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President's Report

There have been a few comings and goings on Council in the past few months. Ian Batterham has replaced Rowena Jameson as Public Officer as Rowena is teaching in Japan for 12 months. Sophie Lewincamp has replaced Rowena as SIG Coordinator and Eric Archer will replace Julie O'Connor as Education SIG convenor. On behalf of the council a big thankyou to those leaving us and for all their support, and welcome to the incoming officers.

Development of the new website continues to be the main focus of council; the design of the site has been finalised but the membership management area is still under construction. There are over 750 pages of content thanks to the hard work of Alice Canon, Marika Kocsis and Jodie Proud, much of which are under "Publications", "Visual Glossary" and "Conservators at Work".

The introduction of an undergraduate conservation course, to be titled Bachelor of Cultural Heritage Conservation, by University of Canberra recently came to our attention. Development of the course has been under discussion with the conservation sections of the cultural institutions in Canberra for several years. The University intends taking the first intake of students in 2009. More information on the course can be found later in this newsletter.

We started developing a new strategic plan in October last year and have been refining it over the past six months. As part of this process we've been working on "vision" and "mission" statements. For those of you who find the terminology confusing, a vision statement spells out the reasons for an organisation's existence, its future intent or picture for the future, while the mission statement spells out the definite and specific organizational goals that it aspires to achieve in the near future.

Draft vision: To be recognised as the voice for the conservation of Australia's cultural heritage.

Draft mission statement: To provide a centralised and concerted voice for the conservation profession as a whole and to thus assist in the conservation of the national cultural material legacy. This will be achieved by acting as an advocate for the conservation profession at all levels and in all spheres; through the establishment and upholding of professional standards; by supporting tertiary training in the conservation field; and facilitating information sharing amongst conservators.

Your comments, as always, are welcome.

Tamara

From The Editors

This is the first edition of the Newsletter being delivered to you by a new editorial team, at ICS in Sydney. Jude Fraser and her team at CCMC in Melbourne have done an outstanding job, way beyond the normal level of volunteering that characterizes how AICCM operates, to deliver the newsletter to you for the past 5 years. Thank you Jude, for your tremendous effort and professionalism.

In pulling together the content we have undertaken a little re-jigging of content and a change in font. Our aim is to ensure that news about our profession is brought to you in a timely and readable fashion. We see this as an interactive process as we get the feel of it and seek feedback on changes we undertake, so bear with us. What you will see in this edition is:

- Most noticeably a new type font and layout. Do let us know whether you find this more or less readable.
- No job advertisements: these are now being delivered through the website at www.aiccm.org.au, to ensure timeliness.
- A state profile of NSW: we intend to run this profile state by state for the next few editions, the idea being to provide a snapshot of each state's conservation activity and employment opportunities. Given that over 50% of AICCM members are working in the private sector, we are particularly keen to ensure we cover this part of the profession well.
- An in-depth interview with a conservator. This month we feature James Crawford.
- A thought provoking comment: We are keen to include a letters page where issues pertinent to the profession can be debated. To that end we reprint part of a recent article from the UK's ICON magazine, on which we urge you to comment.
- Lab and people news: we have tried splitting these apart to provide easier access to news.

So we hope that you find these changes beneficial. Do let us know what you think of them as well as sending us any ideas for future improvements.

Fiona Tennant and Julian Bickersteth

State in Focus - NSW

Art Gallery of NSW

The Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW) has had someone continually on staff to care for its collection since 1899.

Conservators in the early period were traditionally trained on a practical in-house apprenticeship basis. The first trained conservator on staff was Bill Boustead who studied at the Courtauld Institute (London) in 1953.

Because there were no formal conservation courses available in Australia, Boustead set up a Cadet Restorer training course where he not only trained extra conservators for AGNSW but was requested by other institutions in Australia to also train conservators for them, eg:

- The State Library of NSW
- National Library, Canberra
- National Gallery of Australia
- Art Gallery of Western Australia
- plus interns from India (1), New Zealand (3), Papua and New Guinea (2), and the Philippines(1).

This was up until 1978 when it was no longer necessary with the establishment of the Canberra Conservation course at CCAE.

From this point onwards the AGNSW employed university trained professional conservators both from Australia and overseas. Throughout the "life" of the Canberra course we did however offer support in taking their interns on a regular basis for practical training.

In recent years we have had eight foreign student interns from the UK, Denmark, France, and Germany (each for a period of six months). This has in fact proven to be very beneficial to our institution due to the very positive professional recognition we have received from abroad.

In 1933 Australia's first purpose built Conservation Department was built at the AGNSW. It was a freestanding two story building with the Conservation Department on the top floor and carpenters workshop prep area on the lower floor. This was replaced by a new Conservation Department in the Captain Cook extension which opened in 1970. This has again been replaced with our latest Conservation Department which opened in 2003.

The need for upgrading of the Conservation Dept has been linked with the growth and expansion of more specialist collections within the Gallery. This collection expansion and specialisation has meant the introduction of new and diverse media which the artworks are made from. The consequence of this has been the need for specialist conservators. These specialists include:

- Paintings conservators (2) (traditional and contemporary)
- Frame Conservators (of traditional gilded frames) (one full time, one half time) and a specialist conservator (half time) who constructs traditional period reproduction frames

- Objects Conservator (1) (responsible for a very diverse range of mixed media across specialist Curatorial collections)
- Conservator, Western art on paper (including photography) (2)
- Asian Art on paper (scroll and screen paintings) (1)

In addition to this we have one conservation technician and one specialist mountcutter. The Head of Conservation is also responsible for all aspects of Temporary Exhibitions (approx. 35 per year).

The bulk of the Conservation work carried out in the AGNSW Conservation lab is determined by up and coming Exhibitions. Also, there are constantly outward loan requests both statewide, nationally and internationally, that are extremely demanding on most staff. In addition, there are furnishing loans to Government Ministers offices.

Uniquely, the AGNSW Conservation Department has a Benefactors Group called "Friends of Conservation". They carry out a variety of fundraising activities which raise support funding. This funding has over the years made it possible to generally keep up with the latest analytical equipment used in conservation. This has proven to be very beneficial in assessing artworks being conserved. Unfortunately its full potential cannot be utilised due to an extreme shortage of staff.

We have, however, shared our good fortune at having this equipment, and have made it available for use by other conservation colleagues from other conservation establishments. The next major "task" for our Gallery is building an offsite collection storage facility. Conservation staff will obviously be involved with the safe movement and relocation of the stored collections.

In addition to the above, we have a very active outreach commitment to the community. We have been providing a regular 2 hour public enquiry morning every Thursday to the general public (for over 50 years) where they can get artworks identified by curators and conservation advice from conservation staff. We provide "Behind the Scenes" lab tours to specialist University students; Art Gallery Society members, etc, and an outreach programme to specialist school groups in conjunction with our Public Programmes Department.

For further information please contact Alan Lloyd at alanl@ag.nsw.gov.au

Australian Museum

The Materials Conservation Unit originated in the Anthropology Department when Sue Walston became the Museum's first trained conservator appointed to work on the ethnographic collections. By the late 1970's Materials Conservation had become a department in its own right (the title was chosen to avoid confusion with environmental

conservation which is a hot topic within a natural history museum). The department expanded greatly in the 1980's and became involved in aspects of the care of all collections in the Museum. Currently, we specialize in ethnographic, natural science, rare books and archives, and archaeological conservation.

Staffing levels reached a peak during the early 1990's with a staff of 12 but voluntary redundancies and staff reallocation from 2000-2003 resulted in a reduction to 5 permanent conservator positions at one point. This has subsequently been increased to 6 with the addition of a natural science preparator. We have also had a number of temporary positions and student interns over the past 7 years augmenting our numbers. The Museum has a very active volunteer program and we have been very fortunate with the skilled contribution of those who have worked with us. Our longest serving has been with the department for 30 years and has created an enormous amount of high quality storage and display mounts, covers and supports.

The Unit now sits within the Cultural Heritage and Scientific Initiatives Branch of the Research and Collections Division. Until 2000, Materials Conservation was a Division in its own right and had a seat on the Executive. Unfortunately, these structural changes have resulted in a reduced ability for conservation issues to be voiced at the upper management level.

The work of the Unit has been divided into three main areas, Exhibitions, Collection Care and Loans with a coordinator for each. All staff have opportunities to work in each of the programs rather than being dedicated exclusively to one area. Remedial treatments form part of each work programs rather than being treated as a separate program. Additional functions also include Natural Science Preparation and Indigenous Outreach. The Outreach program has involved advising, teaching and preparing loans for Aboriginal Cultural Centres in NSW and beyond along with work for some of our Pacific neighbours. The Unit has also carried archaeological conservation for projects within Australia and Vanuatu. The constant turn-over of exhibitions and demand for loans places a large demand on the Unit and ensuring that our preventive programs are adequately maintained to preserve the overall collection is the challenge. Pest control and environmental monitoring are two of the biggest priorities due to the predominantly organic nature of our collections. IPM and environmental monitoring have also been a major part of our research programs over the past 20 years but more recently, we have examined the effects of light on natural science specimens, mould growth in storage areas and the conservation of Egyptian mummies.

Our current work is dominated by the construction of a new building to house all of our Zoology collection and laboratories. Additionally, there is a program of redevelopment of some of our major galleries. The disruption of the building work which has had a direct impact on the Materials Conservation Labs

creating numerous head-aches, but, on the positive side, it has been an opportunity to rethink the functionality of the space and re-organise the layout. When the department moved to its current lab in 1988, it was considered state-of-the-art, but it is now time to reassess and we plan to remove some of many partition walls to create a more flexible and open work space.

Major equipment items in the Unit include a nitrogen chamber for pest control treatments, a new computer-controlled environmental chamber, an improved wireless central environmental monitoring system, a suction table and a 3-D laser scanner. Within the museum we also have access to scanning electron microscopes, XRD, EDAX and DNA analysis. When the current heavy workload and disruption caused by the development project subsides, we hope to devote more time to investigative projects to find solutions to conservation issues in our collections.

For more information please contact Colin MacGregor at colinm@austmus.gov.au.

Australian National Maritime Museum

The Australian National Maritime Museum is a statutory authority of the Australian Government. The museum is responsible to the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts (currently The Hon Peter Garrett AM MP). It is one of the national collecting institutions under the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (others include the National Library of Australia, Australian National Gallery and National Museum of Australia). Its enabling legislation is *The Australian National Maritime Museum Act 1990* (amended 1993).

The Conservation Section is part of the Collections and Exhibitions Branch within the Museum, along with Registration, Design, Curatorial and Temporary and Travelling Exhibitions. With a staff of 6, the section's role is to provide professional conservation services for the museum's collections and borrowed objects, within the context of long-term preservation and periodic display of objects from the collections. The section also provides support and advice to the public and smaller museums through outreach programs and the Maritime Museums of Australia Project Support Scheme (MMA PSS) which is administered through the Museum.

The Museum is represented on the (Commonwealth) Heads of Collecting Institutions (HOCI) Committee by the Director, **Mary-Louise Williams**, and on the National Collections Preservation Committee (NCPC) by the Head of Conservation, **Jonathan London**.

The current staff of the section comprises:

- Head of Conservation – **Jonathan London**
- Senior Conservator – **Sue Frost**

- Senior Conservator, Paper and Photographic – **Caroline Whitley**
- Conservator, Objects / Mixed Collections / Metals – **Daniel Wardrop**
- Conservator, Preventive Conservation / Mixed Collections – **Kathryn Yeates**
- Conservator, Objects – **Victoria Bramwell-Davis**

As well as being a collecting institution, the Museum has a very active temporary and travelling exhibitions program. Within the next few months the ANMM will close four temporary exhibitions and open three. In addition, a program of gallery maintenance and core exhibition changeovers is in operation. Every object that is displayed in the Museum passes through the hands of a conservator for condition reporting and of these objects some will also receive conservation treatment.

Some of our current on-going project-based work includes:

- Development and manufacture of mobile boat cradles for small vessels in storage
- Development and establishment of new storage facilities for photographic negative material
- Investigation, trial and procurement of new networked environmental monitoring system
- Rehousing of rare books, photographs and postcards
- Development and implementation of improved textile storage
- In-situ condition-reporting and cleaning of large static exhibits e.g. Cape Bowling Green Lighthouse, *Britannia* 18 ft skiff, Tasman Light

In addition, we are developing in-house training resources for other sections of the Museum.

For more information please contact Caroline Whitley at cwhitlet@anmm.gov.au

Historic Houses Trust of NSW – Collections Management Unit

The Trust's collections are dispersed over 13 properties. Most of the 9 staff members of the Collections Management Unit are employed as registrars or assistant registrars, dealing with loans management, accessioning, stock takes, valuations and tracking object movements. A key area of collections management is preventive conservation, including pest control, environmental monitoring and control, wear and tear monitoring, disaster prevention and recovery, and provision of advice on conservation treatment, cleaning, object handling, storage procedures and materials. We have less than the equivalent of one full-time position to manage this diverse range of tasks, which is quite a challenge!

With a few exceptions, conservation treatment is contracted out to private conservators, with the Preventive Conservation Officer or the Collections Manager often involved in discussions about the level of treatment. One of the key challenges for the conservators contracted to undertake treatment, is understanding how each property's conservation management plan effects the choice of treatment. For instance, the approach taken to treat a framed picture from Rouse Hill House will vary considerably from that taken for a similar object from Government House. Another issue is that the adhesives selected for textile repairs to curtains and blinds that will be hung in historic houses may need to be less reversible than that for the research collection. We've experienced adhesive failure on curtain repairs due to the temperatures experienced at the window.

For more information please contact Tamara Lavrencic at tamaral@hht.net.au

Powerhouse Museum

The origins of the Powerhouse Museum began in 1879 when Sydney held Australia's first international exhibition. The government brought several of the star exhibits and set up the Technological and Sanitary Museum, the grandparent of the Powerhouse Museum.

The Powerhouse Museum has a unique and diverse collection of 385,000 objects spanning collection areas of science, technology, design, industry, decorative arts, music, and transport and space exploration. Its mission is to develop collections and present exhibitions and programs that explore science, design and history for the people of New South Wales and beyond. The Powerhouse operates across 3 venues, the Museum at Ultimo, the Sydney Observatory and the Discovery Centre at Castle Hill. The Discovery Centre runs specialized tours and has viewable open display storage.

The Preservation Department has 24 staff members. The conservators in the department work in 6 key working groups.

Preservation Photography. One photographer is responsible for exhibition and loan objects and two photographers work with collection management. All documentation goes directly to K-emu, the museum's collection management system.

Preservation Exhibition team works to condition report, treat, mount and display the objects required for the Museum exhibition program.

Preservation Maintenance team works on the Museum collection held in the Store and are concerned with environmental control issues, pest control, re-housing and new acquisition documentation and loan documentation. A TAM (Total Asset Management) program has been externally funded for a detailed assessment of the collection and collection management.

Preservation Regional Services works with regional museums and organisations in running workshops and providing preservation support including programs for interns and travelling exhibitions. Exciting news is the establishment of a website; a preservation search engine which helps with the many public enquiries.

Preservation Research and Development is involved with analysing the plastic objects collection using a Fourier Transform Infra-Red Spectrometer and supporting the other teams with analysis of materials.

Preservation Steam team works on the maintenance of the Museum's steam program. There is one operating steam train and another steam train which is being restored as well as 13 steam engines maintained and demonstrated in the Museum.

For more information please contact Sue Gatenby at sueg@pnm.gov.au

State Library of NSW

The Preservation Branch is part of Collection Preservation, which also encompasses the Library's photographic section, Imaging Services.

Collection Preservation is presently part of the Collection Management Services Division. This is headed by the Mitchell Librarian and Assistant State Librarian, who reports directly to the State Librarian. Also within this division are Original Materials and Collection Services Branches. Both these areas deal with the acquisition, cataloguing and curation of collections.

