

contents

President' Report	1
From the Editorial Committee	2
Getting the balance right: access vs conservation needs in storage	3
People & Projects	5
Iron Gall Ink Workshop	11
Mellon Collaborative Workshop: Nineteenth-Century Silver Based Photographs	13
AICCM National Conference: Contemporary Collections	15
Printed on Paper: The Techniques, History and Conservation of Printed Media	16
AICCM Victorian Division News	17
SIG News	18

President's Report

Tamara Lavrencic
National President

Congratulations to the Brisbane conference organising committee for putting together a very successful conference: Liz Wild, Amanda Pagliarino, Gillian Osmond, Sam Shellard, Belinda Gourley, Anne Carter, Lyn Streader, Caroline O'Rorke, Michael Marendy, Christine Ianna and Lydia Eggunike all contributed to one of the most enjoyable conferences I've been to in a long time. A special thank you also to the State Library of Queensland and the Queensland Art Gallery/GoMA for their generous support in hosting this event. And then there were the presenters... a talented and often entertaining lot, who collectively gave an impression of a dynamic profession.

The results of the survey on professional membership were presented to the October council meeting and the AGM. With overwhelming support from members who responded to the survey, Council endorsed the reinstatement of the Professional Membership category and the process for assessing applications for professional membership. Council nominated Christine Ianna to convene the Professional Membership Committee to assess future applications. A call for expressions of interest (EOI) for the other committee members will be sent to all past Professional Members. The Education Standing Committee will assess the EOIs and make a recommendation to Council for the other two committee members. A full report on the survey is available on the professional membership page of the AICCM website.

The Preventive Conservation Special Interest Group have produced a template for reporting the results of a Preservation Needs Assessment (PNA). Developed in response to concerns expressed by the National Library's Community Heritage Grant (CHG) Assessment Committee, the template provides a set of topics and questions intended to ensure that all the necessary information to support future grant applications is supplied in the PNA report. Conservators contracted to assess preservation needs under the 2007 CHG program will be required to use the template for their reports. The template is available on the AICCM web site.

Finally, thank you to the outgoing council and welcome to the new council members. The exceptional contribution made by outgoing councillors, Jenny Dickens and Alice Cannon deserves special acknowledgement. New council members include Kay Söderlund as Vice President, Marika Kocsis as Publications Officer, Fiona Tennant as Membership Services Officer.

from the editorial committee

This is the final Newsletter for 2007 and we bring you a report from **Tamara Lavrencic** on the redevelopment of storage at the Historic Houses Trust in Sydney. Some simple but innovative solutions were found to some complex problems.

Jaishree Srinivasan has reviewed the very successful National Conference, hosted by the Queensland Division of the AICCM. All those involved in organising the conference are to be congratulated on their fantastic efforts. All reports we have received back from participants were full of praise and it seems to have renewed member's enthusiasm for full National Conferences every alternate year. The minutes for the 2007 AGM are also included in this issue.

Various members have been attending international workshops and conferences.

Pip Morrison from the NGV was fortunate to be able to attend a Mellon Collaborative Workshop on 19th century silver-based photographs. **Sallyanne Gilchrist** who is now based at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, attended an Iron Gall Ink workshop. **Felicity Turner**, a paper conservator working with ICS in Sydney, attended the Printed on Paper Conference in the UK in September. All these reviews highlight the professional development opportunities available here and overseas and it is pleasing to see members taking advantage of these opportunities.

Our regular columns are with us again – President's Report keeping us up to date with the activities of National Council, People and Projects keeps us in touch with activities around the country, and the Calendar alerts us to all those professional development opportunities. Enjoy your Christmas reading.

Alex Ellem, Jude Fraser, Helen Privett



5th AICCM BOOK, PAPER AND PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIALS SYMPOSIUM

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL, CANBERRA. XXIII-XXV JULY MMVIII

Announcing the 5th AICCM Book, Paper and Photographic Materials Symposium to be held at the Australian War Memorial, in Canberra from the 23rd – 25th July 2008.

The aim of the symposium will be to provide a forum for the presentation of original research and experiences, and for discussion of issues affecting the book, paper and photograph conservation profession.

It is also an opportunity for conservators from around Australia and other parts of the world to come together, catch up on important news, and enjoy a bevy of social events perfectly designed to complement the serious business of conferencing.

The Symposium will have no specific theme, but will cover the following broad topics:

- Conservation treatments
 - Research
 - Analysis
 - Collection issues
-

Getting the balance right: access vs conservation needs in storage

Over the past twenty years the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales (HHT) has assembled a rich and diverse collection of material that documents the history of house and garden design in Australia. Established as the Lyndhurst Conservation Resource Centre in 1984 at the former HHT head office in Glebe, the collection includes soft furnishings – valances, loose covers, curtains, bed furnishings, trimmings; wall papers, garden ornaments, floor coverings, light fittings and furniture. Until recently, storage of the growing collection was constrained, making access to the material limited.

The HHT's move to the new head office at The Mint on Macquarie Street in Sydney, provided an opportunity to review the way the collection, now known as the Caroline Simpson Library & Research Collection (CSL&RC), was stored. At the same time we began to provide improved public access to collection information through the Historic Houses Trust of NSW website.

The collection rehousing team included Joanna Nicholas (Curator of the CSL&RC), Matthew Scott (Conservation Housekeeper) and Tamara Lavrencic (Collections Manager). The project sought to balance the competing priorities of protecting the physical integrity of individual objects while facilitating access for research and interpretation. Amongst the biggest challenges has been the search to find solutions for the storage and access to large and fragile textiles.

With the development of the new head office, two collection storage areas were established at the joint Mint and Hyde Park Barracks site. Within the new Mint building, a purpose built 'repository' with mobile compact shelving, houses objects with a final storage dimension of less than 600mm x 1200mm. The second, considerably larger space in a neighbouring building, was fitted with a bank of large plan drawers (two up to 3 metres wide), deep and wide shelving, custom-designed mobile rack system for hanging and rolled textiles, computers and workbenches. It houses most of the larger objects from the CSL&RC collection with the exception of furniture and large carpets.

The large object store is situated on the first floor of a historic building. There is no lift and the staircases are built for transporting people, not large, unwieldy, fragile objects. The layout of this space is designed to provide a semi open storage, where researchers view and access objects within the space. Within the small object 'repository', objects are brought out as required and viewed within the Library research room.

The need to balance access and conservation requirements resulted in the necessity to develop solutions for specific problems. Special concerns included options for light-fittings, large complex textiles, large sections of linoleum and a variety of rolled and flat wallpapers. In developing the solutions for storing these formats, research, including visits and correspondence with conservators and collection managers in other institutions both nationally and internationally, was undertaken.

One fundamental approach that was developed in the planning was that researchers should view objects as stored. The objects should not be removed from their individual housing and the storage system should facilitate the presentation of the most significant features of the object with minimum handling.

Following from this was the decision to minimise extraneous 'wrapping' of the individual object. Complicated layers of wrapping, padding, stuffing and interleaving has been largely done away with. Our experience has been that the painstaking confections of tissue and padding rarely remained as intended after the object had been accessed two or three times, and which, when replaced incorrectly, could be detrimental to the object. It became obvious that the time and complexity involved in accessing an object, both the unwrapping and crucial rewrapping, needed to be simplified as far as possible.



