sustainability of collections in Australia through nation-wide coordination. It is a perfect time now for members and supporters of the AICCM to put their energies into presenting conservation / preservation well to the management of their respective organisations, to the rest of the collections sector and to other sectors.

Victorian Division

Following the AGM in September, the AICCM Victorian Division finalised its new committee and except for the State Library's Alice Cannon, as an extraordinary ordinary member, it is composed wholly of CCMC staff and students. President: Alexandra Ellem, Secretary: Mary Jo Lelyveld,

Treasurer: Libby Melzer, Ordinary Member: Di Whittle, and Student Representatives: Isa Loo and Elizabeth McCartney. We anticipate a productive year ahead with a number of *Off the Record* talks already in the pipeline.

Special Interest Groups

Textiles

A very successful TSIG meeting was held in Adelaide on 18-19 September 2006. An enthusiastic group of 23 conservators from Australia wide attended the meeting held in the Royal Society Rooms adjacent to Artlab Australia in Adelaide. Thirteen papers were presented covering a wide range of topics. The group also went on a tour of the William Morris collections held at the Art Gallery of South Australia, led by the director Christopher Menz. An evening reception was held at Fabric of Life by Mary Jose who delighted us with her many exquisite textiles.

Topics presented included:

- *Using your Noodle: Using foam rods and tubing in textile storage* Kristin Phillips, Artlab Australia
- *Treatment of the Silk on an 1880s Wedding Gown Using a Vapour Activated Lining Treatment* Skye Firth
- *Experimental Work Comparing the Performance of Wash Bath Additives used in Aqueous Immersion Cleaning on a Series of Standard Soiled Fabrics* Jane Wild
- *Treatment Highlights from the last two years at the Australian War Memorial: Notes Only* Bridie Kirkpatrick, Australian War Memorial
- *Two costumes featured in the new decorative and design gallery at the Powerhouse Museum: The conservation of Mary Piper's ball gown and the reproduction of a lost button for a Victorian mourning gown* Suzanne Chee, Powerhouse Museum
- *Preparing for Crescent Moon: treatments from the Textile lab: Notes Only* Stefanie Woodruff, National Gallery of Australia
- *Out of the bag: The conservation of Captain Charles Bean's suitcase: Notes Only* Bridie Kirkpatrick, Australian War Memorial
- *A Preliminary Investigation into a Stumpwork Panel dated c1650* Kate Douglas, National Gallery of Victoria
- *Modern Materials in Fashion Collections: a conservation issue for the National Gallery of Victoria* Bronwyn Cosgrove, National Gallery of Victoria
- *Rectifying Home Remedies* Victoria Gill, Endangered Textiles
- *A Foreign Perspective. Textile Conservation at the Winterthur and University of Delaware Program of Art Conservation in the United States: Notes Only* Christina Ritschel
- *Treatment of Bullion Fringe Valances with Composite Silk-wrapped Wooden Drops for Rouse Hill Estate* Miriam Wormleaton, International Conservation Services
- *Customising Collection Storage for Research Access* Fiona Tennant, International Conservation Services

The presentations were compiled into a set of Preprints which are available for purchase for \$50 on request. The group is working towards their next meeting in 2008 in Sydney and are looking to invite an overseas guest to speak or run a workshop,

any suggestions welcome. The TSIG has a committed and active membership and the TSIG meetings are a vital and important part of the continuing professional development of the Textile Conservation profession in Australia.

Education

On the 21st October 2006, the Education Special Interest Group held its first face to face meeting since its inception in 2004. Unfortunately only two members attended the meeting held at the Search and Discover room at the Australian Museum in College Street, Sydney.

The purpose of the meeting was to address:

1. The revised aim and terms of reference for the Special Interest Group
2. Focus areas and activity planning
3. An EDSIG Forum to coincide with the AICCM conference in 2007.

While the Terms of reference were accepted the aim was amended. Our aim is to "Promote the conservation profession in Australia and provide professional development for conservators involved in the development and delivery of conservation education programmes within the profession and wider community".

The following terms of reference were accepted:

1. To represent the conservation education profession in Australia
2. To provide a forum for the exchange of ideas amongst members involved in the delivery of conservation education and training programmes.
3. To provide professional development for conservation educators in Australia.

Veronica Bullock from the Collections Council of Australia also attended the meeting to present the outcomes of the survey into human and financial resources in Australian conservation and preservation. Veronica also aired a proposal to develop conservation resources for the primary and middle school sector.