There are some changes on the horizon. The State Library of NSW has embarked on a realignment of its structure. As of July 2008, the Collection Management Services division will join with the Reader Services division, to become Library Services.

Preservation presently has 6 Assistant Conservators and 7 Conservators, who report to 4 Senior Conservators. They in turn report to the Manager of Collection Preservation.

Preservation carries out three streams of work.

- 1 Core services – preservation of the Library collection as a whole: such as environmental monitoring, integrated pest management, counter disaster management, off-site storage monitoring and training of Library staff, volunteers and contractors.
- 2 Collection conservation – collection level conservation; stabilising the collection to enable access in the Reading Rooms,
- 3 Single item conservation – conservation treatment and preparation of individual collection items, for exhibition, loan or for high priority items.

The branch has a mix of specialists in book, paper and photographic conservation. Work is tracked on the Preservation database and distributed by a Preservation

Project Coordinator, who assigns project leaders and team members based on their expertise and availability. This flexible structure enables the branch to respond to changing demands, and provides some variety for staff. Conservators each have responsibility for a core service, such as environmental monitoring or integrated pest management. These projects are rotated annually, widening the pool of conservators with experience in these areas.

Preservation's current challenge will be to maintain this level of service during a time of much change within the Library. This will be possible due to the experienced, reliable and proactive staff of the Preservation Branch.

For more information please contact Catherine Thompson at cthompson@slnsw.gov.au

State Records NSW

State Records NSW is an unusual archive when you compare it with others around the country. It houses the permanent archive of NSW, but it also comprises the Government Records Repository (GRR) which commercially stores the current records of the State's government agencies. In practice this means that permanent archives are stored cheek-by-jowl with temporary records at the repository in Sydney's western suburbs.

The impact of this organisational structure on Preservation Services is subtle for the most part, except for the important funding that the GRR brings to the organisation. This is where State Records differs from its counterparts in other states – we generate much of our own revenue with only a percentage of our funding coming directly from government.

State Records stores 55 linear kilometres of permanent archives and 350 linear kilometres of temporary records. Preservation Services only has direct responsibility for the permanent archives. The site at western Sydney has 6 storage buildings, including the award winning Stage 6 building that uses geo-thermal air-conditioning.

Preservation Services has one full-time Senior Conservator, one full-time Conservator, one full-time clerical officer assigned to conservation and a temporary part-time Conservator. This is an extremely small staffing resource when you consider the size of the collection and the other consultative and advisory roles this team performs. We therefore gratefully welcome volunteers into conservation.

We are part of Archives Control and Management (ACM) which places us in the same department as the archivists dealing with storage, intellectual control, regional repositories, and exhibition loans, as well as in close proximity with digitisation and public access. The Senior Conservator reports to the Manager of ACM who in turn reports to the Associate Director, so there is a fairly direct line of reporting from Preservation to upper management.

The Senior Conservator manages the conservation laboratory,

advises internally on issues of preventive conservation, and both undertakes and directs conservation treatments. The position is also responsible for liaising with agencies on the creation and care of their current records and those they plan to transfer as State Archives. This involves site visits, telephone and email enquiries, and training courses for record managers.

The Conservators are responsible for the day to day treatment of State Archives. Conservation treatments are prioritised based on whether they are for public access, exhibition or condition risk. Ongoing rehousing and stabilisation treatments are chosen based on the significance of the record series and how much they are likely to be accessed.

Treatments are usually fairly basic - involving repairs, flattening and rehousing. We do more aesthetic and complex treatments on those archives requested for exhibitions and where their significance warrants more time being spent. The types of archives held by State Records include standard paper files, numerous types of volumes, parchments, plans, films, photographs, models and other unusual objects that occasionally find their way into files – bullets, strange models, memorial plaques, bicentennial ties and so on.

Many conservators may have the notion that archive collections are full of boring pieces of paper and that the work is purely process driven and unrewarding. Our experience with the NSW State Archive does not reflect this view. The archives throw up just as many tricky treatments as any other conservation laboratory – they are just different in their nature. We also have the luxury of more time to actually do treatment work when it is warranted, rather than purely exhibition focused conservation.

For more information please contact Elizabeth Hadlow at conservator@records.nsw.gov.au

ASA Conservation Framing

Andersen Shaw & Associates provides framing and mounting services to Museums and Galleries as well as to an extended private client base.

The business started operations in 1993 and has had an exciting year 2007/2008, moving from Leichhardt to new workshop premises in Annandale, Sydney.

Long-time staff member, Jochen Letsch, took on the operation of the business in 2007 and ASA has since welcomed three new staff members in Dominique Gekas, Thomas Waite and Ian Geraghty.

ASA offers a flexible service to institutions with the team being available to work onsite on framing and mounting projects. In the past year ASA has been involved in framing and exhibition work at several institutions in Sydney.

One of the most exciting projects of the year was the development of a new style of museum frame. The main focus was to provide a flexible framing system which would

enable artworks to be fitted up or transferred easily. The resulting frame is able to fit varying thicknesses of mounts and matboard combinations. It also allows the package to accommodate floated works which require a spacer. Utilizing a flexible self-bracing system with Velcro tabs and optional security corner brackets, ASA makes these frames available in various solid hardwood timbers as well as in painted finishes.

Please find the contact details for ASA on the website www.asaframers.com.au

Conservation Solutions

Conservation Solutions was established in 1999 to render textile conservation services to the private sector. In 2003, the Art Gallery of NSW engaged the services of the organization to conserve fifteen Indonesian textiles for the opening of the New Asian Gallery.

Conservation Solutions provides secretariat services to the Technology Educators Association (TEA) of NSW. For the last two years the organization has also been involved in setting up the display of textile HSC projects with other technology educators at Vaucluse House and at the Craft Fair at the Sydney exhibition Centre in 2007.

At the TEA conference in 2006, **Julie O'Connor** advised an audience of Textile and Design teachers how to appropriately store and package HSC Textile and Design projects for external marking.



This year, Rebecca Geraghty from Elizabeth Farm attended two days of conservation mentoring at Conservation Solutions as she assisted in the washing and mounting of an Indonesian batik.

This year, two other textile conservation and mounting projects have been completed for ASA framing at Annandale.

For more information please contact Julie O'Connor at julie_oconnor_au@yahoo.co.uk

Heights Heritage Conservation

Heights Heritage Conservation is a newly established conservation company, operating out of a purpose built studio in Belrose, offering a commercial, solution-driven approach to the conservation, storage, and exhibition of culturally significant objects and collections.

Senior Conservator, Tess Evans Post Grad Dip Con (TCC) London is the Principal of the studio.

Since returning to Australia in 1999, Tess has completed numerous projects including; surveys and collection management, long term and temporary exhibition installations, conservation project management, packing, relocation and storage strategies and hands-on conservation for both private and institutional clients. Heights Heritage Conservation has been set up by Tess as a company vehicle for her to continue to offer a comprehensive conservation service under her own name, working closely with other industry professionals.

Heights Heritage Conservation has recently completed the collection management of all the objects belonging to Dubbo Museum as part of the new Western Plains Cultural Centre. The collection is multi media ranging from large industrial equipment to household objects, objet d'art, textiles, framed artworks and works on paper. We undertook the project management, documentation, packing, relocation, conservation and installation of the selected items for the People, Places and Possessions permanent exhibition, (including designing and constructing mounts and supports), working collaboratively with the exhibition designer, curator, private conservators and conservation framers. The remaining items in the collection were packed for storage in the newly designed storage facility. We remain responsible for the ongoing conservation program at the Museum.

For more information please contact Tess Evans at evanstessa@hotmail.com

International Conservation Services

ICS was formed in 1991 evolving out of Campbell Conservation, a company formed five years earlier in response to conservation opportunities that the Bicentenary provided through its focus on the heritage of Australia.

Materials conservation is where we started and this remains a core part of our business. However, ICS has also evolved in a range of diverse directions including collection management, architectural conservation, exhibition management, historic site interpretation and digitization services. This results in a wide range of cross disciplinary projects, providing scope for our conservators on work-related disciplines.

We have five sections within the materials conservation division, each run by a senior conservator, supervising between one and three conservators. These sections are paintings, paper, textiles, objects and furniture.

Our work is extremely diverse coming from state and national collecting institutions, corporations, and private individuals. Projects are undertaken all over Australia and New Zealand and also more widely afield in Singapore and the Philippines. ICS also plays a major role in the Antarctic Heritage Trust of New Zealand's historic huts conservation program, for which ICS is the technical consultant.

For more information please contact Julian Bickersteth at j.bickersteth@icssydney.com

Preservation Australia

Preservation Australia is a privately owned conservation business based in Newtown, Sydney. Its owner, **Kay Soderlund**, has worked privately in conservation since 1986, after a few stints at various institutions such as The Australian Museum and the Powerhouse Museum. She also worked as a Conservation Outreach Officer and then Director of Museums Australia (NSW) for a few years in the late 1990's.

Currently, there is one full time (Kay) and two part-time employees. **Gill McElroy** is a paper conservator who previously worked at State Archives and now works privately. She comes in one day a week to help with the increasing work in the area of hands-on conservation. **Leonie Cooper Squires** is our conservation assistant who also assists in the product side of the business and welds our polyester sleeves.

Preservation Australia has four main areas of business:

- Hands-on paper conservation services
- Consulting in preventive conservation
- Conservation seminars and workshops
- Archival and conservation products

Hands-on Services

This is an area that we have recently re-introduced into our business. After working as a paper conservator for over 10 years, Kay moved into Preventive Conservation and stopped working in hands-on conservation. In the last year or so there has been an increasing demand for paper conservation services in Sydney, and a change in studio allowed us to set up properly for this type of work. To date, we have not really advertised that we provide this service but still have more work than we can keep up with. This work mainly comes from conservation framers, corporate clients from our consulting arm, and referrals from other conservators who are aware that we now offer this service. Once we start advertising this service we anticipate a doubling of the current work coming in (so any paper conservators out there looking for a change....).

Consulting in Preventive Conservation

The work in this area varies a great deal. As we are a small business it is difficult for us to take on large projects that demand a high level of staff time as other areas of our business would suffer too much. We carry out a lot of preservation assessments (mainly for the Community Heritage Grants programme) and have several regular clients who require preventive conservation advice and assistance from time to time. We also have one main client, NSW Department of Lands, with which we have a yearly, renewable contract for preventive conservation services. This works very well for us as it is regular work, without having to expend time in 'chasing' the job – a godsend in private practice! Another couple of clients like that and life would be very relaxing.

Conservation Seminars and Workshops

This is also an area of our business that is growing. We offer a range of seminars and workshops which are delivered upon request. We run workshops in basic paper and textile conservation, preventive conservation, collection care, disaster preparedness and similar and deliver them all around Australia. Mostly, they are for the community museum sector but we also run workshops and seminars for larger institutions, local government, libraries, schools, community groups etc. While we have our standard workshops, we also prepare tailored workshops when asked so that the group receives training in exactly area they need. This part of the business is very satisfying and is one that is also growing rapidly.

Archival and Conservation Products

Since 2002, we have been working in the archival products area and have been slowly increasing the product range. While we specialise in archival polyester sleeves and products for use by conservators, we also keep a range of paper, board and boxes for the local institutions (and some favoured interstate ones!) although our storage space is limited. As we are a small business we cannot compete with the larger suppliers in the more general archival range of products and so we specialise in products specifically for conservators, and the smaller, more easily stored products. Because of our size we have started to develop working alliances with other businesses which will allow us to carry a greater range of products of particularly high quality – working smarter, rather than harder. In a short while, we hope to be able to announce a very exciting new product range available exclusively through Preservation Australia. Meanwhile, the web site listing of our product range is slowly improving.

Current Challenges and The Future

As is the case with most conservation workplaces around the country, we are finding it very difficult to find experienced paper and preventive conservators. There is little point in developing the business if we can't service the demand and we are very close to that point. **Tegan Anthes**, from the SLNSW, will be joining us for a three month full time 'sabbatical' at the end of July this year which we are all looking forward to as it will help us develop the business that next step. Having Tegan come and work with us will be enormously beneficial, and maybe it is something we should look at more closely – offering 'sabbatical' space to institutional conservators who would like a change and a chance to work in the wider community, which is really what private conservation is all about.

Recently, two other conservation businesses moved into spaces adjoining our studio. Anne Cummins (Sydney Artefacts Conservation) provides objects conservation services while Benchmark Restorations and Jeremy Granville Smith are two furniture conservation businesses. One of the down sides of working privately is the professional loneliness that can

be present when you are a small business. With these other businesses next door, this problem is nicely alleviated as it has created an atmosphere that is reminiscent of a large working laboratory, while also providing colleagues to consult with – and have Friday arvo drinks with.

The main challenge for us for the future is staffing – finding conservators who have the experience and the ability to work in the private sector. Each aspect of the business is ripe for growth but without the staff to work in these areas we will not be able to take advantage of this situation. And the one full time employee is finding it increasingly difficult to cover all the bases and finds herself thinking more and more about retirement.

For more information please contact Kay Soderlund at k@preservationaustralia.com.au

Sophie Brown Conservation Framing

Sophie is Australia's first Advanced Guild Commended Framer, with a specialization in conservation framing from the Fine Art Trade Guild, London.

Based in Stanmore in Sydney's inner west, her well appointed, modern studio, provides a wide range of framing services to institutions, corporate and private clients, artists and collectors throughout Australia as well as overseas.

In collaboration with conservators, Sophie provides specialized framing services for exhibitions and displays, as well as individual objects. Through referral services she acts as the interface between her clients and conservators and other cultural material specialists in many fields. The flexibility of her business allows on-site consultations and short-term contracts for out of town assignments. Innovative solutions for difficult projects, including the framing of over-sized works of art are her strength.

For more information please contact Sophie Brown at sophie@conservationframing.com.au

Steensen Varming

Steensen Varming was established in 1933 in Copenhagen, Denmark, by Niels Steensen and Jørgen Varming. Our first commissions included the New University Library in Copenhagen, designed by Jorgen Varming's father, architect Kristoffer Nyrop Varming and the Aarhus Town Hall, two of the most important architectural projects between the World Wars.

From the beginning Steensen Varming also worked with the renowned Nobel Physics Prize winner, Neils Bohr, and the master architect Arne Jacobsen. From its Danish origins, Steensen Varming has developed internationally with practices now established in Ireland in 1946, the United Kingdom in 1957 and in Australia. Steensen Varming

was permanently established on these shores, becoming incorporated in Australia in 1973, following the success in winning the commission to design the Sydney Opera House with Jørn Utzon in 1957.

As well as being at the forefront of low energy and integrated mechanical and electrical building services design, Steensen Varming provide unrivalled expertise in Museum, Gallery and Archive projects. The very demanding and often conflicting requirements for conservation, display and user comfort require careful consideration and sensitive solutions. Our experience and technical expertise covers issues such as temperature and humidity control, adaptive re-use and discreet services for heritage buildings, display lighting, daylighting, façade and building envelope analysis, solar shading, back-up systems, gas phase and particulate filtration. Much of the innovative work carried out for museums and galleries has been published by leading technical journals as well as highlighted by the AGO as exemplar solutions.

Green Star

We confirm that the Green Star building rating scheme is gaining serious momentum. The entire professional staff at Steensen Varming recently qualified "en masse" as Accredited Green Star Professionals.

Steensen Varming is the only Australian building services company to be a member of the Museums Association. Steensen Varming is also a member of the International Association of Museum Facility Administrators, an international organisation that seeks to attain standards of excellence in the design, construction, operation and maintenance of cultural facilities around the world.