Image 1: Rolls of wallpaper in their storage cradles (Photographer: Jenni Carter)

Rolled wallpapers previously stored in bulky and ill-fitting boxes were removed, and covered in clear, polypropylene wrappers with a coloured image of the pattern on the outside. Cradles made from Ethafoam™ were custom-designed to hold the rolls securely on the mobile shelving. The improved visibility allows for quick identification and retrieval. [see image 1]

Light fittings and light shades were the next objects to be housed. Previously, light fittings were wrapped in tissue and placed in polyethylene trays, facilitating transport but necessitating handling of the object for research and interpretation. The objective was to design a structure that would enable the object to be suspended while providing a mechanism for safe transport and storage. The solution came to the team during a visit to the Powerhouse Museum's new storage facility at Castle Hill. There, registration staff had constructed lightweight frames from square aluminium tubing with plastic corner joints, to which plastic sheeting could be attached to form a light and dust free enclosure. Using the same model but without the "walls", frames serving storage and interpretation needs were easily constructed using minimal equipment. [see image 2]



Image 2: Light fittings, glass and metal c1930 in storage frame (Photographer: Jenni Carter)

Textiles, including pieces of fabric, loose covers, curtains, valances and bed coverings were sorted into categories based on their size, embellishments, condition, interpretative potential and anticipated research traffic. Options for storage included: those that could be rolled, those that could be folded, those that had to be stored flat in a box or drawer, and those that could be hung. Large, flat pieces were rolled onto polyethylene pipes, padded with calico that is secured in place with tubular surgical bandage. The rolled textile is then covered with Tyvek, and a coloured label is secured around it to facilitate easy identification and retrieval. Each roll is placed on an aluminium pole in the mobile rack. [see image 3]

Textiles that could not be rolled were assessed to determine whether their significance and condition warranted flat storage in one of the few large plan drawers. The example illustrated of the window drapery is supported on a padded board, which is then used to transport the item. [see image 4] Depending on the size, weight and condition of the object, the board is either blue grey corrugated board or Tycore®. Where robust enough to be folded, objects are placed in textile boxes and shelved.



Image 3: Rolled and hanging textiles (Photographer: Paolo Busato)

Hanging was selected as the preferred option for a number of curtains, valances, and similar textiles where their interpretation – their method of construction, the fabric and its pattern repeat, the way the object was designed to be seen etc. – could be viewed without compromising its physical integrity. This is a rare example of hanging storage for domestic textiles.

As with any project, there are a number of things that we'd do differently. With a larger storage space we may have opted for more plan cabinets in preference to shelves for boxes. Archival cardboard tubes would have been preferred for the rolled textiles as the polyethylene pipes are comparatively heavy, but we were unable to source them at an affordable rate at the time. The compromise between presentable, efficient, manageable storage systems and the best options for preservation of the object has not always been easy.



Image 4: Light fittings, glass and metal c1930 in storage frame (Photographer: Jenni Carter)

Acknowledgements:

Matthew Scott was responsible for the research and development of these innovative solutions.

Fiona Tennant of International Conservation Services provided general advice on storage of large textiles.

Tamara Lavrencic

Manager
Collections Management Unit

Joanna Nicholas

Curator
Caroline Simpson Library & Research Collection

People and Projects

ACT

Australian War Memorial

Alison Wain has left her position at the Memorial to start a PhD at the ANU, in which she will be examining how large technology is managed as heritage. She is doing casual work for the Memorial to continue her participation in the ARC short pulse laser project. **Laura Kennedy** has been temporarily appointed Manager of Preventive, Objects and Large Technology Conservation, and **Cathy Challenor** has been temporarily appointed Manager of Paper, Paintings, Photographs and Textile Conservation. The Objects Lab farewelled **Megan Jordan Jones**, who has taken up a temporary, full-time position at the Bega Library. We hope she will be back with us in March 2008.

Eileen Procter and **George Bailey** are working frantically to prepare and install an ever increasing list of objects for the AWM's new Conflicts: 1945 to Today galleries, which are due to open at the end of the year. Work has also started on a temporary exhibition titled, *Lawrence of Arabia and the Light Horse*, which is due to open in December. **Jamie Croker** and **Andrew Pearce** are preparing five World War One aircraft for installation in ANZAC Hall late next year. They are undertaking the refabrication of the wings of two German aircraft (Albatros DVa and Pfalz) using traditional techniques under the guidance of staff visiting from Historic Flight in France. **David Gordon** and **John Kemister** have completed the installation of the Brisbane Bridge to the rear of the Main Building and are liaising with contractors for the hook up of services. **Dean Willis** and **Andrew Schroeder** continue to mothball what was formerly our operational vehicle fleet - which now has been scaled back to a fleet of two. They have completed a treatment of a Centurion tank to be installed outside ANZAC Hall and will then focus their efforts on 3 25 pdrs.

Jessie Firth has rejoined the Textile Conservation Lab after a short break and **Theresa Duhigg** has joined the lab assisting with support panels and invaluable gopher work. **Sarah Clayton** continues as Acting Head of Textile Conservation.

Work has started on robes and collection memorabilia never previously exhibited for the Lawrence of Arabia exhibition. All textile staff are working full tilt to complete over 600 textile relics, ranging from patches and medals through banners and tunics, for the installation of Conflicts: 1945 to Today. Fortunately we secured the talents of **Clare**

Martin, a local sculptor, who with Sarah Clayton, **Jo Francis** and Jessie Firth has been feverishly constructing 20 mannequins for *Lawrence of Arabia and the Light Horse* and numerous torsi to cover **Brian Cropp's** fully articulating armatures. **Bridie Kirkpatrick** has been working steadily through extensive exhibition treatment lists.

Thomas Fanning and **Yupha Nanteau** are preparing and cleaning glass negatives from the Darge collection for duplication and scanning. **Matthew Cramp** and **Ian Fulton** are contributing to design of new storage facilities for the Memorial's Photograph, Film and Sound Collections. In the painted surfaces lab, **David Keany** and **Sharon Alcock** are working towards the completion of paintings for the new *Lawrence of Arabia* exhibition and the Conflicts: 1945 to Today galleries.

National Archives of Australia, Canberra Office

Prue McKay is leaving the NAA in November for a temporary transfer to AIATSIS (the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies) as their lone conservator. She is currently undertaking research (in collaboration with **Rajani Rai**) into the changes that occur in paper due to manual handling.

Alana Treasure (as Alana Lee) attended the 4th International Conference on the Application of Raman Spectroscopy in Art and Archaeology held in Modena, Italy in September, and gave a presentation entitled *Raman analysis of Iron Gall Inks*. On a side-trip to London, she was also asked to view and give her opinion on the Raman analysis of several 15th century drawings (including one by da Vinci) to be included in a 2010 exhibition at the British Museum.

Travis Taylor, has carried out several difficult treatments, including the complete re-binding of a large volume of single folios of parchment, on which he worked with **Sally Kneebone**.

Tania Riviere, Prue and Alana are all involved in planning the 2008 Book, Paper and Photographic Materials Symposium, with abstracts already being sent in. Keep an eye on the AICCM Website for updates about the Symposium in the coming months.

New South Wales

The Australian Museum

The Australian Museum has sent eight objects from its Pacific collection on an international exhibition tour. This blockbuster exhibition entitled *New Ireland: Art of the South Pacific* has brought together objects from the most significant international collections from New Ireland, PNG and has attracted large audiences. In July **Kate Jones** travelled to Paris and Berlin as a courier for the third leg of the exhibition tour. Highlights of this successful trip included the sites of Paris in summer and learning German phrases from the truck drivers on the long road from Paris to Berlin. The loan material returned to the Museum in November of this year and **Sue Valis**, the courier for the final leg, had a challenging time working out the logistics of returning the artefacts, including two 4 meter long carved posts back into storage, with the normal delivery points into the museum unavailable during the current building construction. In addition, Sue has been preparing a number of natural science specimens for one of the new permanent galleries due to open mid 2008, and she recently presented a paper entitled *Sustainable conservation of cultural collections* at the mgNSW *Framing the Future: Planning for Sustainability* workshop at the Armidale and Region Aboriginal Cultural Centre & Keeping Place Inc.

Melanie Findlay has undertaken conservation treatment of a recently excavated earthenware Lapita pot from Vanuatu, and she has been working on a project rehousing and treating the museum's collection of Indigenous spears and weaponry. She has also been involved in developing a new collections database system that works with visual object recognition software developed by Wollongong University. At the same time she has been developing a Conservation Intern training program.