Due to low attendance at the meeting further consultation with members through a survey will be needed to determine focus areas and activities. Further consultation will also be required to gain a consensus for a theme for the Education Forum at our next meeting in October.

On behalf of the EDSIG group I'd like to thank Colin MacGregor for providing the venue at the Australian Museum.

Exhibitions

The Exhibitions SIG page has been activated on the AICCM website and will be built up over the next few months. An email will go out to all members shortly.

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Crossing Cultures: Conflict - Migration - Convergence

32nd Congress of the International Committee of the History of Art (CIHA)

13 – 18 January 2008

Session: Materiality across Cultures

Session Convenors:

Professor David Bomford, The National Gallery, London
Dr Alison Inglis, The University of Melbourne

The transmission of materials across geographical borders - both as raw matter for artefacts and as novel and desirable features of completed works - has been a constant process in the exchange between cultures. Minerals, animal and insect products, plant derivatives and manufactured substances have spread across the globe for the purpose of making, embellishing and adding significance to a variety of artefacts. Following established trade routes, the movement of cultural materials also gained a momentum of its own. The mining of lapis lazuli in Afghanistan, the Venetian colour trade spreading throughout Europe, the discovery and distribution of Egyptian mummy, the bartering of Trochus and pearl shells across the Pacific are just some examples among many. As well as the economic nature of such exchanges, other imperatives were at work - the totemic or iconographic significance of some materials gave them a value in distant cultures far in excess of their worth in their original environment.

This session aims to draw together widely varying strands of the history, business and practice of the movement of materials for cultural processes. The notion of art and its constituent parts as tradable commodities; the ever-changing vagaries of international taste that control such markets (including the fetishizing of certain materials in different cultural contexts); the trade of materials from poor to rich cultures; such themes may be among those that could be explored. The movement of feather art from Mexico to Vienna in the sixteenth century, the re-configuration of ancient statues for re-use in later cultures, and the market for sacred objects from non-western traditions are a few examples of specific materials crossing cultural boundaries. Finally, the session can challenge our understanding of the conservation of materials in its widest sense. Once cultural artefacts are removed from their original settings and placed in museums or private collections, how can the intangible aspects of their cultural significance be recognised and preserved? Do modern conservation treatments take sufficient account of the unique properties of materials that may have been brought together from diverse cultural origins?

The website for the conference is: <http://www.cihamelbourne2008.com.au/>. All information contained within this website is copyright CIHA 2006



UPHOLSTERY

An interim conference organized by the ICOM-POLAND Committee and the ICOM-Conservation Committee Leather Working Group, Textile Working Group, and the Wood, Furniture, and Lacquer Working Group in concert with the National Museum in Krakow

**COLEGIUM MAXIMUM,
JAGIELONSKI UNIVERSITY
KRAKOW, POLAND
MAY 13-18, 2007**

****Call for papers*Call for papers****

This conference seeks to provide a forum for conservators of different specialties to join in discussing issues and problems related to upholstery encompassing a broad understanding of this subject. While one conservator might be asked to repair and conserve an upholstered object, the project may actually cross many borders and disciplines—from archaeology to tapestry, from leather to lacquer, from wood to ethnographic art. This meeting will focus on presenting an overview of the current state of conservation and restoration research, practice and progress in the field of upholstery and related materials. Successes, challenges, peculiar problems, good protocols, and cautionary tales are sought.

Abstracts consisting of 500 words presenting a summary of the proposed paper/poster in English or Polish should be submitted to the coordinators of the Working Groups by December 20, 2006.

Leather: Andreas Schulze, Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Sachsen, Schlossplatz 1, 01067 Dresden, GERMANY, E-mail: andreas.schulze@lfd.smi.sachsen.de

Textiles: Mary Ballard, Museum Conservation Institute, Smithsonian Institution
4210 Silver Hill Road, Suitland, MD 20746, USA, Fax: +1 301 238 3709, E-mail: ballardm@scmre.si.edu

Wood, Furniture, and Lacquer: Dr. Hany Hanna, Department of Conservation, Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA), Cairo, EGYPT, Mobile: +2 012 4176742, E-mail: hnnnc@yahoo.com

It is the intention of the organisers to publish all accepted papers in English and Polish. Oral presentations at the conference will also be allowed in both official languages of the meeting, and simultaneous translation will be provided.

For more information on conference contact Malgorzata Sawicki, assistant coordinator, ICOM-CC Wood, Furniture, and Lacquer Working Group; ph: 02 92251766, margarets@ag.nsw.gov.au

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