Steensen Varming have long-term relationships with many institutions, both in Australia and overseas, as well as providing advice to The UK Museums and Galleries Commission in the preparation of their published guidance documentation. Steensen Varming have worked on a variety of projects including;

The Clore Gallery & Nomura Gallery, Tate; British Library, Museum of Modern Art, London; Victoria & Albert Museum, British Galleries; Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh; Coventry Cathedral; Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem; National Gallery of Australia; Art Gallery of New South Wales; Australian War Memorial; Historic Houses Trust; Auckland Art Gallery; Casula Powerhouse Museum; Maitland Gallery; Australian Museum and many others.

For more information about Steensen Varming, please contact Michelle Hoare at michelle.hoare@steensenvarming.com.au. For information about the Green Star Professionals please contact Stephen Hennessy on 0412 963 031.

Sydney Artefacts Conservation

Sydney Artefacts Conservation is a privately owned business specialising in objects conservation. **Anne Cummins** established the business 16 years ago primarily to conserve large items of outdoor cultural material, an area of heritage work which had previously been neglected. Since then the business has developed to include consultancy services, such as; collection surveys, preparation of conservation management plans and tailored workshops on preventive conservation and basic maintenance techniques.

The majority of work is commissioned by Government and Statutory bodies including the major cultural institutions, however, we have a substantial flow of work from private collectors, corporate clients, and architectural firms. We are increasingly working in regional areas and interstate, and employ several highly qualified conservators with experience in a range of disciplines and materials.

We have recently relocated to a studio space in Newtown and are enjoying the city views, eclectic food, clothes shops, and the company of like minded businesses such as Preservation Australia. We now have a larger space to conduct treatments on smaller artefacts as well as larger moveable sculptures.

For more information please contact Anne Cummins at anne@artconservation.com.au

Lab and People News

Victoria

Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation, The University of Melbourne

Lab News

Students of the CCMC Masters in Cultural Materials Conservation have just completed semester one. Well done to the first year students who have completed a challenging semester and the second year students who completed some excellent treatments and research papers. CCMC would like to thank all of the contributors in the course. **Dr Ana Labrador** from Ateneo University in the Philippines and previously at the University of the Philippines, was a Visiting Award Scholar at CCMC for four months and taught into the CCMC programs, delivered public lectures and undertook research with **Robyn Sloggett** on cross cultural research in the field of conservation. Dr Labrador is a visual anthropologist and brings a fresh perspective to our profession.

Catherine Nunn has been awarded an Ian Potter Foundation Travel and Conference grant to present a poster titled *The treatment of an un-lined 18th Century British painting in Australia* at IIC London Congress in September this year. In May **Caroline Fry** delivered a seminar for the Cultural Heritage Centre for Asia and The Pacific, on *Conservation Issues in Vietnam*, at Deakin University. In April **Caroline Kyi** gave a demonstration of the sample embedding technique developed and currently used in-house at the CCMC, to staff members of the various conservation departments at the NGV. Caroline Kyi and **Liz Hinde**, with David Thurrowgood (NGV) and Deb Lau (CSIRO), contributed to the free lecture series presented by CSIRO Education, in partnership with the NGV and the ARC Centre of Excellence for Free Radical Chemistry and Biotechnology. The title of the series was *The Science of Art: Conservation, restoration and authentication*. Caroline's presentation aimed to provide the audience with the conservation context in which her PhD research into controlling biodeterioration using free-radicals was placed, highlighting the considerations that need to be made and included in the research methodology.

Nicole Tse submitted her PhD on the characterisation of oil paintings from four museums in tropical south-east Asia as part of an Australian Research Council Linkage grant. Its success was dependent on the many collaborating partners that included the National Art Gallery in Malaysia, Heritage Conservation Centre in Singapore, National Gallery in Bangkok and the J.B. Vargas Museum at the University of the Philippines. A body of information was built up on early twentieth century oil paintings materials, techniques and behaviour. More information is available from the CCMC website <http://www.culturalconservation.unimelb.edu.au/research/canvaspainting/>

The CCMC and Nicole will continue to research in this area.

Caroline Fry spent two weeks in Hanoi in April where she conducted a conservation survey of the small but significant collections of Hoa Lo Prison Museum, which houses artifacts from the French colonial period through to the period of the Vietnam War in mid 1970s. The collection has approximately 3000 objects, including photographs, textiles, metal artifacts, and paper based materials. **Pip Morrison** from NGV assisted in examination and condition reporting of the photographic collection at the Museum. Caroline visited The Vietnam Museum of Fine Arts in Hanoi, where she met with Director Binh and former colleagues. Director Binh, on behalf of Ministry of Culture and Information of People's Republic of Vietnam, invited Caroline to become an advisor for conservation for the Ho Chi Minh Museum and Palace in Ho Chi Minh City. She also visited **Francis Cumming**, a paper conservator who is working at the National Library of Vietnam on a 2 year VIDA (Volunteering for International Development from Australia) project, where she is supervising conservation treatment of 19th century newspapers and

journals, and establishing a digital scanning project.

Further information on the above projects is available from Caroline Fry at cmfry@unimelb.edu.au

People News

Tracey Golds is finishing her contract in mid June to return north to warmer climates. The CCMC second year paper students have benefited from Tracey's knowledge and experience as she has taught the Conservation Assessment and Treatment subject in first semester. Tracey has also been undertaking treatments in our consultancy programs. **Cushla Hill** has recently returned from 9 months at Queens University in Canada where she has been teaching paintings conservation for two semesters, as a sabbatical replacement for Barbara Klempner who used to teach paintings at the University of Canberra. **Vanessa Kowalski** will be returning in early July after working most recently at the Guggenheim Museum in New York. Unfortunately this means that **Alex Ellem** will be finishing as she has been back-filling Vanessa's position. In September **Helen Gill** will be taking up a six-month paintings conservation internship at the Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen, Denmark. **Katherine Rosenthal** will be returning to her hometown of Sydney in July to take up a position at David Stein's studio. **Libby Melzer** will be returning from maternity leave in July while **Holly Jones-Amin** has gone on maternity leave and she and her husband are the proud parents of son, Azlan.

Heritage Victoria

Lab News

Isa Loo is currently working on a treatment plan to stabilise the archaeological material from the HM Pentridge Prison site which was recently excavated. The channel deepening project in Port Phillip Bay has also unearthed some interesting early twentieth century maritime relics; more about these in a future newsletter.

All lab staff are excited about the prospect of seeing the archaeological objects from the Glenrowan siege site excavation which ran throughout May 2008. This Commonwealth funded excavation was co-administrated by Heritage Victoria's archaeologists. The conservation of excavated artefacts in this case was handled by **Karina Acton**, senior objects conservator from ICS.

People News

Isa Loo has joined Heritage Victoria's Conservation Lab on a 12 month contract. Isa is filling in for **Susie Collis** who is currently undertaking a secondment within Heritage Victoria to champion the wider needs of heritage objects and collections around the State of Victoria. **Jenny Dickens** has been on leave from Heritage Victoria for the past 12 months and is due to return in the second half of 2008. **Stuart Fuller**, a conservation student from the University of Melbourne has been assisting Susie and Isa with the many projects that they have been working on.

Museum Victoria

Lab News

Museum Victoria's new Strategic Plan (2008-2013) includes strategic directions closely associated with Conservation's current and forthcoming priorities, for example: minimisation of the Museum's environmental impact; use of eco-sustainable practices; the State Collection Integrated Storage Project; and greater integration of facilities and collections management planning and practice across our six campuses.

Re-development of natural sciences-focused galleries at Melbourne Museum (Science & Life, Darwin to DNA and Evolution) is our next major on-site exhibition project. This will comprise the removal of existing on-floor content and the staged production and opening of 3 new large exhibitions within in these spaces in the next 2 years.

The re-structure in late 2007 which created 2 teams ie. CP (Collections Preservation) and CDA (Collections Development & Access) has positively affected Conservation's work output and standards in 2008, particularly in preventive conservation activities. Michelle Berry leads the CP team which focuses on collections in storage. Helen Privett leads the CDA team which focuses on collections research, acquisitions and public access projects such as exhibitions, loans, publications, website content et al.

Recruitment to vacant positions in the CDA team has resulted in Karina Palmer, Samantha Hamilton and Elizabeth McCartney joining us on an ongoing basis. Karina just completed the management of the large-scale Melbourne Story exhibition at MV, including conservation and restoration of a Big Dipper carriage from Luna Park. Samantha joins us from private practice, where she had been working with the Sisters of St. Joseph at Mary McKillop Heritage Centre. Elizabeth just completed her training at the University of Melbourne, to add to her Masters degree in Conservation gained in the UK during 2004/05. Suffice to say, she's enjoying having a salary now!

We're currently recruiting to a part-time objects/textiles conservator position to complement Samantha's role while she works part-time for the next 12 months. We will shortly

advertise a natural science collections conservator role. Karina is happily expecting her first child (due in October), so we'll recruit to backfill her role too!

Our numbers will shrink at the end of June when coincidentally Liz and Melissa complete their current contracts, David takes six months' long-service-leave and Helen takes a long-overdue holiday (exploring the less well-known Hawaiian islands).

Staff will be attending the objects- and textiles-focused training workshops run by Richard Wolbers, as well as the metals conservation course led by Ian McLeod. Melissa Gunter recently attended Simon Moore's UK-based course on preservation of fluid-preserved collections and David Coxsedg undertook brief visits (IPM-focus) to the Powerhouse Museum, Australian Museum, State Library and Art Gallery of NSW.

In the next 6 months, we anticipate consolidation and refinement of our new structure and working model, recruitment of new staff, lots of (highly varied) work and fun!

People News

In CDA team activities, **Samantha Hamilton** and **Elizabeth McCartney** have been preparing indigenous Australian objects for fieldwork in remote areas in Cape York, as part of an ARC project which re-unites communities with historic cultural items to facilitate mutual learning and associated benefits. Samantha is also conserving indigenous objects from Tuvalu for a community-produced exhibition at the Immigration Museum which describes local community issues and the severe climate change threats to Tuvalu.

Karina Palmer and **Melissa Gunter** have recently had trial access to a portable Bruker XRF unit which they used to examine indigenous objects and natural science specimens for pesticides (and in the case of the latter, preparation materials) containing hazardous substances. Focusing on items acquired early into the Museum's collections, they found positive evidence of residues of arsenic, mercury and bromine compounds.

Helen Privett recently attended an exhibition design workshop for MV led by RMIT's Centre for Design. This outlined concepts and decision protocols for selection of alternative materials of construction for exhibition production (built form, showcases, furniture, finishes, graphics), with the aim of identifying a range of products which will meet environmental sustainability and collections preservation criteria. The new natural science exhibitions will make extensive use of sustainable materials and lighting.

In CP team activities, **Michelle Berry** and **John Clarke** have been collating T, RH and radiation (lux, UV) data in exhibitions, including galleries which receive natural lighting. This is being used for several purposes: comparison

of buffering and filtering performance of purchased showcase brands and models; identifying areas where lighting can be increased to facilitate visitor appreciation of displayed items; identifying areas where lighting needs to be reduced; identifying redundant exhibition lighting which can be switched off; identifying faults in infrastructure and software; and identifying targets and locations for installation of more sustainable systems.

Michelle and **Liz Ogden** are developing goals and procedures for improved storage and preservation of paper-based, book, image and audio-visual collections dispersed through the Museum's cultural and science holdings. Michelle, Catherine and **David Coxsedg** have also conducted an intensive review of our long-running IPM program. Michelle has also been assisting the development of a proposed MOU for Victorian arts agency collecting institutions which will enable mutual aid for disaster response.

State Library Victoria

Lab News

Jane Hinwood and Ian Cox have been working on an 1857 album of early photographs by East India Company photographer Linnaeus Tripe. Ian carried out a leather underback to repair the late 19th century English Zaehnsdorf binding - Zaehnsdorf was a well-known English binder. The binding had broken down completely due to the immense weight (20kg) of the volume. Jane Hinwood carried out some research in order to identify the type of photographs in the album. They had been originally identified as salted paper prints, but on closer examination the prints were found to be early hybrid matte albumen.

Work has begun on another major digitising project of the State Library's heritage collections, the Victorian Maps series. A survey was completed late last year by **Alice Cannon** and **David Harris** in order to identify maps that required treatment prior to scanning. Scanning will be performed by the State Library's Imaging Department, using a large roll-through scanner, with the maps placed between sheets of Mylar prior to scanning. The majority of treatments required consist of simple cleaning, repair and rehousing, but a significant number of maps also require pressure-sensitive tape removal. In some cases, when maps are particularly brittle or fragmented, old linen or paper backings are being removed and the maps washed and lined. Work on this collection is being supervised by Alice Cannon with the assistance of **Kellie Slape**, **Nick Ziruhl**, **Thomas Rawlins** and **Savina Hopkins**.

Part of the work in the lab involves supporting the Dome Gallery exhibitions with each exhibition undergoing a complete change of material every 12 months. In addition page or item changes are scheduled midway through each

exhibition as required for structural reasons. For instance **Jean Holland** managed, in the last year, the retrieval, assessment and preparation of 258 items for the *Mirror of the World* exhibition changeover. This included the mounting and framing of 58 flat works on paper, the construction of 90 book cradles for books which were displayed open, 21 books mounted for wall display, and the remaining 89 books displayed closed on simple mountboard supports. Minor treatments were carried out including surface cleaning, tear repairs, and leather consolidation.

We have recently also had the loan of the portable Bruker XRF meter as it travels around to various institutions. It has proved useful in identifying pigments on manuscripts, paper colourants and toned photographs.

People News

Our current exhibition *Medieval Imagination: Manuscripts from Cambridge, Australia and New Zealand* has been drawing large crowds. For more information on the exhibition and some great images follow the links on our library site <http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/>. Two major book treatments were completed for the exhibition. Treatment of the *Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*, a 15th century English manuscript, was carried out by **Ian Cox**. (A video preview of Ian's treatment can be seen at http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/programs/exhibitions/kmg/2008/medieval_imagination/online/pilgrims_progress/index.html). Pages were disbound, cleaned, repaired, re sewn and the book rebound in a style sympathetic to the period. **Katrina Ben** completed the treatment of the Codex Sancti Paschalis, a 13th century Franciscan manuscript on long-term loan to the Library, which involved similar aspects, however Katrina also dyed the alum tawed leather covering to a rich red with brazilwood.

Katrina recently gave a talk for AICCM Victorian Division members on the treatment performed on the Codex. The talk also featured **Anna Walsh**, PhD student, Melbourne College of Divinity, who discussed various theological and historical aspects of the manuscript. The talk was very well attended, with about 35 people squeezing into the conservation studio. Katrina will be presenting a similar paper at the AICCM Book and Paper Symposium in Canberra in July.

Medieval Imagination will close in mid June. **Catherine McFarlane** is managing the complex timetabling involved in the return of manuscripts borrowed from Cambridge, New Zealand and Australian collections. The Library's exhibitions program has been extremely full this year, with the Library also sending out its first touring exhibition. *Victorians on Vacation* was shown at the Gippsland Art Gallery and will travel to Mildura, Warnambool and the Mornington Peninsula Art Gallery during 2008-2009. **Jane Hinwood** and Catherine McFarlane travelled to Sale to install the exhibition.

Queensland

RSM Art Conservation

Lab News

RSM have moved from Fortitude Valley to much larger premises in Albion, Brisbane. We now have four times the space of our previous studio, with dedicated areas for paper (including a wet room), paintings and objects conservation, as well as a conservation framing area.

We are continuing with conservation work on a wide range of objects, textiles, paintings and works on paper. We have almost finished our contract to complete the conservation of all paintings from the Queensland Parliament and we recently completed a project to clean the marble walls of the main dining hall of Tattersall's Club in Brisbane City.