Heather MacKay has spent the last few months coordinating the preparation of natural history specimens and anthropological artefacts from the African collection for the Australian Museum's latest exhibition *Africa Impressions*. Included in the display are two of the museum's five lions which were brought in from off site storage and apart from a good brush vacuum and some 're-boofing' of the manes, these specimens are in excellent condition. Another specimen also in need of some personal grooming was a Hamadrayas baboon from the 1880's, which is one of the oldest examples of early taxidermy in the mammal collection. Unfortunately many of its original fingernails were missing and the substitute nails of painted metal were looking very scratched and inauthentic. Thanks to the suggestion of a colleague, a packet of fake acrylic nails were purchased from the local chemist and after they were

reshaped and painted they were attached to entomology pins with Paraloid B72 and inserted into position. Heather is happy to have completed her first primate manicure!

Michael Kelly has been managing the selection and installation of a Nitrogen gas generator system to supply the Museum's low oxygen fumigation chamber. The chamber had previously operated on a compressed nitrogen gas cylinder system, rented from a gas supply company. With the permanent relocation of the chamber, due to the current construction of the new Science Collections building, access for dropping off and picking up the large and heavy cylinders became difficult. This, combined with the ongoing costs of cylinder rental and gas, resulted in the purchase of the Nitrogen gas generator system. The benefits include significantly lower running costs than with the previous system, resolution of OH&S issues due to poor access, and a continuous supply of nitrogen gas.

Colin Macgregor took part in a trial shutdown of all power in the Museum in order to check that back generator and emergency systems were fully operative, prior to the planned two day power outage next year. This is necessary due to a larger electricity sub-station being required to power the new Science Block. The test provided us with some valuable lessons relating to the continuity of power to the DNA freezers and other essential services, and it has resulted in an improved emergency system. The department is also preparing a more detailed set of Guidelines for food and drink in the Museum during functions. The lab has recently undergone some refitting with furniture and a new layout in response to the impact of the building program. We have also acquired a new computer-controlled environmental chamber, which will be used for conditioning buffering materials and carrying out experiments on material responses to RH and temperature cycles.

Australian National Maritime Museum

Jonathan London has been wrapping up his role as project manager for the restoration of *Taipan*, an 18foot skiff designed and built by Bob Miller (Ben Lexcen) who went on to design the Americas Cup winner, *Australia II*. The year-long project culminated in the re-launch of the vessel in Sydney on 18 November at an ANMM sponsored event to thank the contributors to the Restoration Appeal.

In addition to the usual activities of recruitment, meetings and his involvement in exhibitions, Jonathan has also been liaising with **Kathryn Yeates**, our mixed objects/preventive conservator, regarding the trial of the EnviroPoint environmental monitoring system that we are considering purchasing. With two buildings on a large site, better tracking and monitoring of our internal environment is necessary.

Daniel Wardrop is the conservation representative on the museum team preparing for the arrival of the traveling exhibition *Iceman - the story of Ötzi*. The Iceman is the oldest known wet mummy in the world and is the subject of ongoing archaeological fascination and study. He was discovered in 1991 in the Ötztal Alps and remains on display at the South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology, where he can be viewed through a small window in an ice-brick lined freezer room. The exhibition examines the mystery of Ötzi's life and death, displays a replica of the mummy as he was found encased in ice, and a reconstructed model of the man. It also showcases a unique collection of Neolithic artefacts, which will inform the public about Copper Age living.

The most recent exciting event for textile conservator **Sue Frost** has been the adaptation of an existing compactus unit for the storage of rolled textiles. This is a major step forward in the textile re-housing project. Original shelving was removed from five bays of the compactus and the top, bottom and middle shelves were reinforced to provide the unit with structural strength. An adjustable racking system to take stainless steel rods was designed and manufactured. The flat textiles such as flags have been rolled in the usual manner on archival tubes, padded with Dacron and par silk sleeves and interleaved with archival tissue. Each bay can take about 30 rolls 1800mm in length. The method of suspending the hanging rods has been so effective that we will trial the same system to hang the uniform collection. One lot of original shelving has been left at the end of each compactus bay to maintain structural strength. Hats and shoes will be stored on these. Our volunteers have been making internal hat supports for the collection and **Kevin Bray**, our preparator, is manufacturing standard bases of powder coated steel to raise each hat off the shelf. We are also preparing archival trays to fit the shelves to take the shoe collection.

State Library of New South Wales

The State Library's new onsite cold stores are now on and running. **Dana Kahabka** has been involved in the coordination of the design, manufacture, and packing of the cold stores with the assistance of the Collection Preservation, Facilities, and Original Materials Branches. The cold stores are a low cost, low energy cold store for the Library's cellulose acetate collection and they use gasket sealed galvanised steel storage cabinets. The cabinets have inbuilt humidity plugs to measure the relative humidity inside the cabinets. The Library's colour photographs and film will be the next additions to the cold store.

Lang Ngo, Aileen Dean-Raschilla, Nikki Ellis, Cecilia Harvey, Silvana Volpato and **Jessica O'Donnell** have been working on the diverse range of items for next year's Heritage Gallery collection. So far

we have treated plans for Sydney's model villages, stamps from the E B White collection, and a giant, four-part film poster. **Tracey Golds, Steve Bell, Lisa Charleston** and **Jessica O'Donnell** have been preparing material for the exhibition, *Impact: A changing land*. This exhibition exposes the controversial histories of the harm inflicted upon and affection for the state's environment over the past 200 years. The story of human impact on the landscape of New South Wales is told through original sources drawn from the Library's collections. With Tracey leaving the Library, we would like to thank her for all her hard work this past year, especially her work on the new offsite store. We wish Tracey all the best in her future endeavours.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Artlab Australia

Exciting news in the Objects lab is that **Sophie Parker** had a baby girl, Hannah, in September, and they are doing well. Also, we welcomed a new staff member, **Megan Phillips**, who has joined us to cover Sophie's absence and has been assisting **Justin Gare** with the manufacture of numerous large, lightweight storage containers and general storage improvements at the South Australian Maritime Museum. Megan has also been examining and investigating possible treatment options for a recently acquired Javanese sculpture belonging to the Art Gallery of South Australia. The sculpture is a low-fired terracotta figurehead of the God Kala, and dates from the tenth century. It would have been built into the lintel of a door. Ingrained dirt and an archaeological crust are present, distorting important surface details, which the curator would prefer revealed. The sculpture suffered some structural damage, including the loss of an ear, and it has some indigenous repairs, dating from within a century of its manufacture. These repairs are intriguing as the repair material and technique have been lost over the centuries. As it is a highly delicate piece with a friable surface that is prone to losses, cleaning tests were undertaken to gauge the least invasive and most effective method. Treatment commenced with gentle brush vacuuming, to remove loose surface dirt and then various solvents were tested for effectiveness. Neat distilled water tended to leave tide lines, but a 50:50 solution of distilled water and ethanol, applied with a natural sea sponge, was found to be the most effective at removing material with minimal staining.

Renita Ryan, Jo Dawe and **Kristin Phillips** undertook a survey of the South Australian Museum's Australian Ethnology store in order to provide recommendations for safer storage and protection of collection items, potentially including more storage space areas. Some of the problems in the store included the overcrowding of objects, storage of high pest-risk items, and lack of ease concerning handling

and access. As part of the survey recommendations, blinds have been installed to cover designated areas of open shelving, providing protection from light, dust and possible water leaks. Objects stored in this area were dusted and lightly cleaned prior to the installation of the blinds. Other survey recommendations included the manufacture of archival handling boards for fragile bark baskets, the manufacture of individual shaped forms for the internal support of fragile bark buckets, and the reshaping and installation of internal supports for misshapen items. As the store is home to a very large and varied collection and there are the usual funding constraints, undertaking some recommendations will be staggered over many years.

Mary-Anne Gooden has been treating a mid-nineteenth century plaster sculpture of a town hall, owned by a private client. Little is known about the provenance of the sculpture other than its approximate age. The item is over 60 cm tall and is hollow, with numerous windows at the front view, some still retain their original coloured glass panel inserts. As candles are inserted in the interior and lit, the resulting light passes through and illuminates the coloured windows. When the sculpture arrived at Artlab, it was extremely dirty, covered in dust and cobwebs and much of the dirt was ingrained. It had also suffered structural damage, having some cracks and breaks with associated losses of material. Mary-Anne has undertaken extensive cleaning, including brush vacuuming, sponge cleaning with distilled water, and swab cleaning with water and ethanol to access recesses and further ingrained dirt. The results have been impressive and once cleaning is complete, structural repairs will commence.