People News

We welcome objects conservator, **Erin Chapman** and architectural conservator, **Daniela Talassi** to our team. We now have 6 happy staff members.

Australian Capital Territory

Australian War Memorial

Lab News

Since **David Keany's** departure **Sharon Alcock** has been carrying on alone in the Painted surfaces lab. With the change of government, loans work has been very busy requiring a variety of treatments and some major frames conservation. The lab is now gearing up for the exhibitions "Over the Front" and "1918: Advancing to Victory". In the meantime Sharon is removing mould, bloom and greasy surface dirt from a recent acquisition and is getting a start on the treatment of three canvases which were damaged in a major hail storm last year. The canvases will have to be humidified and slowly stretched before the flattening and consolidation of the tented paint layer can be addressed. David Keany returned on contract in mid May to work on frames for "Icon & Archive" and **Kathryn Ferguson** will be working part time at least until the end of June to give Sharon a hand with the exhibition work. Sharon is looking forward to not having to haunt the corridors searching for the next unsuspecting victim to help move a large art work around the lab!

The Objects lab, the Textile labs, and the Large Technology Conservators are busy working on two exhibitions, "Over the Front" and "1918: Advancing to Victory".

People News

The Paper Lab is sorry to lose **Sophie Lewincamp** who is moving across the lake to the National Library. Sophie's skill, imagination and boundless energy will be missed. We have been very lucky to have **Tania Riviere** on transfer from the National Archives. Her assistance has been invaluable in the preparation of our major photographic exhibition for the National Photography Festival (<http://www.nla.gov.au/vivid/>). **Helen Butler** has been valiantly and successfully coordinating conservation efforts on this large and complex (and travelling) exhibition.

Laura Kennedy has been appointed permanently to the position of Manager, Conservation, Preventive Objects and Large Technology. **Eileen Procter** is acting in the Preventive Conservator position until the end of the financial year.

National Archives of Australia (Canberra)

Lab News

In the absence of Karen, **Cheryl Jackson** has been condition reporting 3 large panoramic photographs which are due to go on loan to the National Library in June. The panoramas are 3 albumen prints ranging from 1400mm to over 3m long. They were produced by Bernard Holterman and Charles Bayliss in 1875 after Holterman made his fortune on the gold fields.

The laboratory staff has been busy working on change over items for our Memory of a Nation exhibition on display in our Parkes building.

Travis Taylor has been working on an extremely brittle oversized architectural ferroallic print of Victoria Bridge in Brisbane. He has been surface cleaning, removing tape and repairing tears prior to applying a remoistenable lining.

In conjunction with the University of Canberra, **Alana Treasure (Lee)** has been down to Melbourne to use the infrared beamline on the Australian synchrotron. She is analysing parchment degradation caused by iron gall inks on 19th century documents by FTIR microscopy.

Cheryl has also been kept busy recently giving Public Lectures on the Preservation of Digital Prints. She has given 3 so far, and each has been booked out, showing the level of interest in the topic amongst the Canberra population. Although the talk centres on making and keeping permanent digital prints (inkjet etc), there are as many questions about making and keeping permanent files of the prints on the computer. Technological obsolescence, the stability of burn at home CDs and DVDs and backup choices are all hot topics.

Cheryl and **James Doig** (Assistant Director, Digital Preservation) were recently featured in the May edition of Australian Photography magazine, in an article based on digital preservation. Cheryl's contribution was again based on the preservation of the prints we produce for ourselves and the vulnerability of the files on our computers, while James focused on the longevity of electronic records and how the NAA approaches the issue.

People News

There have been some staffing changes in the last few months. **Tharron Bloomfield** has accepted the position of preventive conservator but won't be commencing until July/August. In the meantime **Alison McCrindle** will continue acting in the position. **Karen Holloway** is on maternity leave and is the proud parent of another baby boy, Daniel, born in May. Mother and baby are doing well. **Kylie Roth** is acting in Karen's exhibition position and commenced with us mid May. **Stephen Willet** has joined us as conservation assistant and the extra help has definitely come in handy with a backlog of work and his extra height is useful when unlocking display cases too.

South Australia

Artlab

Lab News

The Projects section is delighted to welcome **Di Whittle** to the team. Di, **Joanna Barr**, **Zandria Farrell** & **Helen Weidenhofer** have commenced work on a memorial bronze sculpture of King Edward VII. Di & Zandria have also been working on a small John Dowie sculpture from the Carrick Hill collection. And the projects team are continuing to assist the National Motor Museum prepare the Talbot 474 for its centennial touring exhibition.

Lisette Burgess has been working on the damaged water gilt AGSA frame belonging to the painting, "At Mandalay Burma", by Mortimer Menpes. This treatment has involved the rebuilding of sharp edges and in-gilding of lost sections. She and **Rita Bachmayer** are also working on the AGSA frame belonging to the painting, "The Favourites of Emperor Honorius" by J.W Waterhouse. **Eugene Taddeo** and **Marek Pacyna** have been treating a large portrait of, "John McDouall Stuart" for the Adelaide City Council. This treatment has involved varnish and over paint removal and in-painting of paint losses and abrasion. Marek has also been treating several privately owned paintings. **Chris Payne** has been continuing his treatment of "The Horse Muster" by Thomas Clark which belongs to AGSA. He is currently in-painting large areas of paint loss and abrasion. **Gillian Leahy** has been treating

several privately owned paintings. One of these paintings is a portrait of Napier Sturt, the son of Charles Sturt which is owned by the Charles Sturt Museum in Adelaide. This treatment involves the removal of a very discoloured varnish layer and some in-painting.

Kristin Phillips is working on a Japanese flag belonging to the Alice Springs RSL. The flag has been very poorly framed and is covered with contact and glued onto canite. **Bee Flynn** continues work on a collection River Maps belonging to the State Library of South Australia.

Justin Gare has been preparing a series of tours he will be conducting through a historic house in Hahndorf as part of SA History Week. He has also been working on the rehousing of a model twin-screw Bi-Plane from Pulteney Grammar. The plane was constructed by William and Harry Raupach in 1911.

People News

In the Paper Lab, **Jodie Proud** is working out how to conserve an eleventh century Jain manuscript. There are hundreds of talipot palm leaf fragments (20 x 5cm) that have been wet and are now stuck together in eight sections. They have to be meticulously prised apart without losing information; the fragmented pieces are consolidated and then a concertina style of storage is made.

The Book Conservation team of **Colin Brown**, **Liz Mayfield**, and **Michael Veitch** have recently sent **Ery Sustiyadi** back to the Sonobudoyo museum in Jogkarta with the Serat Ambiya illuminated manuscript in much better shape than it arrived four weeks previously. The 1851 volume was dry cleaned throughout and the loose blank endpapers were washed, de-acidified and re-sized. Numerous paper tears were repaired and loose sections were re-sewn using the original Islamic method. The remnants of the cover were flattened, in-filled, and a new cover was made with sympathetically dyed leather. The remnants of the original spine leather were re-attached and a box made for the treasure to protect it during and after its journey home.

Charlotte Jenkin has decided to take a break from work for family reasons and has resigned from Artlab.

The objects lab would like to congratulate **Jo Dawe** and **Simon** on the safe arrival of their beautiful baby boy, **Tristan**. Objects would also like to welcome **Heather Perry**, a mid-career intern from Cynon Valley Museum, Wales, who has been a very welcome addition to the team. Heather has been busy reinvigorating complex foil and flower decorations on an icon piece.

Finally our very best wishes go to **Liz Mayfield** and **Fred Francisco**. Liz is about to take a years maternity leave to give birth to her first baby and Fred will be retiring in July after 14 years at the Art Gallery of South Australia and 23 years of invaluable service at Artlab.

Western Australia

WA Museum

Lab News

David Gilroy and **Salvador Gomez** have completed the move of the Aboriginal human remains from their former home in the Jubilee wing at the WA Museum Perth site to a custom designed store in the collection facility at Welshpool. The store has its own climate control systems and is splendidly laid out with sparkling new shelving and custom made boxes and tubs that contain human elements awaiting their final journey to country. Nyoongar elder Ken Colbung conducted a smoking ceremony, so the spirits residing with the bones were given the necessary blessings of music, dance and words to enable them to leave the Perth site and begin the homeward journey. In January **Ian MacLeod** and David Gilroy got some much needed assistance from the careful movers at Allied Pickfords and have moved the Secret and Sacred materials from their former home in Perth site to a discrete and secure location that is controlled by passive climate methods underneath the administration building at the Welshpool site. David and Salvador made all the preparation of the Museum of Childhood collections, formerly belonging to the Edith Cowan University, look relatively simple but since they have moved more than 3.5 million objects in the past few years one would reckon they know what they are doing!

David Graves has been doing brilliant work with the foundry who cast the famous Gormley sculptures at Lake Ballard near Menzies in Western Australia. There were some severe microstructure defects in the broken legs and these have been eliminated by introducing a full annealing program on the recasting models, who individually reflect members of the local Menzies community which is located 2 hours drive north of Kalgoorlie. **Richard Garcia** from the museum's conservation team has been instrumental in ensuring that practical and manageable outcomes are delivered through this integrated cross-organisational program of metal conservation. This month will see **Andrew Thorn** and **Anne Cummins** working on the documentation and condition reporting of the 50 sculptures that are placed over several kilometres of the salt lake surface.

Vicki Richards has been flat out working with interns, giving lectures to a group of upcoming maritime archaeologists working on a post-graduate diploma at the University of WA, giving public lectures with Ian Godfrey for National Archaeology week and with her continued *in-situ* conservation research on the shipwreck of the James Matthews in Cockburn Sound near the labs in Fremantle. **Carmela Corvaia** and **Richard Garcia** have been to the Shark Bay World Heritage Centre to do work on a massive deck knee from the former *Uranie* shipwreck of Louis de Freycinet in the Falkland Islands. The reason why the WA Museum has the prized

de Vlamingh plate is all due to the heroic efforts of the French explorer de Freycinet. A whole team of conservators including **Maggie Myers**, Richard Garcia and **Ulli Broeze Hoernemann** were recently running around the museum in Kalgoorlie and sorting out the urgent collection and conservation needs of the objects on exhibition and in storage.

Ian MacLeod joined a team from the AE2 commemorative foundation (AE2CF) to travel to Istanbul for a meeting with the Turkish Institute of Nautical Archaeology to determine the best conservation management options for this famous WWI submarine. The movie *Gallipoli Submarine* was featured on the eve of ANZAC Day while the AE2 CF team were freezing at Gallipoli waiting for the start of the Dawn Service. **Michael (Mack) McCarthy** from the Maritime Archaeology department of the WA Museum was also present and played a pivotal role in securing good outcomes to be taken to both Turkish and Australian governments to form the basis of an international agreement on site management. Options that were supported include urgent application of a system of sacrificial anodes to bring about *in-situ* conservation of the vessel, a system of underwater blocks to prevent anchors and fishing nets becoming snagged on the site and causing more damage, a set of mooring buoys with monitoring devices on them to secure the site from accidental disturbance by passing fishermen and container ships. The final element involves a request to increase the present 10 cm opening of the main hatch to the full width to allow a remote observation vehicle to enter the vessel and fully record the conditions inside and to take water samples from near the last remaining torpedo to look for signs of hoped for corrosion that would have allowed water to penetrate the massive explosive charge in the torpedo head.

Ian MacLeod recently travelled to Sweden to conduct the external assessment of a PhD by Yvonne Hors who has done brilliant studies on the sulphur problems of the Vasa (1628) shipwreck. By using every known spectroscopic method, including sulphur isotope measurements, she has been able to establish the mechanism whereby sulphur is incorporated into the timber structures and how bacteria have formed iron sulphide minerals such as pyrrhotite and pyrite. During the trip Ian was able to make his first pilgrimage to the iconic warship which is the best preserved wooden warship from the early 17th century.

Regular meetings of the AICCM 2009 conference organising committee of Jonathan, David, **Paul Malone**, Dan, Maria, Vanessa and Ian MacLeod are beginning to get the backbones of the program sorted out so place a note in your diary. The main conference will take place in the NWS lecture theatre at the new maritime museum building on Victoria Quay in Fremantle from Sept 22-25 2009 with the possibility of Monday 21st being reserved for special workshops and conservation practicals, should sufficient interest be expressed by the members planning to attend. The timing has been set

so as to allow students at the CCCM course at the University of Melbourne to come along and present their stories and to meet potential employers! The conference topic is **Conserving public and private collections** which allow ALL conservators to prepare papers for the conference. If anybody manages to get abstracted and fall into the nearby Swan River you can relax as **Kalle Kasi**, **Jon Carpenter**, Vicki Richards and Ian MacLeod have all just completed their advanced first aid, resuscitation and diver rescue training updates!

People News

Ulli Broeze Hoernemann has begun a secondment from the museum to the State Library of WA as head of the paper conservation laboratory which has allowed our wonderful WA AICCM President to get back to the bench and do his very fine work. The WA Division recently combined with members of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering to have a tour of the restoration and conservation works at St Georges Cathedral in Perth. The dean, most Reverend Dr John Shepherd gave a sparkling address on the history of cathedrals and the present structure, Ian MacLeod explained the corrosion prevention work to give the new steel hidden inside replica stone and brick buttresses a life time of 250 years and inside the building the bracing of the crossing of the nave and transepts was explained as being the way to make a 125 year old brick and stone building comply with the modern BCA for earthquakes. We were then enthralled by Stewart Smith, the assistant organist and head of the Classical Music Program at WAAPA give recitals on the chamber organ, a chancel or choir organ and the final elements were resounded on the great west organ. Following this we adjourned to have a wonderful banquet meal at a nearby Chinese gold plate award winning restaurant.

Patricia Moncrieff Textile Conservator, Consultant and Educator

Lab News

In 2008 there has been a resurgence of commemorative textiles from World War I requiring conservation within the private sector. Manufactured in Egypt, the textiles resemble extra large postcards and are dedicated to their loved ones back home. They are embroidered upon silk, using the Cornely machine embroidery technique that was invented in 1865 by a Frenchman named Bonnaz and manufactured by Ercole Cornely. These machines could work both chain and moss stitch and could sew in any direction. Early 1900 models produced raised cords, double zigzag lines and two needle braiding.

A rattan woven sleeping mat from WWII and a Nazi Swastika flag were conserved for the Goldfields War Museum in Kalgoorlie, Western Australia.

The rattan sleeping mat was given to Claude Clifford Shaddick by a group of women in North Borneo in 1945. A cartoonist, Joseph Francis Garvey painted a mural on the mat.

The Nazi Swastika flag was retrieved by Private Joseph Lawrence Monaghan, serving in the Australian Army during World War II during the retreat of the Germans at El Alamein, North Africa. It is signed by the members of his platoon and was sent to Boulder, Western Australia in 1943. The Nazi swastika was one of the best known party symbols of modern times. Originally a sun symbol, it was used in many different ways before it became the national flag of Germany in 1935. Its square shape indicated its use as a wall hanging. The Swastika flag was replaced in 1945.

Currently Patricia is working on a diversity of textiles. Several Kuba raffia embroideries from the Republic of Congo, Africa, numerous cross-stitch samplers from the UK, and a military hat from the Military Academy at West Point USA.

Patricia was a consultant for the Art Gallery of Western Australia regarding the Yohji Yamamoto Exhibition held Oct 2007 – Feb 2008. Yamamoto is an internationally known Japanese designer of haute couture based in Paris, Japan and New York.

Patricia recently carried out an assessment of a Battle of Britain lace panel belonging to the Royal Australian Airforce Association. The lace panel is one of approximately thirty eight panels commemorating the Battle of Britain made between 1942-46 in England, manufactured by Dobsons & M Browne & Co., Nottingham, England.

New South Wales

Australian Museum

Lab News

The recently opened *Dinosaurs Gallery* (February) has been drawing large crowds with a display including skeletons, models, and hundreds of fossils that offer an insight into the life of dinosaurs. This has been brought to life with impressive life size animation of a Queensland dinosaur stampede, recreated scene of predation, display of a working paleontology lab, and The Australian Museums opalised fossil collection.

The soon to open *Surviving Australia Galleries* (new permanent exhibition opening in June), will reveal stories of Australia's animal inhabitants and tales of their adaptation and survival over millions of years of changing climate and landscape.

Also recently opened is the exhibition *Frank Hurley – Journeys into Papua*. This exhibition is based on a selection of photographs (85 in all) printed from the Australian Museum's historic glass plate negative archive, taken by Frank Hurley during his expedition into Papua during the early 1920's. The exhibition also features 26 ethnographic objects, collected on the same expeditions, many of which can be seen in the photographs.

The new science building is now well on the way to being completed. This building will house the invertebrate collections and will be a welcome upgrade in storage conditions for the collections. We look forward to the end of the noisy drilling!

Staff are currently working on specimen preparation for the *Surviving Australia Gallery*. **Melanie Findlay** has carried out repairs and removed ingrained dirt and stains from a 120 year old Thylacine skeleton for this exhibition, and is also working on repairs to an archaeological ceramic.

Michael Kelly has been working on the exhibition *Frank Hurley - Journeys into Papua*. Michael also continues with the Mammals collection historic taxidermy mount storage project, many of the specimens date from the late 19th century. This material is stored in an off-site warehouse and is in the process of being fitted with support padding into custom-made polypropylene boxes.

Kate Jones is soon to complete a training course in 'Fundraising for Collections Care'. Kate is learning how to write successful grant proposals and finding options for funding a wide range of collection care projects.

Heather MacKay has completed a storage survey of a collection of bark cloths from Vanuatu and is undertaking the storage upgrade and treatment of some of the cloths. Heather is also assisting in the preparation of natural collections for the big move into the new science building.

People News

It was with heartfelt sadness that we said goodbye to Sue Valis who has taken up the position of Conservator/Collection Manager at the Museum of Tropical Queensland. We look forward to hearing news from Townsville and are pretty sure that she will be enjoying the wonderful view (at the very least natural light!) and climate. We wish her all the best.

Australian National Maritime Museum

Lab News

The ANMM Conservation staff in association with some of their colleagues from the museum's Design section took part in the annual staff sailing regatta on Friday 16 May, winning line honours and the trophy! This fine piece of nautical plastic and gilt is a worthy rival in terms of "good" taste to Conservator Ken (another trophy well known to some AICCM members!!!), and it will spend the next year on proud display, back and forth between the lab and the design studio.

Our trusty helmsman **Jonathan London** has been working on developing the Conservation outreach program and assessing tenders for storage and traveling crates for a large collection of bark paintings. In addition he's been planning for the new environmental monitoring system, assessing tenders and submitting budget bids. Security of framed works on display has been raised recently and we are trialing a security hanging system for framed works. As part of this investigation we have looked at *Track & Slide* www.trackandslide.de. The fittings are designed by conservators and seem very robust.

Coming off the back of the hectic installation of the temporary exhibition *Bateaux Jouets: Toy boats from Paris 1850-1950*, **Daniel Wardrop** is now working on the next temporary exhibition *Trash or Treasure? Souvenirs of travel*, set to open in July. He is also working with **Cameron McLean** from the ANMM's Registration section, on a project to improve the storage and in-store mobility of small boats at the Museum.

Very soon our order of Henry Hanger coat hangers will arrive from America.....once they arrive we can start emptying boxes and filling our new hanging space inside the compactus.

Victoria Bramwell-Davis is currently working on objects to be displayed in the NAIDOC and the *Trash or Treasure* exhibitions. One of the treatments involved the conservation of a carved and polychrome driftwood mask from Torres Strait. The object was made between 1917 and 1933 and had suffered from an extensive insect infestation prior to its arrival at the museum. The wood was full of cavities and hollow tunnels. Areas in the surface had collapsed causing stress on the paint layer. Although the pest damage was old, the object was still isolated for six weeks in a Cryovac™ bag with Ageless™. The most vulnerable cavities were then consolidated with 50/50

Plectol and deionised water. Once this had dried, the voids were then filled and reinforced with the same mixture bulked with glass micro balloons. The fill was gradually inserted under the cavities using a syringe with a silicon tubing attachment. The fills were then retouched with acrylics.

Caroline Whitley has been preparing paper and photographic items for display in the August exhibition *Great White Fleet-US sea power on parade 1908*. The show will be part of centenary celebrations marking the 1908 visit to Sydney, Melbourne and Albany of the US navy's fleet of sixteen white painted battleships, during its epic cruise to circumnavigate the globe visiting six continents and 26 countries. The voyage provided US crews with practice in seamanship, while also being a political and public relations exercise, and a symbolic demonstration of America as a new world power that could intervene anywhere. As a result of the visit a Royal Australian Navy was established, as well as the Australian/American alliance. Some of the most interesting objects in the show are large photographic panoramas showing what a party time was had by all- with the ships in Sydney Harbour welcomed by thousands of well-wishers lining the shores, mass maypole dancing displays, public buildings lit up and decorated with colourful bunting, and huge street parades.

People News

Mary Gissing has begun a short term contract with us and will be working on textile objects selected for changeover exhibitions, as well as working with **Sue Frost** to prepare the swimming costume collection for photography. This exciting project is working towards getting the entire swimwear collection onto the museum's web site and is a preliminary stage of the Swimwear exhibition currently under development. Sue has also been working on many interesting textile-based souvenir objects for *Trash or Treasure? Souvenirs of travel*. These have ranged from a 1970s Gold Coast tea towel to a 19th century Chinese court robe. Finding solutions for display mounting of the various textile objects have been the main problems to resolve.

State Library of NSW

Lab News

Anna Brooks, Lisa Charleston, Trish Leen and Silvana Volpato recently prepared and helped install items for the exhibition *Dockside: Sydney's working harbour, 1840-1875*. This exhibition covers the gruelling work on Sydney's wharves in the mid 19th century. The paintings and watercolours offer a romanticised vision, and photographs show only a single moment in time, but together the images in this exhibition capture the pace and toil of the colonial city's working harbour.

Cecilia Harvey has been treating Governor Lachlan Macquarie's journal of a tour to the Western and Southern Districts of NSW in 1820. Cecilia has been removing the journal pages from the existing inlays in preparation for the Library's ongoing digitisation project.

Guy Caron has been working on *The Temple of Flora, A new illustration of the sexual system of Linnaeus by Robert John Thornton London 1799-1807*. This large and heavy album is famous for its sumptuous plates using a mixture of aquatint, mezzotint, etching and engraving techniques. The plates were colour printed using multiple plates and or hand coloured. Thornton's aim had been to capture the wonders of botany using the arts of painting and engraving. Nothing like it had been attempted in England at this time and no expense was spared on these magnificent works. Consequently Thornton was financially ruined by his self-imposed quality standards. The binding, is a half bound with corners in green morocco leather. The intensive treatment involved replacement of the head and tail sides, end-bands and repair of the broken corners.

Martin Bongiorno, Cathryn Bartley and Lang Ngo recently completed the rehousing of 200 Max Dupain photographic prints. The prints are new acquisitions to the Library's collection and some of them were recently on show in last years *Max Dupain : The Modernist exhibition*.

People News

Lisa Charleston has left the Library after 6 years. We will miss Lisa's cheery smile and wish her all the best in her new position at the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

State Records NSW

Lab News

We have had a run of reader requests to look at insolvencies, divorces, probates and other family history archives – this is not uncommon of course, family historians being our bread and butter – our problem has been that all of the archives have been in very poor condition due to very old flood damage at the Supreme Court. This has kept **Sarah Bunn** and **Jill Gurney** very busy over the past few months separating welded parchment from degraded, felted paper.

Elizabeth Hadlow has been advising a number of agencies on the storage of large format archives – maps, plans and tracings on plastic. She has also been wrestling with tricky tracing paper plans – to line or not to line, that is the question.

Carol Marsh is kept ever busy with Ward files from the Department of Community Services, but she has had a welcome break from that recently doing tape removals with a mixture of warm air and solvent treatments.

People News

We recently said a sad adieu to **Angela Vincitore** who commenced a contract with us at the beginning of the year. Angela has returned to Italy where we wish her luck in the very competitive Italian conservation profession.

International Conservation Services

Lab News

Large projects in diverse parts of the country have dominated over the last few months. **Karina Acton** has been providing on site archaeological conservation advice at the four week excavation of Ned Kelly's final stand at Glenrowan, Victoria. **Fiona Tennant** and **Erin Watson** have been auditing collections for the Stockman's Hall of Fame, Longreach, Queensland and for Sydney West Area Health Authority from Parramatta to Lithgow. They have also been assisting **Doug Rogan** review the collection of Fosters Group from Hobart to Brisbane to Perth, along with Hunter Valley, Barossa Valley and Coonawarra visits. Hard work, guys, but someone has got to do it.

Adam Godijn and **Arek Werstak** have been reinstalling large murals in the State Theatre as well as working on the Theatre's substantial art collection. **Miriam Wormleaton** and **Skye Firth** have been immersed in a research project on Spanish embossed leather chairs for the Historic Houses Trust of NSW.

People News

We welcome **Wendi Powell**, Canadian trained objects conservator and **Matteo Volonte**, Italian trained paintings conservator to our permanent staff. Both Wendi and Matteo have been working for ICS casually for some months.

At the same time we sadly farewell Miriam Wormleaton who takes up a position with Historic Royal Palaces in the UK, and **Adrian Warren** who is moving to the far South Coast of NSW.

Special Feature — Conservator in focus

James Crawford Interview

James Crawford graduated from the University of Canberra in 1998. After working at International Conservation Services (ICS), Sydney and Institut de Restauration et de Recherches Archéologiques et Paléométallurgiques (IRRAP), Compiègne, France, he moved to Malta to extend his studies in 2004. While in France he participated on excavations of Roman and Etruscan sites with the French Ministry of Culture's Département des Recherches Archéologiques Subaquatiques at Sous-Marines (DRASSM), Marseille. He was interviewed for the Newsletter by Julian Bickersteth.



Can you tell us where you are at with your career?

At present I am continuing in the so-called "objects" conservation domain, mainly developing a specialisation in metals. In parallel, I am pursuing collaborations with electro-chemists and engineers who are also interested in the practical application of conservation science for understanding material degradation and improving conservation strategies.

What led you to seek further training overseas?

Acquiring further training *overseas* per se was not necessarily the prime objective, although it became even more apparent than I had previously imagined that training abroad provided a wider range of appealing and varied professional and academic opportunities. Before undertaking the Bachelor of Applied Science (Cons. Cult. Mats.) at the University of Canberra I had always anticipated spending some time overseas – particularly in Francophone countries, where I would eventually be able to improve my high school French. Knowing the concentration (in temporal and spatial terms) and importance placed on heritage within Europe, the notion of combining my professional outlook with these other interests appeared to be a promising, more balanced way of approaching both of these activities in parallel – rather than 11:1 months per annum.

During my first five years in conservation practice in Australia and France I realised that conservators are understandably

typically following procedures based upon their predecessors' protocols, but sometimes without due review of efficacy, or variation according to varying circumstances - past or anticipated. When considering and discussing with colleagues possible divergences from usual conservation approaches it was remarkable to see where the boundaries emerged between established knowledge/empirical success and assumed, but unsubstantiated knowledge/empirical success. By virtue of numbers, gaining a variety of perspectives from differing schools of thought *and practice* was, and continues to be, one of my motivations for further training in various institutions, abroad or otherwise. Combining the relevant cumulative knowledge and experiences acquired by more conservation professionals with approaches I have found successful has been a useful method for me when managing conservation issues. Of course this is simply what we all do, to a greater or lesser degree, according to circumstances and attitudes – whether it be professionally or personally. Further training overseas,

particularly in the academic arena, has improved my fundamental understanding of degradation and conservation processes. This has facilitated a certain level of control and manipulation of standard conservation strategies, which, as a result, are then based more on prior reasoning and less on empirical trial and error.

On a more personal level, I've found training abroad to also be a great way to meet various passionate conservators and conservation scientists, either working in their home countries or

similarly as ex-patriots. From my experiences, I can say that ex-patriot professionals generally tend to be fairly gregarious and motivated. I feel these qualities make for more open communication and fruitful collaborations.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the courses you have undertaken?

The strengths of the Masters in Applied Conservation Studies I undertook at the Institute of Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage (ICMCH - <http://www.heritagemalta.org/icmch/>), Heritage Malta (HM), were principally people-based: the driven and committed local and foreign lecturers (inc. conservators, conservation scientists, engineers, metalworkers), laboratory technicians and administrators.

Also, the integration of the former Malta Centre for Restoration (MCR) within Heritage Malta (the national agency for cultural heritage) made for closer collaboration

I've found training abroad to also be a great way to meet various passionate conservators and conservation scientists

with the curators and archaeologists of Malta's national museums and sites. This recent assimilation (2005) has built the infrastructure needed for developing greater trust, which is in turn necessary for achieving the proverbial *multidisciplinary collaboration*.

My time (end 2004 - end 2007) at ICMCH coincided with Heritage Malta's/Malta Centre for Restoration's participation and co-coordination of the Promet project (www.promet.org.gr). This Framework Protocol 6 European Commission-funded research project was developing and testing corrosion protection systems (coatings and corrosion inhibitors) and portable diagnostic equipment for metal heritage collections around the Mediterranean Sea. A consortium of 21 institutional members in 11 countries, mainly encircling the Mediterranean, was formed. As a member of Heritage Malta's four-person team of conservators and conservation scientists I was able to apply knowledge gained from my Masters coursework and practicals, and in turn, apply the experiences from the Promet project back onto my Masters studies – particularly with the major applied research dissertation.

The context of studying and working on cultural heritage projects in Malta cannot be ignored. While being small by geography (at 320km² or 1/8th the area of the Australian Capital Territory) and population (400 000), Malta can easily be overlooked on the contemporary world stage. Today it is a country of heritage superlatives that has more than once played centre-stage in European history as a pivotal stepping-stone in the Mediterranean. Malta's long history is evidenced in its material culture: from the Neolithic to Bronze Age megalith temples that claim to be the oldest free-standing monuments in the world, through to Baroque cathedrals and fortifications largely stemming from the wealthy patronage of the Knights and their Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John (Jerusalem/Rhodes/Malta) and through to submerged airplane- and shipwrecks when, at the time of the Second World War, Malta became labelled as the world's most bombed country. The geography and history of Malta have developed a densely populated and culturally rich nation with an economy chiefly based on international tourism. These human pressures combined with the prevailing hot, humid, maritime environment, which is laden with marine and terrestrial aerosols (inc. Saharan sands from Sirocco winds) makes for a challenging environment for most cultural heritage materials and for any conservator faced with devising short and long-term solutions, which are in check with the local environmental and socio-economic considerations.

Currently facilitating the conservation of Malta's heritage, it would now appear that history is paying some dues back to Malta. As the smallest European Union (EU)

member state (by population and area), Malta now sees some of the advantages of being a part of a much larger and wealthier consortium of nations. This includes Malta's benefiting from and contributing to various Europe-based heritage conservation networks (European Cooperation in the field of Scientific and Technological Research - European Science Foundation (COST-ESF), European Network for Conservation Restoration Education (ENCoRE), funding (European Commission Framework Protocols (ECFP), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)) and projects thereunder.