Zandria Farrell has been cleaning and polishing numerous silver and silver-plated items recently bequeathed to the National Motor Museum from the estate of Eddie Perkins, an Australian racing identity. The items are diverse ranging from trophies and candelabra to cutlery and serving dishes.

Joanna Barr graduated from Deakin University with a Masters in Cultural Heritage in October. Joanna has just returned from attending the Big Stuff conference in Germany and ICOM-CC's Metals 2007 in Amsterdam. She also attended ISSI's *The Great Lime Revival* conference and workshop series in Melbourne. Joanna is currently working with the National Motor Museum to develop their policy and procedures in managing and maintaining their vehicle collection, with a special focus on vehicles that are to be driven. Zandria Farrell has been providing support to the objects team whilst Joanna has been away and focuses on strategic work for the NMM.

The textiles team has recently cleaned a hand-knotted Morris carpet belonging to the Art Gallery of South Australia in preparation for the Morris tour in Christchurch, New Zealand. Various cleaning techniques were used, resulting in the removal of over 500gms of dirt and sand. **Bee Flynn** is working on the repair of an insect damaged, kangaroo skin rug and is continuing work with **Rita Bachmayer** on earthquake mitigation for the ceramics in storage for the Art Gallery of South Australia. **Charlotte Jenkin** is continuing the treatment and re-storage of 17 hand-drawn river charts of the Murray River for the State Library of South Australia. Kristin Phillips travelled to Indonesia in November to attend a conference *Traditional Textiles of Indonesia: Today and the Future* and will present a paper on display and storage techniques for Indonesian textiles at the Art Gallery of South Australia.

The Paintings team have been preparing works for the *Modern Britain* exhibition at the NGV. The team recently undertook condition checking for Robert Hannaford's exhibition at Carrick Hill, a beautiful South Australian historic home. **Marek Pacyna** and **Eugene Taddeo** have treated a large painting on display in the foyer of the Hilton Hotel Adelaide. The painting *Meandering Murray and Wattles*, 1982 by John Olsen had sustained a tear in the canvas. Areas of the paint film were very fragile and cupped resulting in several paint losses. The years of exposure to nicotine smoke and the occasional accidental splash of champagne also required careful removal. **Gillian Leahy** has been working on several privately owned paintings. Two of these have required major treatment including varnish removal, lining, and infilling and inpainting large areas of loss. Gillian continues to carry out her monthly environmental reports for Carrick Hill, Art Gallery of SA and the Migration Museum of SA. Rita Bachmayer prepared a number of Sidney Nolan paintings for loan to Sidney Nolan's Retrospective exhibition at the Art Gallery of New South Wales and for an exhibition titled *Heide Portraits* at the Heide Museum of Modern Art, Victoria. **Chris Payne** has been working on a number of portraits for private clients leavened by the allure of a luscious nude. He also has been on several trips visiting regional clients.

The paper lab has been concentrating recently on preparing works for the *A century in focus* exhibition at the Art Gallery of South Australia, a major exhibition of South Australian photography from the 1840s to the 1940s. **Fred Francisco**, **Jodie Proud**, **Charlotte Park** and the welcome new addition to the team, **Anna Austin**, have all been matting, framing, conserving and making supports for all formats of photographs. Meanwhile, the book conservation team **Colin Brown**, **Liz Mayfield** and **Michael Veitch** have been conserving and rebinding photograph albums from the same period, as well as continuing with their usual mix of commercial and institutional

work. This has included tear and hinge repair work on a Dutch, vellum bound atlas of sea maps dating from 1650 belonging to the State Library of South Australia.

Andrew Durham, Louise Stack, Ian Page and **Claire Le Duc** participated in the South Australia Living Artists Festival by working with the Festival committee to jointly host the After Party. This followed the official launch of the SALA Festival in the Migration Museum courtyard. Artlab also held an opening exhibition of SALA artist, Simone Kennedy's works in the Artlab foyer during the same night. Kristin Phillips, Renita Ryan and Louise Stack completed a series of conservation workshops for curators of small museums. This was held in conjunction with Multicultural SA. Kristin Phillips, Fred Francisco, Renita Ryan, Rita Bachmayer, Charlotte Park and Louise Stack presented the *Sacred Treasures* talk with a consultation session at The City of Norwood Cultural Heritage Festival. Andrew Durham and Louise Stack coordinated the *Artist in our Foyer Program* in which local artists exhibit their works on a rotation system throughout the year in the Artlab foyer. Artlab and the ANZ Banking Group were the winners of the state's Australia Business Foundation awards in the category of the KPMG Advice Bank Award. This award was received for the customer service plan and staff training developed between David Stokes and Naomi Horton, two senior managers from the ANZ Bank, and Artlab staff.

VICTORIA

The Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation, The University of Melbourne

The last few months have been rich with people coming and going. Overcrowding in the PROV labs lead to a move by the Objects Section back to the labs on campus. We miss having **Holly Jones-Amin, Kate Shepherdson** and **Di Whittle** regularly amongst us. A recent farewell is the temporary adieu to **Libby Melzer** as she enters the world of motherhood. We wish Libby the very best for the months to come. In October, **Raaf Ishak** was welcomed back after his lengthy stint away producing artworks for a recent solo show at Sutton Gallery. **Dena Kahan** has resigned to focus on her own artwork and the cataloguing and archiving of Louis Kahan's collection. In September CCMC welcomed two new staff members in the Paintings Department, **Helen Gill** and **Katherine Rosenthal**. Both Helen and Katherine have been working for CCMC part time whilst finishing their theses for the Masters program at Melbourne University. They have both been working steadily on fee-for-service jobs, and becoming very familiar with Heiber thread-by-thread tear repair techniques. **Ana Soares**, a Portuguese conservation student at Camberwell College of Arts, UK undertook a placement with CCMC during October. Ana worked with each of the treatment

sections and also attended some lectures and prac sessions. Her stay in Australia also allowed her to investigate her interests in working with Indigenous cultural materials. **Marcelle Scott** returns from the Getty in December, having had an excellent opportunity to focus on a number of writing and research projects.

Other forays out of the lab include frequent trips made by **Jude Fraser**, Kate Shepherdson, Di Whittle, **Marika Kocsis** and **Briony Pemberton** to regional libraries and historical societies for two major collection survey projects. Work in the libraries is being conducted for the State Library of Victoria's Memory Victoria Project and the work with historical societies is for Heritage Victoria's Collections Conservation Support Project: South West Region Pilot. Di Whittle has also conducted a preventive conservation survey of the Physics collection at the University and is treating a number of significant collection objects.

In October, a strong contingent of conservators (**Petronella Nel, Catherine Nunn** and **Alexandra Ellem**) and students (**Liz Hinde**, Katherine Rosenthal, Helen Gill, **Amy Boyd, Marion Parker, Liz McCartney, Selina Halim**, and **Lisa Nolan**) attended the National Conference in Brisbane. Petronella presented two papers, one on adhesives used in archeological ceramic conservation and the other on micro X-ray Diffraction analysis of painted surfaces. Alex presented a discussion on the use of oral history to learn more of the history of Hugh Ramsay and his artworks and Liz presented her research into a photographic method for documenting daylight fluorescent paint. In November, Petronella, Catherine and Alex attended the day and a half workshop using portable XRF at CSIRO. They look forward to further experimentation when borrowing the equipment.

Petronella Nel has had an active year with two successful grant applications and presenting at two conferences. She gave two talks in Brisbane before heading to Budapest to present a poster on *Issues associated with adhesives used on archaeological pottery*. She and Dr. Peter Lynch, a researcher at CSIRO, received a grant for a compositional study of ochre-earth pigments based on μ PIXE and μ XRF- μ XRD techniques by application of multi-pixel array detector technology. The successful ARC Discovery Grant, *Archeological conservation: the development of analysis and assessment protocols for adhesives used on archaeological pottery* is an exciting collaborative project proposed by Chief Investigators **Associate Professor Robyn Sloggett** (CCMC), **Deb Lau** (CSIRO) and Professor Antonio Sagona (Centre for Classics and Archeology, University of Melbourne). Petronella will be conducting the research.