The former MCR, and its incorporated academic training programme in conservation was established in 1999 at the initiative of the University of Malta and the Education Ministry with one of the intentions being to provide local conservation training. Comparisons can be drawn with the time of the Piggott Report/"Museums in Australia 1975". On the one hand, this relative immaturity of formal academic conservation training in Malta would at first sight appear to be disadvantageous since the foundations for the courses are still being established. On the other hand, entrenched approaches are subsequently few and a fresh mentality prevails that opens the way to innovation. The catchcry of converting weaknesses into opportunities was one I often heard and witnessed there. There are many examples of international seminars, conferences and practical short-courses available to students and staff of MCR/HM that were initiated to address the skills and knowledge gaps (present locally or indeed internationally) in specific conservation domains.

A minor and understandable weakness of my Masters at ICMCH, now run under the auspices of HM, is that the responsibilities of the increased size of the overall institution and managerial hierarchy appeared to have occasionally slowed down some administrative procedures. Rather than focussing on smaller projects and private clients the priorities of the greater HM and ICMCH's students are now set on the more formidable quantities of the national collections. There appears to have been an understandable prioritisation of tasks by HM's administrators.

...entrenched approaches are subsequently few and a fresh mentality prevails that opens the way to innovation.

For students of other courses, the HM/MCR assimilation might have even initially limited research activities that students could have assisted with. It is notable that a specific heritage research unit has recently been established; offering greater possibilities and the impressive library continues to expand.

The sustainability of the training courses available at the ICMCH cannot be overlooked, especially when considering the population of Malta. This is where Malta's geographical location offers continued promise as a regional centre for conservation

training, not only to southern Europe, but also to the Middle East and North Africa where conservation training opportunities are fewer.

What is your prospective on Australian conservation training looking at it from overseas?

The 2003 closure of the long-established conservation school at the University of Canberra comes to mind here and was a worrying event for the profession in Australia and internationally. I initially read about this on the Conservation Distribution List and Maltese conservators also queried me about the event.

The opening of University of Melbourne's Centre for Conservation Cultural Materials (CCMC) training programme, even if only at a post-graduate level and seemingly until now mainly focussing on the graphic arts, was quite timely. The very recent decision to open an undergraduate course as a Bachelor of Cultural Heritage Conservation at the University of Canberra will perhaps at first sight clear the largest obstacle for conservation training here (scheduled for February 2009, with the syllabus pending announcement). Without an undergraduate conservation course and the subsequent support offered by the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) the future of fundamental and affordable conservation training in Australia for locals seemed ominous. I presume this is a governmental response to the first recommendation of Collections Council of Australia's Conservation Survey 2006: "1. Develop an integrated system of education and training in conservation /preservation."¹ But for purposes of efficiency, it is not yet clear to me why this new undergraduate course has not been incorporated in-house within the University of Melbourne's recently established CCMC. Hopefully these institutions will perform complementarily to each other, and not compete for and drain already limited resources in the sector. Also, I wonder how much, if any, of the former University of Canberra programme can be resurrected and how much will necessarily start afresh. Regarding the Bachelor's continuity and development, it will be interesting to see if the course will be opened permanently or only periodically.

Conservation training and industry support, or lack of, trickles down from the higher and wider realms of community attitudes and government policy. A common attitude held by those Europeans (lay and otherwise) questioning the value, or indeed presence of cultural heritage in Australia, is inherently Euro-centric and superficial: emphasising age as an indicator of significance/value, and possibly referring to colonial heritage, if at all. From a European perspective, Australia is a young nation not yet widely renowned for its

cultural heritage, but rather more for its natural heritage – subsequently having a detracting effect on the value Australia's various societies and governments place on supporting the training that underpins the cultural heritage conservation profession. The recent political shift and further developing awareness of indigenous peoples' cultures in Australia will naturally improve attitudes locally and internationally. At an institutional training level, I would be interested to hear more about the uptake and retention rates for indigenous Australians in conservation training and work. The recently proposed offering of a Melbourne University's Faculty of Arts indigenous culture field placement unit to Masters students at the CCMC appears to be a positive step forward for increasing awareness of conservation training avenues. It remains to be seen whether government funding and corporate sponsorship of cultural heritage training will match improving consciousness – i.e. by portions of royalties from

other more lucrative sectors. The primary resources sector is one such lucrative industry and is currently expected to boost Australian GDP by 3% via coal and iron ore mining. Without substantial economic incentives for federal or state governments, as with heritage tourism, or increased support from other sectors, it would appear that conservation training in Australia will face further difficulties. Perhaps this is the irrevocable plight of a non-lucrative industry (i.e. public sector component) in Australia that quietly waits in the governmental funding queue

behind more fundamental sectors like health and education. The increased and increasing public awareness of cultural (& natural) heritage conservation over the recent years makes the present as good a time as any to advocate for more balanced support of the public conservation sector.

How important is it for Australian conservators to get an international perspective?

The conservation profession is without doubt an international field, by nature and by necessity. I feel it is as important for Australian(-based) conservators to benefit from the perspectives available internationally as it is important for conservators based in other countries. Although of high importance, due to our small population gaining international perspectives whilst training or practicing in Australia might not be as plentiful, but it is certainly still feasible since Australia has and appears to continue attracting conservation professionals from abroad. A personal tally of the immigrated lecturers, internship supervisors and colleagues I have associated with in Australia between 1995 and 2002 suggest this. I can't properly qualify my position subsequent to this time, as my interaction in conservation in Australia has since been relatively fragmented.

Conservation training and industry support, or lack of, trickles down from the higher and wider realms of community attitudes and government policy.

From my part I can say that working and/or studying in Europe is not impossible and is very rewarding. It does however involve the necessary time, finances and bureaucratic paper trail – moreover as a non-EU or non-UK passport holder.

What do you see as the challenges for the profession over the next ten years?

From my perspective, the challenges facing the Australian conservation profession are similar to those I have been made aware of from various conservator or conservation scientist colleagues training or practicing in Belgium, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, France, Germany, Greece, Malta, Poland, Spain & United Kingdom. That is to say that the conservation profession is fragile, and while it becomes adept at promoting its particular activities to the public, it does not gain sufficient attention from government and private sectors for the level of remuneration and job security deserving of the years of training expected from its personnel. Achieving an even playing field between industries competing for newcomers considering their career options will probably never be fully met, but needs advancing.

With escalating globalisation, the activities and standards of distant countries like the EU members will also shortly have a profound effect on Australian conservation (and other) training: by way of the Bologna Process. The 1999 Bologna Declaration committed signatories to six objectives, which together aim to establish a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010. Now, the Bologna Process involves 45 European countries undertaking reforms to create this integrated European Higher Education Area. Representing conservation training in Europe, the ENCoRE has responded in compliance with the Bologna Process, “One major aim is that by 2010 at the latest, all conservation-restoration education in Europe will fulfil the Bologna Declaration for European higher education” and “the conservator-restorer licensed for independent practice is per definition a graduate at Master’s level from a university or governmentally recognised equivalent, or doctoral research level (PhD). The overall length of study for entry into the profession or to continue to doctorate level should be five years”². The then Australian Minister for Education, Science and Training, Julie Bishop stated in the 2006 paper, “The Bologna Process and Australia: Next Steps” that, “Australian higher education must remain abreast of these international developments in order to ensure that our institutions continue to be ranked amongst the world’s best and that our graduates have the skills required to participate on the world stage. The Bologna Process could have a number of implications for the acceptance of Australian higher education awards and options for student mobility. It is an important process that is receiving considerable attention, not only within Europe, but from a range of other countries. It presents challenges to, and opportunities for, Australia’s relationship

with Europe as well as Asia and raises the importance of developing effective multilateral dialogue with Australia’s key Asian education partners about future directions in higher education.”³ Also having a knowledge-based economy and society, Australia will compete with Europe, thereby matching expectations on its graduates and employees. Although the Australian Skills Recognition Information (ASRI) quoted entry requirement qualification for practicing professional conservation in Australia is “a bachelor degree or higher qualification or at least 5 years relevant experience”⁴, I’ve noted in Australia advertised positions for conservator posts indicating a preference for a Master’s level qualification. It seems the influence of increasing standards has informally begun, while not formally addressing suitable remuneration for these extra qualifications.

As time passes, science in conservation, an area in which I have particular interest, is one that inherently offers greater promise than ever and is a topic I would like to remark on. For some scientists, an encounter with research on heritage materials offers an interesting, perhaps even romantic, fleeting divergence from other more typical industrial/commercial fields. For those scientists actually committed to the conservation domain, the relevance and applicability of improved conservation science needs to be guided not only by these scientists, but also by the conservators who are largely the personnel with greater familiarity and contact with the real artefacts and day-to-day conservation issues. As with any research, conservation research is time-consuming and expensive. I see that the embedding of more conservators within research projects, commencing with contributing to the initial project proposal to engaging as an end-user, can only increase the field application of research results: thereby limiting the *shelving* of more academic research and increasing conservation research cost-effectiveness. The use of analysis techniques supported by the recent and continuing introduction of synchrotron radiation beamlines, at Synchrotron Australia, Clayton, Melbourne, will provide new avenues for heritage science within Australia and I look forward to seeing how this develops: particularly more in terms of improving material conservation strategies, than for curator-inspired material technology studies.

¹ Bullock, V. M., Birtley, M. M. & Jenkins, C. J. (2006). *Conservation Survey 2006: A survey of human and financial resources in Australian conservation and preservation*. Collections Council of Australia Research: Report No.1 : Australia, p. 5

² <http://www.encore-edu.org/encore/DesktopDefault.aspx>, viewed 22 May 2008

³ <http://www.dest.gov.au/mr/rdonlyres/d284e32f-98dd-4a67-a3c2-d5b6f3f41622/9999/bolognapaper.pdf>, p. 1, viewed 22 May 2008.

⁴ <http://www.immi.gov.au/asri/occupations/c/conservator-2549-11.htm#industry>, viewed 22 May 2008.

State Division News

NSW Division News

The first half of 2008 has been a busy and productive time for the NSW Division. We have hosted two evening events and participated for the third year in a row in the Historic Houses Trust *Ask the Experts* day.

Our evening events have been very well received by both AICCM members and professionals in allied fields. The first function *Cold Storage for Collections* highlighted three different options for storing photographic and similar collections. Our three speakers – James Elwing, Dana Kahabka and Peter Shaw - presented the budget, middle-of-the-road and expensive large scale models so that the audience could get a sense of what they might be able to achieve in their own organisations. Our second function *Light Sight and Conservation* was presented by Andre Tammes of LDP Pty Ltd. Andre has very extensive experience both as a lighting consultant and university lecturer and his talk was attended both by conservators, designers and curators. The audience discussion following Andre's talk was lively and has prompted thoughts of a more extensive seminar on lighting issues being organised next year.

In February we hosted a retirement party for Rose Peel and Pat Townley. Both Rose and Pat had been with their respective organisations for more than twenty years, and both have been great advocates for conservation over their careers. The party was held at the Duck and Swan Hotel and was very well attended – in fact we are thinking of getting Rose and Pat to retire every year so that we can pull those sorts of numbers to future events!

NSW Division will be hosting at least two more talks before the end of the year, as well as promoting events hosted by other similar organisations – one such being *Lasers for the preservation of cultural heritage*, presented by Professor Costas Fotakis, IESL-FORTH and University of Crete to be held on July 8th at 8PM at the Australian Museum. For more information contact the Australian Museum.

General News

University of Canberra

Bachelor of Cultural Heritage Conservation

All the cultural institutions in Canberra with conservation sections (AWM, NLA, NAA, NFSA & NMA) are currently in discussion with the University of Canberra regarding the development of an undergraduate conservation course to be entitled Bachelor of Cultural Heritage Conservation.

Development of the course began some years ago; initially discussions were with the Canberra Institute of Technology, who have since dropped out and given the stage to the UC.

The driving force for the course is the current difficulty experienced in attracting qualified graduates to conservator jobs in Canberra. This lack is particularly clear in the area of 'entry level' conservators who would begin their work at the base increment of the professional stream.

It is felt the new course would be a useful complement to the Melbourne University program which is aimed at the post-graduate student.

It is also hoped to incorporate training opportunities in areas currently not covered by the Melbourne course, for example textiles, large technology, audio visual materials and digital artefacts.

The model proposed by the University involves the practical elements of the course being carried out by the institutions in the form of 'Practicums' where students would spend their practical sessions in a working laboratory under the guidance of a professional conservator. All lecturing would be handled by the university, either by recruited staff or by sessional lecturers. The level to which institutions can accommodate these practicums is currently under discussion.

Current discussions are also aimed at ensuring that the course produces graduates with the necessary training to ensure they are fully prepared to enter a conservator position. This has entailed considerable work in shaping the course structure and in specifying the curriculum. It is hoped at the end of the process we will have a course which meets the needs of not just Canberra-based institutions but those further afield, in Australia and the wider world.

The University intends taking in its first intake of students at the beginning of 2009. Recruitment of staff to run the course will begin shortly.

Ian Batterham

National Archives of Australia & National Collections

Preservation Committee

21/5/08

Call for Nominations

Conservator of the Year

Dear AICCM member

Do you know of a colleague who has:

- directly contributed to raising conservation standards in their organisation in Australia? Or
- significantly contributed to raising conservation standards as a whole? Or
- had far reaching benefits in the conservation field, nationally or internationally?

Then nominate them for AICCM's 'Conservator of the Year'! Please read the policies and procedures document and fill in the nomination form below.

This year we would also like to give more awards, to acknowledge:

- services to AICCM, and
- conservation services to regional areas of Australia

Please send in nominations, providing as much detail as possible, and your contact details in case we need to follow up.

Nominations close Thursday 31st July 2008 and awards made at the AICCM AGM in Melbourne in October. Please find a copy of the current Policy and Nomination Form in this newsletter.

Contact AICCM Membership Officer, Fiona Tennant at f.tennant@icssydney.com, or telephone +612 9417 3311, if you would like to discuss.

Special Interest Groups

Gilded Objects Conservation Special Interest Group

Planning is underway for a one day symposium to be held on Wednesday, 8th October 2008 at the National Gallery of Victoria. The date has been set to precede the AICCM Paintings Group Symposium, 9-10 October, 2008 providing frames conservators and paintings conservators the opportunity to further the interdisciplinary dialogue associated with the presentation of works of art.

To connect with the Paintings Group theme 'Connecting the past to the future', the theme of the GOCSIG Symposium is 'Frames: past, present and future'. The theme will provide scope to explore such issues as:

- the legacies of the past and the current framing policies within institutions
- the changing face of commercial framing practices and associated skills shift
- development of conservation materials, treatment methods or analytical techniques used to carry out framing treatments
- historical variation in framing styles and the future of frames within the contemporary art context

Those with ideas for papers and posters should contact MaryJo Lelyveld (maryjo.lelyveld@ngv.vic.gov.au or 03 8620.2122) in the first instance by 16th July before submitting a 250 word abstract that includes the title of the paper, author's name, address, e-mail address, telephone and fax numbers and a one-paragraph biography by 27th August, 2008.

Special Interest Group Co-ordinators

Antarctic Heritage

Julian Bickersteth
Ph: 02 9417 3311
j.bickersteth@icssydney.com

Book and Paper

Prue McKay
Ph: 02 6246 1129
Prue.Mckay@aiatsis.gov.au

Conservation Picture Framers

June Anderson
Ph: 02 9564 5576
Fax: 02 9564 5578
contact@asaframers.com.au

Conservation Science

Deborah Lau
Ph: 03 9252 6403
Fax: 03 9252 6244
deborah.lau@csiro.au

Education

Eric Archer
Ph: 02 6208 5036
e.archer@nma.gov.au

Exhibitions

vacant

Gilded Objects Conservation

MaryJo Lelyveld
Ph: 03 8620 2122
holly.mcgowan.jackson@ngv.vic.gov.au

Objects

Vacant

Paintings

Carl Vilas
Ph: 03 8620 2103
carl.villis@ngv.vic.gov.au

Photon

Detlev Lueth
Ph: 03 9881 6812
detlev.lueth@naa.gov.au

Preventive Conservation

Fiona Tennant
Ph: 02 9417 3311
f.tennant@icssydney.com

Textiles

Kristin Phillips
Ph: 08 8207 7520
phillips.kristin@saugov.sa.gov.au

Conference Reports

Five Days at Beechworth: An Introduction to Heritage Materials Technology, 11-16 May 2008.