The CCMC hosted the first Symposium on Middle Eastern Manuscripts held in Australia. Expert collection managers, conservators and researchers from around the globe gathered to explore the care and conservation of Middle Eastern manuscripts, paying particular attention to cultural sensitivities related to their display, handling, storage, conservation treatment and use. It was followed by two two-day sessions on the traditional materials and techniques of the conservation of Islamic manuscripts, presented by David Jacobs, Senior Conservation Officer at the British Library. Anita Chowdry, artist and illustrator, presented a five-day workshop on Indo-Persian Painting. The organising committee of Robyn Sloggett, **Julia Greene**, Libby Melzer, Briony Pemberton, **Tim Ould**, Marika Kocsis, Holly Jones-Amin and Alex Ellem were pleased with the success of these events with much talk of future symposiums from Symposium participants.

In the labs, there has been a constant flow of work. In paintings, Catherine Nunn has recently completed the treatment of a 17th Century Dutch panel painting involving a difficult cleaning and much reintegration of the image during retouching. She has also been undertaking work on more modern paintings at Heide Museum of Modern Art for various shows. Numerous pictures have also come through the lab destined for exhibitions at the Bendigo Art Gallery and Heide Museum of Modern Art. **Caroline Fry** recently completed her studies in the Asia Link Leaders Program. The program brought a diverse group of people together and it was a stimulating course, leading all to consider collaborative projects in Asia.

Catherine presented a paper on the treatment of an un-lined 18th Century British portrait at a mini-conference day at the School of Historical Studies at the University. Briony Pemberton, paper conservator, presented a paper on the identification of a white deposit on some leather-bound books. She and Petronella Nel used SEM-EDX, FTIR and Raman and identify the deposit as calcium stearate. The mini-conference was a great opportunity to showcase the work and research being undertaken at CCMC in the wider university context.

In frames, **Sean Loughrey**, **Jordi Casasayas** and Raaf Ishak have been keeping up with the flow of framed works coming through paper, paintings and textiles. They have done a major reconstruction of a frame for an oval portrait that had lost extensive compo detailing, most noticeably in the corner flats. They have been working from the ground up, from compo moulds to patinated gilding. **Louise Bradley**, **Nola Orr**, and Marika Kocsis have continued working on the Prints Collection from the Baillieu Library. Marika and Nola have been undertaking hinge removal and necessary treatment work while Louise has been remounting the work. Marika is examining the prints for watermarks as her internship research project.

AICCM National Newsletter No 105 December 2007

National Gallery of Victoria

Michael Varcoe-Cocks has started cleaning von Guerard's *Mount Kosciuszko*, continuing his research and restoration of this artist's work. **Carl Villis** spent some time in Italy researching the attribution and provenance of a 16th c. Italian panel painting in the NGV collection. **Melanie Carlisle** returns from leave to start a major restoration project on McCubbin's *Blue and Gold* and **Raye Collins** begins work on her major project, McCubbin's, *Melbourne 1888*. **John Payne**'s book, *Framing the Nineteenth Century; Picture frames 1837-1935* is now available in the Gallery shop.

The Exhibitions section is pleased to announce the appointment of **Belinda Gourley** for a two year position as Exhibitions Conservator. Currently at QAG, she will be starting at the NGV in the new year. Both **Catherine Earley** and **Janelle Borig** were recently involved with the de-installation of the NGV's winter blockbuster *The Guggenheim Collection*. A trip to Bilbao, Spain for the final sign-off was something Catherine looked forward to. An exhibition of works by Joseph Beuys and Rudolf Steiner opened to coincide with an international Steiner Symposium being held in Melbourne. It has been interesting working on a show with a strong "philosophical" slant rather than our common "pretty" shows. Recently attention has been on the installation of the final big show of the year *Modern Britain*, comprising numerous NGV works and a large loan component.

Solitaire Sani and **Kate Douglas** have been fully occupied with the preparation of works for the *Krishna and Modern Britain* exhibitions. Work is also continuing for *Black* with about forty of the works being photographed for publication. **Annette Soumilas** has been continuing her work making display underpinnings for historical costumes for *Black* and **Christina Ritschel** has been working two days a week conserving new acquisitions. Kate Douglas attended the NATCC textiles conference in Washington.

The Frames and Furniture Department has undergone major change with the temporary departure of **Suzi Shaw**, on leave to undertake a 12 month Annette de la Renta Conservation Fellowship at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the twelve month maternity leave of **Holly McGowan-Jackson**. We wish them the best for their respective endeavours in research and motherhood. In their absence, **Ruth Goris** has taken up the position of Frames and Furniture Conservator. Ruth has recently completed a two year Internship in Frames Conservation at the Tate and a Masters in Historic Interiors and Decorative Arts 1660-1830 and Revivalism with Birkbeck College, University of London. She has over 10 years experience in furniture conservation and restoration. **Noel Turner** has returned from international travel to take up the position of

Senior Conservator of Frames and Furniture. Ruth, Noel and **MaryJo Lelyveld** have been finalising treatments for several frames included in the *Modern Britain* exhibition.

Louise Wilson has been doing research into Australian paper merchant Graeme Brown, who was the first to import European artists' papers into Australia. He supplied papers to many leading Australian artists, including Fred Williams. The research has involved interviewing past employees and Graeme Brown's wife and son. **Ruth Shervington** and Louise have been condition reporting and treating a number of Asian scrolls in preparation for the *Mountains and Streams* tour to AGNSW. Ruth will be the courier for the show to Sydney. **Pip Morrison** travelled to New York to attend a Mellon funded workshop on nineteenth century photographs, as reported elsewhere in this edition of the newsletter.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Art Gallery of WA

The past three months have seen a few more staff changes at the Art Gallery: A big welcome to **David Graves** who recently joined the team as objects conservator. David has hit the lab floor running with several objects-based exhibitions changing over: *The Tom Malone Prize* (glass), *Yamamoto* (garments), and *James Angus* (sculptures) all of which are keeping him occupied.

Daniel Hoggar returned from his travels in the UK, where among other things he attended the AIC Conference *Printed on Paper: The techniques, history and conservation of printed media on paper* at Northumbria University. Both Daniel and **Stephanie Baily**, who has returned between two lots of maternity leave (congratulations again Stephanie), are now preparing silver gelatine photographs and digital prints for the forthcoming Roger Ballen exhibition, and carrying out treatments on the State Art Collection.

After obtaining an industrial size mitre cutter, **Trevor Gillies** is happily researching the framing of a number of contemporary paintings in the collection, including some works by Sidney Nolan and Fred Williams' Stump series. Trevor has also recently conserved a gilt frame for Max Meldrum's *The Old Farm*.

Maria Kubik is treating a large selection of paintings for the impending State Art Collection exhibition, dealing with new acquisitions including numerous unstretched Western Desert paintings, and preparing paintings for the Gallery's active outwards loans program. Maria is also supervising UWA student **Marc Schmidlin** as a pre-conservation study placement.

Iron Gall Ink Workshop

23 – 25 October 2007, The National Archives, Kew UK

Sallyanne Gilchrist, Bodleian Library

The Iron-gall Ink workshop was held at The National Archives in London in conjunction with the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (ICN). The two and a half day workshop was followed by a half-day symposium designed for mid-career conservators and collection managers working with library and archive collections. The workshop was presented by two experts from ICN, Birgit Reissland, a conservator, and Han Neevel, a chemist. There were approximately 20 participants from various institutions from the United Kingdom.

The workshop was presented as a series of lectures with an emphasis on practical activities. We were given the opportunity to ask questions throughout the presentations and general discussion was also encouraged. Both lecturers were forthcoming with answers to our queries about iron gall ink, its production and its degradation. To further excite our interest in iron gall ink, a well-presented and informative workshop handbook with a user-friendly reference guide

was provided to each participant.

Paper conservators will be familiar with iron gall ink corrosion and its tell-tale signs. This damage will appear initially as discolouration, eating through the paper and visible on the verso. The final stage of ink corrosion appears as losses along the line of ink, creating a lace-like effect. There are a variety of reactions that may cause this instantly recognisable damage. The cellulose chain may be degraded by acid hydrolysis or the cellulose may undergo oxidization by the activity of transition metal ions. This workshop examined how best to prevent or impede these reactions.

To begin, we were given a potted history of iron gall ink, a variety of recipes and its uses. After attempting to interpret a 16th century recipe, the practical component of the day saw us grinding gall nuts, pounding gum arabic, popping corks from wine bottles and sprinkling green vitriol into our

solution to create beautiful, luscious black ink. The tannins from the gall nuts, combined with the ferric ions from the vitriol almost instantly to produce this velvety ink. For a fabulous read on the intricate details of making ink, please refer to the article *Monster Ink*, written by Nicola Jones from the British Museum.¹

After we had made our own iron gall ink and we had shaped our own quills from goose feathers, we tested our ink on various types of supports. We tested our ink on a heavy weight filter paper and particles, suspended in the solution were quickly trapped on the surface of the paper, as absorption was rapid. On Iron Gall Ink Indicator Paper² the ink developed a red halo as the transition ions escaped our nib. On office copy paper our ink sat on the surface for some time before drying a beautiful, deep velvet black. On newsprint our ink was absorbed quickly as it did again on an historic rag paper sample. This series of tests visually demonstrated how the same ink could produce a wide and distinct colour range depending on the support material.

Armed with this knowledge, it became evident that the variations in ink will effect treatment decisions. On the second day of the workshop Neevel gave a thorough lecture on the chemistry of ink corrosion and Reissland encouraged discussion about pre-treatment tests and treatment options. During these workshops, we spent a good deal of time examining historic examples of iron gall ink in its various stages of degradation. With a critical eye, we visually analysed samples using daylight, transmitted light and microscopy. It became clear that in addition to recipe variations, other factors such as the age of the ink, the type of support and the method of application, are all important pre-treatment factors to be considered.

Part of day two was spent discussing risk assessment, storage and the environment. Throughout the workshop it became increasingly clear that aqueous treatment should not be carried out routinely, rather as a last resort. Large areas of ink may be prone to further mechanical decay with the introduction of moisture and cracks may appear on the surface of the ink. In addition, the introduction of moisture may cause iron(III) ions to migrate within the support and create a haloing effect.

On the third day we used our ink on Iron Gall Ink Test Paper to test various adhesives, commonly used by paper conservators for repairs or resizing. The adhesives we tested included wheat starch paste, gelatine, methyl cellulose and Klucel. Interesting results were achieved. I found paste to be the most satisfactory of the adhesives, although other

conservators discussed their use of gelatine. Gelatine is known to bind the free transition ions within the paper and has good ageing characteristics as an adhesive. Used for resizing papers, the gelatine may in fact act to inhibit ink corrosion to a degree.

Finally we were introduced to the relatively recent notion of calcium phytate treatment. Neevel explained that phytate would actively bind itself to free iron in the ink, preventing it from oxidising. According to Reissland, this treatment should be carried out only if aqueous treatment is unavoidable and it should always be followed by deacidification with calcium bicarbonate. Aged samples show that the phytate treatment may inhibit ink corrosion, however it is still an aqueous treatment and therefore unsuitable for many fragile items.

The final session was a half-day symposium where conservators from around the country spoke of their experience dealing with iron gall ink in their collections. Robert Minte from the Bodleian Library, gave a paper on the non-interventive approach to treatment and the use of MicroChamber® paper as an interleaving material. Reissland gave a fascinating paper on the presence and history of drying material such as blotting sand, often inadvertently removed while surface cleaning. Blotting material could include sand, minerals, glass, metal and organic material such as bone. A beautiful, glittering world to be discovered on the surface of a letter.

Other presentations included a case study of Wool sample books from the National Archives, presented by Juergen Vervoost. Reissland presented new trends in non-aqueous treatment of ink corrosion as research currently being undertaken by the InkCor group. Neevel gave a paper entitled, *Brown inks for writing and drawing* and Mariluz Beltran de Guevara from the British Library gave an update on their iron gall ink project and their use of calcium phytate.

The workshop gave conservators the opportunity to focus on the conservation of iron gall ink with the right balance between theoretical and practical learning. Reissland and Neevel were both enthusiastic and informative presenters. On more than one occasion Reissland made reference to research currently being undertaken in Australia and as such it would benefit the Australian conservation community to invite this dynamic duo to visit and present this finely tuned workshop.

Further information

<http://www.knaw.nl/ecpa/ink/index.html>

<http://www.infosrvr.nuk.uni-lj.si/jana/Inkcor/index.htm>

¹ Jones, Nicola (2002) *Monster Ink*, *New Scientist*, issue 2360, 14 September 2002

² Iron Gall Ink Test Paper was developed by ICN to detect water-soluble iron(III) ions on paper. In the presence of iron(III) ions the indicator paper will turn an intense red colour. It is available through Preservation Equipment Ltd.

Mellon Collaborative Workshop: Nineteenth-Century Silver Based Photographs

8 – 12 October 2007, New York, USA

Pip Morrison, Photographic Conservator, National Gallery of Victoria

Held in the photograph conservation lab at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, this week long workshop was a unique opportunity to learn from a variety of experts on nineteenth-century photography, meet photograph conservators from around the world, and have a bit of fun in the dark room.

On the morning of Monday 8 October, twelve photograph conservators from all around the world converged on the steps of the Met. There were representatives from France, Finland, Canada, Mexico, Italy, Brazil, America, Portugal, Poland, Bulgaria, Russia, and one slightly late Australian, having got a bit lost in Central Park on the way. Breakfast was provided along with a little bit of get to know each other time before the week of arduous learning began. Each day started at 9, and ended at 7.30. In five days we were to learn five processes, and attempt to come away with our own examples of each. The processes were; photogenic drawings, salted paper prints, albumen prints, collodion printing-out prints, and gelatin printing-out prints.

Doug and Toddy Munson of Chicago Albumen Works, were charged with the task of co-ordinating twelve mostly over-enthusiastic students, in the classroom, in the lab, and in the dark room. They spent the week displaying what seemed to be endless amounts of energy, running from question to question, and switching between processes depending on where each person was up to. They had to co-ordinate the various processes, as there were drying times between steps for most of the processes, and not enough time in the week to stop and watch the emulsions dry. So, while albumen paper was drying, salted paper prints were being processed, and while albumen prints were being processed, collodion emulsions were being created and the paper being coated etc etc. They did an incredible job keeping us all going, and helping us to not completely mix up any formulas or steps. Everyone left with at least two examples of each process, and some very keen people left with many many more than that.

Nineteenth-century silver based print processes were predominantly printing out processes, meaning the photographic image is fully formed by the action of light on the photo-sensitive silver salts. We had a variety of means to produce the images, using either negatives created digitally at the Chicago Albumen Works, or by placing objects on the paper prior to exposure to make photograms. The sensitised paper was exposed either in the sun on the roof of the Met or in a UV light box.

We started the week with photogenic drawings, the process developed by Henry Fox-Talbot, pioneering the way for producing images on photosensitised paper. The images created are soft, and can have a variety of image tone, depending on the contents of the stabilisation bath used. We had the choice of four stabilisers and being conservators, many of us cut up our images, and used all four stabilisers to show the differences in image tone achieved using the different chemical combinations.

The next two days were spent coating albumen papers, twice, and coating and sensitising salted papers. Salted paper prints differ from photogenic drawings in that there is a binder for the salts, and they are toned and fixed rather than stabilised. We used arrowroot as the binder, which was mixed with the common table salt and water. The paper was immersed in the salt solution and hung to dry. Once dried, the salted papers were sensitised using a silver nitrate solution applied with a foam brush and hung to dry in a dark drying box. I tried a few times for a nice rich salted paper print, and got mostly washed out looking prints. I was appeased later in the week however, when the artist Jonathon Kline came in and showed us his extremely dense, rich salted paper prints, and told us he has a 70% failure rate. It seems like an easy process, but to get a decent quality print really takes a lot of experimentation and expertise.