Presented by David Young OAM for The Specialist Centre for Heritage Trades, Holmesglen Institute of TAFE.

Susie Collis, Conservator, Heritage Victoria.

The conservation of building materials and of heritage buildings is recognised internationally as a specialised field of conservation. Australian conservators and heritage architects who wish to specialise in this field tend to travel to one of the Universities in the UK or to North America as there is no specialist post graduate course in building conservation that focuses on materials in Australia. There are, however, several training opportunities in Australia for conservators to develop their knowledge of the conservation of building materials and heritage buildings.

David Young OAM is an Adjunct Associate Professor in Cultural Heritage Management at the University of Canberra. David has been teaching cultural heritage management courses at the University since 1992. There are two intensive summer schools that are taught in alternate years; **Cultural Heritage Management** and **The Conservation of Traditional Buildings**. A shorter version of the latter of these courses has also been taught as a short course by David Young for the **Specialist Centre for Heritage Trades**, which is based at **Holmesglen Institute of TAFE** in Victoria. The venue for this 5 day intensive short course has been Beechworth for the past two years.



The idyllic town of Beechworth is the host town for the course because of the venue 'Latrobe at Beechworth.' This is a multi-function campus of Latrobe University which was formerly the Mayday Hills Hospital, better known as the Beechworth Lunatic Asylum. The site as it exists today presents many practical case studies for the teaching of buildings conservation. Within the grounds of the former Mayday Hills Hospital one can find rendered one and two storeyed Italianate structures, detached brick cottages, a long rendered brick outer wall (used to keep the internees in), a

horse stable with wood block flooring, early water catchment structures and even a pise de terre building.

The Mayday Hills Hospital was initially constructed as the Beechworth Lunatic Asylum between 1864 and 1867. Beechworth was a key component in a system of nineteenth century asylums which included those at Kew near Melbourne and Ararat in the west of the State. The Mayday Hills Hospital has been crucially important in the social history of Beechworth and has, along with the Beechworth gaol, contributed significantly to the economic viability and survival of this historically important town. Its size and prominent siting in Beechworth have had an important and long lived social and economic impact on the town and region.



Mayday Hills Hospital is on the Victorian Heritage Register and as such is a site of State significance. Mayday Hills Hospital is historically and socially significant for its physical manifestation of the changing approaches to the treatment of mental illness in Victoria from institutional confinement to treatment and rehabilitation. It is aesthetically significant for the beauty of its picturesque setting on a prominent hill in Beechworth and for its extensive landscaped parklands made up of native and introduced trees and shrubs. The curved drive with its avenue of large oaks is particularly noteworthy in autumn.



The 2008 Beechworth course in building materials technology brought together 20 people of various professional backgrounds. The majority of the attendees were trade skills professionals who now teach the trades of building surveying and drafting, carpentry & joinery, bricklaying, plumbing, painting & decorating at TAFE institutions and universities across Victoria. Joining them were two heritage consultants working in private practice, a heritage architect, two historians, an archaeologist and a conservator.



The start of the week began with an overview of The Burra Charter (the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance). After this discussion of conservation philosophy and the guiding principles of buildings conservation the group embarked on an exploratory walk of the grounds of the former Mayday Hills Hospital, with David pointing out many of the architectural features which we would encounter during the week. There are many noteworthy architectural material features such as a very early type of damp proof course made of tar and sand and unusual render and mortar compositions that have been used on the structures throughout.



The theoretical topics covered by David Young included the properties of masonry materials, damp problems and salt attack in buildings, the theory of limes, cements, pozzuolans and sands, the properties of wood and wood decay with specific attention paid to fungal rot, borers and termites. For the properties and conservation of both wood and masonry David was able to share the knowledge and experience he gained from his participation in two ICCROM conservation courses (Stone Conservation and Wood Conservation). David lectured for the Norway ICCROM Wood course from 1998 to 2004. His images of traditional Norwegian timber structures and sites are particularly stunning and his version of Lennon/McCartney's 'Norwegian Wood' is not bad either.

In the latter part of the week David addressed metals in buildings; their decay and conservation and also the conservation of paint and painted materials. Discussion here was focused on the choice of materials for heritage conservation (to replace or to conserve?). These sessions on

metal and paint provided the most technical subject matter of the course and any object conservator would have found the information presented and the ensuing discussions very useful to be a part of.

David was assisted in his lecturing program by several experienced and internationally trained heritage trades persons. Colin Trembath who teaches joinery and furniture making at the University of Ballarat demonstrated joinery repairs to a heritage window in one of the former hospital buildings on the grounds. Greg Owen an experienced heritage builder demonstrated the slaking of lime and Bob Litherland a teacher in construction and bricklaying at Gordon TAFE shared his experience in traditional lime mortar mixing and gave the group an expert demonstration in the repointing of heritage brickwork. Other presenters from the group talked about painted finishes to interior and exterior heritage surfaces as well as about the current methods used for graffiti prevention and graffiti removal on heritage buildings.

The practical workshops provided the highlights of the week; this was a fantastic opportunity for participants to chat and share ideas about the processes of building conservation. The slaking of lime is a must-do for any conservator. Mixing a traditional lime mortar and using it to re point a heritage brickwork wall on the heritage listed grounds of the Mayday Hills Hospital was equally as interesting.



At the end of the week the course participants broke into smaller groups to undertake a conservation assessment of an historic building in downtown Beechworth. This was an opportunity to synthesise the skills learned during the week and it provided an opportunity to amalgamate the specialist expertise of plumbers, masons and bricklayers, carpenters and building surveyors, not to mention the expertise of the heritage management people. This group work was extremely fruitful as there was a genuine respect for different areas of expertise and a willingness of all to listen to each other's points of view that can often be absent in group reporting. Some heritage professionals pondered that it would be much easier to produce conservation assessment reports for heritage buildings if the team included a heritage builder, plumber, joiner, bricklayer, conservator and historian.



As a result of this course much information was shared between the presenter David Young and the trade skill professionals and heritage professionals which are very positive and constructive outcomes. This short course is highly recommended for conservators, as is staying in Beechworth for a week in autumn...and when you're there don't forget to check out the night time ghost tour of the Beechworth Lunatic Asylum (www.beechworthghosttours.com).

To express your interest in the Beechworth Heritage Materials Technology course presented by David Young, contact David Scannell at Holmesglen TAFE on DavidS@holmesglen.vic.edu.au

Information about the University of Canberra's Heritage Conservation Summer Schools can be found at <http://www.canberra.edu.au/faculties/design-creative/summer-schools>

David Young can be contacted via his e-mail address listed on that page.

Comparing conferences: AIC 2008 National Meeting, Denver

Maria Kubik and MaryJo Lelyveld

Considering the faraway venue for this year's American Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC) conference, it was unexpected to meet so many familiar faces. Several Australians had made the trip to Denver either to present papers, as part of their overseas internships, or simply as part of more extended travels through the US. Compared to AICCM national conferences back home, this was heavily subscribed and hence also very well resourced. Useful observations could thus be made in terms of organising future conferences and symposiums back home.

Over 800 conservators from a range of institutions, private organisations and universities attended. This required a welcoming hall and registration desk to be open over 5 days to process. Many of the large suppliers were also present to distribute samples not already in the conference bag (figure 1).



Figure 1: MaryJo shows off her stylish conference bag before heading to the trade hall.

At one point there were four overlapping training sessions and seven concurrent presentation sessions, turning the 40 page final program into a difficult tome to study. This volume did not even include the preprints or abstracts! Choosing where to go was made additionally difficult as the special interest groups closely matched in topics, but not necessarily time schedules. Luckily the venue facilitated rapid swapping between groups.

All sessions, workshops and SIG meetings, not to mention breakfast and lunches were situated at the Hyatt Regency Denver. As many of us had also chosen to stay there, it would have been the ideal conference for agoraphobics or the plain lazy. Those opting to stay inside would have missed out on a great deal, as there were many interesting things to see and do around town. Denver is a modern city in the heart of Colorado's Great Plains, rich in early colonial and American Indian history. The city itself was too new to offer much in the way of a distinctly historic precinct, but this in turn allowed for a vibrant, modern inner city with visitor friendly town planning. The conference reception night was held at the Denver Art Museum, which had recently been renovated with a new extension (figure 2).



Figure 2: Denver Art Museum's new extension, providing plenty of lopsided wall space for display cases and paintings.

In order to report on a few of the many events, it is best to do so in separate sections:

Interview Methodology for Conservators was a one day workshop aimed at providing attendees with an overview of the issues involved in undertaking oral history projects. From the preparatory aspects of defining the project through to the practical mechanics of the interview, the workshop reviewed: Interview techniques (e.g. managing interpersonal dynamics); The place of memory and language in reporting; The procedures involved with producing and publishing;

and legal issues associated with artists' and narrator's rights. Key oral history projects including INCCA, the FAIC Oral History Project and the Archives of American Art Oral History Project (Smithsonian Institute) were reviewed.

Infrared imaging technology presented by Aaron Selik from FLIR covered the basics of using InGaAs cameras. Aaron provided many examples from his work with several large US institutions, making recommendations in regards to setup, getting the best out of technology, and using a modified CCD camera to make quick in-situ inspections. He also reported on the usefulness of UV reflectance images as opposed to UV fluorescence, and discussed new IR technology such as Indium antimonide detectors and thermal imaging and to detect structural repairs. Opportunities were provided for participants to ask questions and handle the various detector systems Aaron had brought.

The Wooden Artefacts Group (WAG) presentations were international in scope (with speakers presenting on Singaporean, Peruvian and Australian collection items) and broad in subject, ranging from the base (an 18th century English commode) to the divine (items from the Santa Theresa Monastery Museum of Viceroyal Art). One of the highlights of the day was an entertaining presentation from Don Williams of The Smithsonian Conservation Institute on dealing with media. Having recently published a book about 'Saving Stuff', Don gave us the highs (spreading the word) and lows (being cut down for spreading the word), 'do's (bring a range of 'outfits' to media interviews) and 'do not's (wear plaid) of being a media darling. In light of the conference theme, the papers given highlighted the growing inter-disciplinarity experienced by conservators when undertaking projects within the evolving museum context.

The Paintings Specialty Group launched its second catalogue 'Volume 2: Stretchers, strainers and mounting', and hosted a 'tips' session during its lunch function. A broad range of topics were presented, including the conservation of murals and painted sculpture. One of the more unusual topics covered the collaboration of German and Austrian paintings conservators, helping the Nazi regime to seize and treat paintings during World War II.

The AIC Committee session was also useful, in that it reported on recent activities undertaken by the Institute. Of note was the release of the AIC Guide to digital photography and documentation, which is reviewed elsewhere in this newsletter (see page...). In this session, it was particularly heartening to see AICCM was further advanced in its review of professional membership and new website development. AIC was still at the survey stage, and expects to charge its members US\$350 for the accreditation process, well in excess of our costs.

In all, it was a very worthwhile trip to Denver in terms of workshops, presentation and network opportunities. The AIC National Meeting has provided us with a lot of food

for thought; clearly we do not have the same level of membership to support such a large undertaking, but much of the organisation and ideas can easily be replicated closer to home. Hoping to see everyone at the 2009 AICCM National Conference in Perth!

Museum Microclimates Conference on Preventive Conservation

Copenhagen, 19-23 November 2007

Catherine Lovelock

I attended the Museum Microclimates: Conference on Preventive Conservation hosted by the National Museum of Denmark. This was a valuable opportunity to spend some focused time on preventive conservation at one of the few major symposia on this topic since '2001- A Pest Odyssey'. It was intense (sequential screens of tiny data, equations and graphs) un-relieved by insufficient (and terrible!) coffee, but beneficial and it was helpful to note other conservators (incl. managers) found it to be so too.

The organisers and scientific committee comprised staff from the National Museum, the Conservation Centre in Vejle, the School of Conservation of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Tim Padfield and David Thickett. The program included 4 full days of presentations separated by a mid-week excursion day. Various expert-led workshops on the following weekend were well attended by conference participants.

In some respects, the conference functioned as a catch-up for participants from multiple EU research networks and as an interim meeting of the ICOM-CC Working Group on Preventive Conservation. Some of the papers and posters were updates on European Commission, 6th Framework Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development Program projects. Many participants were conservation scientists or conservators involved in research. A high proportion came from Scandinavia, central Europe and the UK. There was clear interest in use of passive environment control methods, however, the diverse submissions were grouped into 5 main themes (below).

Theme 1 "The Effect of the Environment on Artefacts" included presentations from David Erhardt and Marion F. Mecklenburg summarising historic developments in preventive conservation, their research and some outcomes of public communication from the Smithsonian Institution during the past c.15 years. Other papers outlined microclimate-induced 'stretcher effect/s' on paintings, evaluation of preservation actions for stored paper-based collections, projected developments in display lighting practice and potential implications of climate change for insect pest behaviour.

Theme 2 “Measuring the Environment” included papers on applications of various technologies eg. SurvNIR, as well as progress on 5th and 6th Framework projects including development of end-consumer products such as dosimeters eg. PROPAIN.T.

Theme 3 “Using Knowledge of the Effects of Climate: Surveying Actual Collections” featured more ‘real life’ projects ie. where theory and research outcomes are being trialled or implemented within heritage organisations. Several of these related to historic sites, buildings and associated collections - rather than new-built structures. These projects all involved institutions collaborating with research organisations.

Papers from the UK included an update from the National Archives (below), and three English Heritage projects. The latter were two studies focused on historic libraries and a consultant/contractor-led combined risk assessment and condition survey audit of English Heritage’s numerous sites and collections. Two papers from ICN addressed risk assessment practice. One of these investigated the perceived negative effects of over-visitation on a historic site. The other paper emphasised the need for research in prioritised areas where data is lacking for practitioner-led risk assessment activities.

Tim Padfield cautioned participants to ensure future access to monitoring records.

Kostas Ntanos from the National Archives, UK (TNA) presented a key paper on the current comprehensive review by that organisation of its earlier (2000) much-referred-to (BS:5454) published specifications for storage of its collections. For many reasons, including economic and environmental sustainability imperatives, TNA is conducting in-house research and participating in projects with multiple partners, to establish an up-to-date, evidence-based position on T and RH parameters, as well as internal air quality, for its collection’s environments, within a new wholistic stewardship program.

Jim Reilly outlined another comprehensive partner research project - this time focused on environment monitoring - between IPI and the National Museum of Denmark. This 3 year project involved detailed data gathering, development of a web-based tool to store and organise data (plus environmental metrics and associated interpretive text), and production of a detailed overview of 240 diverse storage locations and their long-term suitability for the NMD’s collections, with bearing on future construction plans.

Another project (Polish Academy of Sciences/ISAC-CNR, Italy) was an interesting investigation of historic RH levels, mechanical damage and ‘proofed environment’ regarding specification of appropriate environment conditions for 3 historic churches.

Under *Theme 4 “Use of Enclosure to Control Climate – the Larger Environment”*, Michael Hojlund Rasmussen provided a valuable follow-up report to the ICOM-CC 2005 paper

about the Vejle Cultural Heritage Centre shared storage facility which was built to achieve (mostly) passive climate control via use of sustainable design and materials. This paper summarised building performance, ongoing costs and the user-agreement for operation of the building, which also houses the Conservation Centre.