Having made albumen papers before, I was not looking forward to the endless beating of the egg white, and was more than grateful that Doug and Toddy are not total traditionalists. They let us use a blender. What could have been an hour or so of beating was turned miraculously into about one minute. There was to be no time wasting in this workshop. Floating very thin paper on albumen is surprisingly difficult to do. None of the albumen can get on the back of the paper, as this may get sensitised, and will disturb the image on the front. The paper curls like crazy once it hits the albumen, and you have to have two people to gently battle the paper down without submerging it at all. Four or five attempts later, I got a good one and was able to go and clean up, have a coffee, and brace myself for the second coat, which is far easier than the first. Once all the papers had been coated twice, having been dried between coatings, they were ready to be sensitised by brushing on the sensitising solution in the same manner as the salted papers and photogenic drawing papers. Albumen prints give nice crisp detail, and were developed in the 1850s in order to provide prints that could show the finer detail that was being captured with wet-plate negatives. They are usually gold toned, giving nice warm purple toned prints that look nothing like the yellowed prints so prevalent in collections today.

We didn't make our own gelatin printing-out papers, we did however, have the chance to coat our own collodion printing-out papers with an emulsion provided by Doug and Toddy. These papers are coated with a true emulsion, with the photosensitive silver salts held in the collodion or gelatin binder. Coating the collodion paper was a process of gently rocking the paper to ensure the emulsion evenly covered the surface. This appeared easy with the first coat, with the emulsion sliding nicely over the paper surface. The second coat was another story, with areas sticking and pooling on the first coating. Not many people managed to make printable papers, so it was fortunate that there were some pre-coated papers available. We still printed on the hand coated papers, and got some interesting results from the uneven emulsions.

The week was not only spent printing photographs, but included lectures and a tour of the current photograph exhibition. The exhibition *Impressed by Light: British Photographs from Paper Negatives, 1840-1860*, curated by Roger Taylor and Malcolm Daniel, is an amazing exhibition of beautiful and some very famous but rarely seen salted paper and albumen prints. Roger, who is the former curator at the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford, England, gave us a tour of the exhibition, while Malcolm gave us an insight into the early prints from the Met photograph collection. We were allowed to view, in the near dark, a selection of photogenic drawings by Talbot, and saw Malcolm's favourite salted paper prints by a selection of nineteenth century artists such as Gustave Le Gray and Édouard Baldus. It is always a rare treat to get into the lesser seen parts of such a major collection.

During the week we also had the absolute privilege of receiving chemistry lectures by Mike Ware, a retired chemist who has written numerous books on nineteenth century photographic processes, materials, and their deterioration mechanisms. Mike was brought over from England, where he researches, writes, travels and makes photographs wherever he goes, producing prints using various processes including the chrysotype process, using gold as the imaging material. On the final day we were treated to an impromptu, and very modest exhibition of his work in the study room next to the lab. Mike is an amazingly generous lecturer with the kind of passion for his subject that makes you happy to be given an intensive two hour long chemistry lecture beginning at 5.30 at night after a day on your feet.

The Mellon Collaborative Workshops are an extremely generous undertaking by the Mellon Foundation, the organisers of the workshops, the host institutions, and the invited lecturers. It is a real privilege to be accepted into the workshops, and currently, there are only three more of them scheduled. They are incredibly well organised, crammed full of information, with even more information in an enormous take home binder, and are also a lot of fun. I am very grateful to the Mellon Foundation and the National Gallery of Victoria for co-funding my trip, and for allowing me to go to the workshop.

AICCM National Conference: Contemporary Collections

17 - 19 October 2007, State Library of Queensland, Brisbane

Jaishree Srinivasan, Queensland Art Gallery

The AICCM has convened symposia and workshops for special interest groups as well as national meetings to address specific topics over the last few years, but it's been a decade since a conference has brought together collection managers, conservation scientists and practising conservators across all disciplines. The 2007 AICCM Conference *Contemporary Collections* did just that by providing a vibrant forum for the exchange of ideas thanks to two years of hard work and planning by the Conference convenor Liz Wild and Committee members Anne Carter, Lydia Eggunike, Belinda Gourley, Christine Ianna, Michael Marendy, Caroline O'Rorke, Gillian Osmond, Amanda Pagliarino and Sam Shellard. Although the organisers could not turn on the warm weather for the event, much to the disappointment of some delegates from the southern states, there were no complaints from the 125 delegates from Australia and overseas about the Conference venue, the newly refurbished State Library of Queensland and its excellent facilities.

The theme for the conference, *Contemporary Collections*, was sufficiently broad to attract a range of contributions that reflected the interests of most of the AICCM membership. The sessions were grouped loosely into topical themes such as modern materials, indigenous collections, photographic and painting conservation and collection management. Of the twenty seven papers presented, one addressed conservation training and education, twelve dealt with conservation treatments and related fields of enquiry, nine involved the use of scientific analysis of materials to throw light on specific conservation problems and the remainder dealt with collection management issues. Stimulating papers included topics ranging from the conservation of Howard Taylor's *The Black Stump* (a concrete and tile outdoor sculpture); the preservation of War service food rations in their original containers; the treatment and display of comic books; to findings on the recent research into cleaning dirt from acrylic paintings. With a variety of conservators present, papers on broad issues related to collection management — including current thinking on temperature, humidity and light control — were key to discussions.

The three poster sessions allowed many overseas delegates in particular, the opportunity to present their conservation research to the national membership. Placing the poster sessions and the product stands in the morning and afternoon teas area was a particularly good idea. It ensured that delegates had time to talk to both poster and product presenters. The delegates also availed of the lab tours of SLQ and GoMA during the lunch break everyday.

The conference culminated fittingly, with a discussion on 'Ephemeral art: Perpetual Upkeep' by a panel consisting of visual artists Madonna Staunton and Bruce Reynolds, conservators Fiona Kemp and Vanessa Roth Wiggins and curator, Julie Ewington. It was particularly valuable to hear the views of the artists on their practice and their thoughts on their works now held in public collections. It echoed the thread running through what were to me, the most thought provoking presentations in the conference — the need to begin with and use all available background information to inform the treatment of an object.

The Conference participants who managed to stay on till the weekend were able to attend a public lecture "Modern Paints: Uncovering the Choices" by Dr Tom Learner Head of Contemporary Art Research at the Getty .

The social side of the conference deserves mention. The evening reception held on the Gallery of Modern Art's roof terrace, where the delegates were welcomed by Tony Ellwood, Director, Queensland Art Gallery, was a spectacular event. The venue, overlooking the river and the bright city lights beyond, was matched by excellent catering and set the benchmark for the rest of the conference, including the morning and afternoon teas and the SIG dinners on Thursday night.

The preprints edited by Amanda Pagliarino and Gillian Osmond, will be a valuable resource for many years to come and will hopefully inspire the membership to begin thinking about papers for the next AICCM National Conference.

Printed on Paper: The Techniques, History and Conservation of Printed Media

5-7 September 2007, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK

Felicity Turner, Assistant Paper Conservator, ICS

The Printed on Paper conference co-sponsored by the American Institute for Conservation and the University of Northumbria, with support from The Print Council of America and the National Trust, was the first international interdisciplinary conference focusing on printed media. Around 100 delegates from America, the United Kingdom, Europe and Australasia attended three days of presentations given by curators, historians, librarians, archivists, conservators, and scientists representing six countries, fifteen major U.S. museums and libraries and nine international museums and universities.

Newcastle/Gateshead hosted the conference, which was held in the recently constructed Sage Gateshead entertainment centre overlooking the Tyne River. The city, with its grand neoclassical centre, is a mix of historical periods. Remains of the medieval city walls, the Norman-built castle and Black Gate and parts of the Roman Hadrian's Wall sit alongside the 19th century railway line and grand central station, which, along with several major art galleries, combine to provide interesting entertainment around the conference proceedings.

On the first morning, the delegates were welcomed by Professor Lynn Dobbs, Dean of the School of Arts and Social Sciences, Northumbria University. Her remarks were then followed by a series of interesting talks on the early years of printed material. Of particular interest was a presentation on the history and conservation of the Kunyu Quantu given by Harry Metcalf of the Scottish Conservation Studio. This 1674 map of the world had been woodblock printed with 36 blocks onto 18 pieces of Chinese paper which were joined and then backed with linen. The map was in two parts, each over 1.5 meters square, and had been stored folded for many years. Steps were taken to treat ingrained dirt and water staining and re-adhere areas of lifting paper to the linen backing, followed by local humidification and flattening.

In the afternoon, Roy Perkinson, formerly of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, now retired, entertained the audience with a fascinating presentation of deceptive repairs in Old Master prints. Stemming from his translation of Max Schweidler's book on restoring old prints and drawings, some examples of deceptive repairs were presented.

These included chamfered repairs in which the entire sky had been replaced in a Rembrandt landscape etching; the splitting and re-backing of a first state Durer engraving; faked watermarks created by paring away paper fibres to create a thinner area; and a falsified watermark in a Van Dyck engraving where papers bearing two similar watermarks were chamfered together to create a hybrid.

The second day focused on the middle years of printmaking with papers covering a wide range of topics from Mexican broadside prints and silent film lithograph posters to transfer lithography and the photographic and printmaking processes of Clarence H. White. The proceedings opened with the only paper from Australia, *Conservation of Early Australian Colonial Prints*, presented by Ranson Davey of National Gallery Ireland as Andrea and David Wise (National Gallery of Australia) were unable to attend the conference. This interesting paper presented research into the Gallery's extensive colonial print collection in preparation for the exhibition *Two Hundred Years of Australian Printmaking*. As over 600 prints were examined and conserved during this period, the opportunity was taken to discover more about the artist's materials used in the early days of the colony. Since traditional printmaking materials were in short supply, unusual local alternatives had to be found. The aim was to confirm anecdotal evidence of the use of whale or shark oils as binders for printing inks instead of linseed oil using GC/MS.

In complete contrast was the paper given by Amy Namowitz Worthen, Curator of Prints at Des Moines Art Centre, *Attention Shoppers! The Case of Italian Orange Wrappers*. This engaging presentation described the history of printed orange wrappers used in Europe to protect fruit from spoiling during transportation. The wrappers are printed using a variety of different processes including relief, screenprinting, offset lithography and gravure, with folk art images advertising the growing region, the quality of fruit or other factors. The paper focused on the previously little discussed subject of the hazards of diphenyl, the fungicide impregnated within the paper, and its effects on the printers, the workers who wrap the fruit, fruit vendors, consumers and collectors.

The last day of the conference turned to topics of today and tomorrow. Papers ranged from discussions of the conservation treatment of modern artworks, such as Andy Warhol's *Mao Portfolio* of 10 screenprints; which had acidic interleaving paper adhered to the surface of the prints after being housed for more than 30 years with these materials; to the development of micro-scale techniques of conservation using polyethylene tapered, flexible polypropylene, stainless steel, and PTFE-lined tipped tools to dispense solutions such as natural water-soluble polymers, cellulose, ethers, solvents and particle-filled solutions in the treatment of small tears, consolidation of media, loss compensation and other hazardous tasks; to the challenges facing conservators and curators of prints

with the development of digital technology. In particular, issues such as changing supports from paper to canvas, plastic or even food; the use of computers to 'draw' or 'print' artist created work; new matrixes, such as digital files, which can be reprinted at will in smaller or larger size formats and unlimited editions, that raise intriguing questions such as what is the original artwork?, how can one define authenticity?, and how will digital art affect the future of printmaking?

The conference presented many interesting and thought-provoking subjects, as well as an excellent opportunity to engage with a wide range of experience and expertise from a diverse group of professionals.

AICCM Victorian Division News

Alex Ellem, President

October's *Off the Record* session *Why Publish?* was a grand success with record numbers attending. The evening combined the AGM and a panel discussion with **Sabine Cotte**, a private conservator; **Michelle Berry**, Conservator, Museum Victoria; **Deb Lau**, CSIRO; **Robyn Sloggett** CCMC, The University of Melbourne; and David Marshall, Editor of the Melbourne Journal of Art, with **Alice Cannon**, AICCM Publications Officer, chairing the discussion. Topics were diverse and clarified the expectations one should have when entering the publishing universe. It helped demystify the peer review process, among other things, and seemed to have made the endeavour seem a little less hairy. We'll see down the road whether it has inspired some to publish something. The refreshments at Jimmy Watson's Wine Bar certainly added to everyone's aspirations. Two *Off the Records* were held in November – one being a talk by Dr Bruce Kaiser, Chief Scientist for KeyMaster Technologies/Bruker instruments following completion of the first Australian workshops using a portable XRF. The committee would like to thank the State Library for hosting the event. The other was a talk about the materials and techniques of Indian painting by Mike Wheeler, Senior Paper Conservator at the V&A Museum, who came to Melbourne for CCMC's Middle Eastern Manuscripts Symposium. The Book and Paper Group of AICCM assisted his passage to Australia. We appreciate

his willingness to speak to Victorian Division members as a separate event to the Symposium. The year finished with relish at a city bar for the Christmas party.

The Committee for Victorian Division would like to thank all of the speakers over the past year - **Helen Privett**, **Alice Cannon**, **Holly Jones-Amin**, **Andrew Thorn**, **Solitaire Sani**, **Catherine Nunn**, **Jocelyn Evans**, **Marcelle Scott**, **Holly McGowan-Jackson**, **Rob Murdoch**, **Suzi Shaw**, **MaryJo Lelyveld**, **Nick Selenitsch**, **Dena Kahan**, **Penny Byrne**, **Raye Collins**, **Melanie Carlisle**, **Michael Varcoe-Cocks**, Sabine Cotte, Michelle Berry, Deb Lau, Robyn Sloggett, Bruce Kaiser and Mike Wheeler - for sharing their time, thoughts and experience with us. We also thank the various institutions and the individuals within them who have supported the *Off the Record* sessions by providing venues for our talks. Thanks go to **Museum Victoria**, the **State Library of Victoria**, **The Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation**, the **National Gallery of Victoria** and **Nick Selenitsch** and **Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces**. The Committee would also like to acknowledge and thank **Archival Survival** for its sponsorship providing many of our speakers' gifts.

SIG News

Objects SIG Convenor position VACANT

After 5 years as the Objects SIG Convenor I am relinquishing the position and I take this opportunity to encourage members to think about taking up the roll and continuing the Objects SIG activities.

It has been great to be involved in the organisation of activities and I hope that members have found the workshops and symposium program useful and relevant. It has been a real pleasure meeting and working with Stephen Koob, who tutored the 2003 workshop *Moulding, Casting and Gap-filling for Glass and Ceramics* and Thea van Oosten, who tutored the 2005 workshop *Conservation of Plastics* and also gave the key note lecture at the inaugural Objects SIG symposium held at the Melbourne Museum.

I would like to thank all those members who have provided assistance in organising programs and events and I would especially like to thank all the participants who have taken part in the SIG activities and have made them vibrant and engaging professional and social events.

Amanda Pagliarino

Education

The theme for next years biannual meeting is "Technology in Community Conservation Education". One member from each state is invited to join the organizing committee. All members are invited to submit abstracts for the meeting by the 15th December 2007.

Nominations are being called for the convenor of the Education Special Interest Group. The focus of the EDSIG group is community conservation education. The convenor is also a member of the Education Standing committee with a focus on continuing professional development. Nominees should contact Tamara Lavrencic for more details about the position. The new convenor will be announced at the meeting in 2008.

Best wishes for Christmas and the new year.

Julie O'Connor

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The AICCM National Newsletter is the quarterly newsletter of the Australian Institute for the Conservation of Materials (Inc.)

It is issued to all members as part of a membership entitlement in March, June, September and December.

Deadlines for copy are:

1 February
1 May
1 August
1 November

Contributions are welcomed and should be sent to:

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The AICCM National Newsletter is published with the assistance of a grant from the Commonwealth Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts.

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