Alfons Huber’s paper (under EU-1383 ‘Prevent’) advocated re-use of original double-glazed windows - with addition of temporary external shading in summer (nb. current regulations prohibit this for historic buildings) - to reduce high light and temperature levels in galleries, and save on air conditioning-related costs, at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. Historic double-glazed windows were removed from this and many other sites in Austria and Germany in recent decades in favour of ‘up to date’ (less effective) units combining single glazing, insulation glass & internal blinds.

Morten Ryhl-Svendsen discussed air exchange rate and surface reaction rates on air quality in storage areas. In reducing air exchange rate, ozone and particulates from external air will decrease while organic acid vapours generated by collections and furniture/materials/finishes will increase. He outlined active and passive filtration methods to reduce the detrimental effects of organic acids on stored collection items.

Lara Broecke’s paper on her internship as a paintings conservator at the National Museum of Art in Maputo, Mozambique was a timely reminder of the down-to-earth reality (politics, resources, sensitive advisor-client relationships) of achieving sustainable passive climate control in cultural organizations in developing countries. Broecke described extreme climate conditions, diverse collections, unsuitable buildings, aspirations to achieve overseas institutions’ practices and standards, and no resources apart from occasional gifts of air conditioning units from benefactors, notwithstanding the gallery’s lack of funds to run or repair these (or pay staff wages). Her successful low-tech solution to maintaining a more appropriate and stable environment within the gallery was manual opening and closing of the front doors at times of day (established via monitoring) when external conditions reached specified T and RH levels. She received a very positive response from the conference audience.

Theme 5 “The Showcase and the Picture Frame” included 2 historical review papers. Stephen Hackney summarised framing practice and policy at the Tate. Jerry Shiner discussed the development of micro-environment units for display cases. The highlight was practical and reflected comments in papers from the UK and Brazil concerning (respectively) display cases and glazing of paintings in humid climates. The former discussed specification, quality control, value for money and assessment of potential positive and negative outcomes in relation to large-scale purchasing of display cases for major exhibition developments. This included pro’s and con’s of close control of air exchange rate as a means to achieve stable RH, in relation to off-gassing from materials (and objects),

exacerbated by thermal energy from lighting.

I attended the weekend workshop “*New Approaches to Environmental Assessment*” led by Jim Reilly, assisted by Lars Aasberg Jensen, Leon Zak and Jesper Stub Johnsen. This covered in detail the approach and technology used by IPI and the NMD to evaluate storage suitability across their multiple collections and campuses. I also attended part of the workshop “*Low Energy Climate Control in Museums and Archives*” led by Poul Klens Larsen from the NMD, and Tim Padfield. This expanded on NMD presentations about work for collecting organisations in Denmark, Spain, Egypt et al. It included some group work to prescribe climate parameters, sustainable building design elements, materials and storage, for case study collecting institutions.

The excursions associated with the conference were wide-ranging (2-3 sites were included in every option). I visited the (more distant) Vejle Cultural Heritage Centre (shared museum storage facility) and Viking runes at Jelling (World Heritage site). Receptions were held at the historic town hall and national art gallery. The conference dinner was held within the historic, fabulous, by-then-Christmassy Tivoli Gardens.

It was exciting to explore the city centre of Copenhagen at the very end of each (full) conference day, even if by night (sunset was at 4 pm) and in freezing temperatures (daily max 3-5 C). Participants took lunch-break runs through the exhibitions at the NMD’s main site (it manages several museums in Copenhagen and regional areas) however, all missed the prehistory (Viking!) galleries – “Closed for Redevelopment”.

Research

The Twentieth Century in Paint / CCMC, University of Melbourne

The University of Melbourne’s Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation has been awarded ARC Linkage Project funding for its research project “The Twentieth Century in Paint”. Associate Professor **Robyn Sloggett** will head this project, which will bring together expertise from across the University, Australia and internationally, especially focussing on the Asia Pacific region. **Nicole Tse** will receive an Australian Postdoctoral Industry Fellowship as part of this grant.

The project will examine new media, pigments, dyes and additives that led to the creation of revolutionary works of art in the 20th century in both Australia and Southeast Asia. It will consider how these materials impact on modern art’s paint handling, performance and permanence. The results of this project will inform the preservation of modern art in Australia and throughout the region.

The project brings in University of Melbourne experts Prof. Carl Schiesser and Dr Stephen Best as well as Prof. John Drennan from Centre for Microscopy and Microanalysis at the University of Queensland, and Prof. Jane Hunter from the School of Information Technology and Electrical Engineering, also at UQ. The National Gallery of Australia, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, ArtLab Australia, the Queensland Art Gallery and the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery are collaborating partners and will also make critical contributions to the project. The Tate (U.K.) and the Getty Conservation Institute (U.S.A.) will also contribute important expertise in modern paints based on their successful collaboration in the Modern Paints project.

In Southeast Asia “The Twentieth Century in Paint” will build on PhD research “The Characterisation of Oil Paintings in Tropical Southeast Asia” which was recently completed by Ms Tse with partners in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines. Ms Tse will continue to collaborate with the National Art Gallery Malaysia (Balai Seni Lukis Negara), the JB Vargas Museum at the University of the Philippines, Silpakorn University in Thailand and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts (SEAMEO-SPAFA). All are important partners in this project.

For further details contact:

Tim Ould: tould@unimelb.edu.au

Nicole Tse: nicoleat@unimelb.edu.au

What makes good research, what should we be researching and what are the pitfalls and problems?

Ian Batterham

National Archives of Australia

Conservation is an evolving field and research is essential to keep it moving, developing and improving. A lot of this research is done by students as part of their academic assessment but many of us manage to find time in our busy jobs to also carry out important research.

Some years ago I was asked to participate in a discussion session on conservation research at a conference. On re-reading the notes for that session, I believe they may be useful to students and others contemplating research. I elaborate on them here.

One of the problems encountered when students are required to come up with a research topic is that they are often fairly new to the field and thus do not have a fully developed understanding of the background of an issue requiring research. This can lead to a poorly defined experimental method and result in outcomes of limited value to the profession. To help avoid this, in preparing to carry out research the following should be kept in mind:

1. Is the question rooted in an actual conservation problem?

To be valuable, research should address a problem or an area which is of concern or interest to working conservators. This can be ascertained through discussion with appropriate conservators working in the field as well as literature reviews.

2. Understand the question you are asking.

This really follows on from the first point. In order to properly explore a line of research you need to ensure that you fully understand the question and the field of knowledge in which it resides. Without this you could easily end up asking the wrong question or pursuing the wrong line and end up with results of little use. You can get this understanding by reviewing past literature and current practices in the relevant area.

3. Don't ask too big a question.

Many students in my experience have carried out research that is simply too broad in focus for the time and resources available. This has produced results that are of limited utility because they are highly generalised or are too patchy or incomplete to draw strong conclusions from.

4. Know how you can answer the question.

It is very important when considering a research question to know how you can answer the question – what

experimental method will be used, what equipment will be needed and what skills will need to be developed in order to properly carry out the research. There are many questions out there with no known means of finding an answer – what is important is to find a question that can be answered using existing and available methodology and/or equipment. If these are not available or cannot be developed/procured then examining the question is not possible.

5. Do your background research.

In order to appropriately develop your research methodology and to carry out the research itself in the best possible way, it is important to prepare yourself to fully understand the topic under question. Thus it is essential to thoroughly read appropriate background material as well as talk with practising conservators to get their insight into the problem and its background.

6. Understand how to set up an experiment.

Proper experimental design is crucial in producing results which are meaningful and which stand up to scrutiny. If preparing a set of experiments it is necessary to have a proper understanding of the principles of experimental design and to apply them appropriately.

7. Understand the proper use of statistics.

If statistical analysis is involved in the experimental method the underlying statistical principles need to be properly understood and used accordingly.

Publishing research

Very little conservation research in Australia gets published. There are a number of reasons (and possible reasons) for this:

- Student research is often very good but on completion of their studies students immediately have other priorities (eg getting a job) so that they neglect to get it published.
- Online discussion groups such as the ConsDistList may have taken over somewhat from proper publishing. Has this possibly led to a dumbing down of the knowledge base for the profession where hearsay takes the place of published and peer reviewed research?
- Cultural cringe – do Australians feel our work is not good enough in the international scene? (quite a wrong perception in my experience)
- Much conservation research is not rigorously scientific - being anecdotal or observational, and thus is not published. In such cases an anecdotal observation could be the basis for more rigorous research.
- It is a lot of work to produce a fully formed scientific article, especially one that is peer reviewed.

I am not sure how to get round most of these problems. But

we should be publishing much more than we do because good research is being done.

Future research

From my experience in the field, the following are the areas of research we require and will require into the future:

- **Modern materials.**

We know much about historical materials used to produce cultural artefacts. We know less about materials used in more recent times or being used now.

- **Materials and techniques from other fields.**

Industrial and consumer product manufacturers have many more resources than we do - conservation is a tiny field with limited resources. We need to keep ourselves aware of developments in wider fields. For example - in paper conservation fields to keep an eye on are: papermaking, laundry products (eg bleaches), dentistry products, and medical products.

- **Examination of emergent techniques and materials.**

In conservation there are often new techniques and materials which appear or are suggested but which are not researched enough to be taken up by a conservative profession. In such cases it is very useful to add to the knowledge base on the technique or material to assist with its uptake or raise questions about its use.

- **Looking at materials and techniques from the past.**

Conservators have used many materials and techniques in the past which have been revealed over time to be less than effective, eg soluble nylon. A useful research avenue would be to examine past techniques and to look at items treated with a particularly technique or material to determine how it is faring.

- **Looking at materials used in historical times by associated professions to see if they have an application.**

For many object types there is a history of treatment by artisans using traditional formulas and methods to carry out which is in effect conservation work. Examples would be furniture restorers or scroll mounters. In some cases it may be that the materials or techniques used could actually be highly effective and should be brought into the field of scientific conservation.

- **Looking at materials and techniques used by other branches of conservation.**

Conservation specialisations can be a little insular and a material or technique used in one stream may well have an application in another field but may not be known of outside its field of current use. It is important therefore to look outside your particular specialisation and see what is being done elsewhere. Useful crossovers may thus be found.

- **Other areas of research.**

- Conservation issues peculiar to particular collections eg a collection of maps or a collection of animal skins.
- Conservation issues specific to a little studied material type eg pith paper, modern plastics, iron gall ink
- Conservation issues relating to objects that are actually used and handled eg technological objects, popup books.

Publication Review

The AIC Guide to Digital Photography and Conservation Documentation (2008) Edited by Jeffrey Warda. Washington D.C: AIC

Maria Kubik



Released April 2008

Soft cover, 111 pages with illustrations

US\$20 through AIC Publications (<http://aic.stanford.edu/library/publist.pdf>)

A timely publication featuring all you need to know to start documenting and storing conservation images digitally.

This book was launched in conjunction with two tutorial sessions at the AIC 2008 conference in Denver. The same information is presented in a coloured 'screenshot' instruction section in the appendix, allowing people who did not attend the sessions to still be able to follow the instructions easily.

Although not a heavy tome at only 111 pages, this book is comprehensive. Chapters are broken into a logical order:

- 1.0 *Workflow*: Introduction to the sequence of image acquisition.
- 2.0 *Equipment*: DSLR cameras and lenses, the benefits of tethered shooting, reference targets, lighting, software and appropriate printers.
- 3.0 *Settings*: Getting the most out of your camera, including exposure recommendations and RGB values using reference targets and/or histogram.
- 4.0 *Image processing*: Manipulating the image size and resolution, sharpening, file formats and metadata. Colour management using calibration and Photoshop.
- 5.0 *Storage*: File management and backup options.
- 6.0 *Conservation specific techniques*: Different angles of illumination; polarised, specular and transmitted lighting; macro photography; and useful considerations for IR and UV photography.

The sections are practical and easily understood with numerous illustrations. Even for those who think they already know all there is to know about digital imaging, there will be new sections: For example, do you calibrate your monitor regularly with a colourimeter? Do you know how to attach metadata to a series of photos? For those still not satisfied, further reading can be found in the references and bibliography. Most of this source material dates between 2005 – 2008, ensuring only the

most recent and up to date information is presented. While instructions are limited to Canon and Nikon DSLRs and Photoshop (both Mac and Windows), most conservation labs will already be operating or have access to these tools.

This Guide was made possible through a special AIC task force. Consisting of a collaborative team of IT experts, photographers, imaging scientists as well as conservators, expertise in each field was ensured. The large drawcard to this document other than the price is that it is practical. Even if you do not intend to implement these guidelines, the book will serve as a useful reference for any conservation photography you should already be undertaking.

Conservation Matters

What do YOU think?

We spend our lives as conservators making decisions about how to treat objects. These decisions are made as a result of a complex mix of what we perceive as being “best” for the object and what is being asked of us by the curator/ client, supported by our professional training and experience. We believe we generally get it pretty right, but is that how the broader world sees it?

The following is an excerpt from a recent article in the UK Institute of Conservation’s ICON magazine, by Helen Hughes, Head of Historic Interiors Research & Conservation at English Heritage.

Friends, Romans and Country.....

By Helen Hughes ACR, Head of Historic Interiors Research and Conservation for English Heritage.

I have already voiced my concerns about British conservators’ lack of engagement with dramatic developments in the field of conservation during the last twenty years, which are a response to the vast expansion of what is now considered to be ‘cultural heritage’ and the wide range of global values which direct conservation management. As traditional art historic values are being challenged it could be argued that the conservator is emerging as the ‘new connoisseur’ whose close physical engagement with the object is providing new insights into its creation, subsequent biography and the devising of conservation options.

But while the rest of the sector is embracing the subjectivity of all conservation decisions, British conservators appear to be adhering to the three myths of late twentieth-century conservation; the concept of ‘minimal intervention’ – (minimal intervention to achieve what exactly?); the idea of ‘one standard of work’ which is based on a taboo of any value judgements; and the lie of ‘irreversibility’ (please name a reversible procedure). Conservators, entrapped by vocabularies and terminologies, hold it as a tenet of faith that they ‘are not restorers’, but then happily engage in aesthetic infilling and retouching and see no contradiction between their words and actions. Owners, who want to use or enjoy the objects they bring to the conservator are often viewed as ‘the enemy’ instead of allies and partners. Really, there is no point – and it is inhibiting the development of the profession – in conservators continuing to attempt to reconcile these outmoded concepts, which serve only to render them mad or bankrupt, or both, and present conservation as old fashioned and obstructive.

It is of particular concern to find recently trained conservation graduates emerging from courses stating that they just ‘do conservation’: throw-backs to values taught in the 1970s and 80s, objective white-coated technicians apparently absolved or banned from making any subjective decisions. Theory or methodology is an optional extra that is not really very relevant to them.

What do YOU think? Do Helen’s comments have validity for Australian conservators?

Write to the editor with your comments at j.bickersteth@icssydney.com and/or f.tennant@icssydney.com.

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Contributions are welcomed and should be sent to:

Julian Bickersteth and Fiona Tennant
International Conservation Services
53 Victoria Avenue
Chatswood NSW 2067
AUSTRALIA

Tel: (02) 9417 3311
Fax: (02) 9417 3102
j.bickersteth@icssydney.com
f.tennant@icssydney.com

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AICCM NATIONAL COUNCIL

2006-2007

National President

Tamara Lavrencic

Tel 02 8239 2360
Fax 02 8239 2444
tamara@hht.net.au

Vice-President

Kay Söderlund
Tel: 02 9557 2395
k@preservationaustralia.com.au

National Secretary

Vacant

National Treasurer

Maria Kubik
Tel 0412 879 566
maria.kubik@artgallery.wa.gov.au

Membership Services Officer

Fiona Tennant
Tel 02 9417 3311
f.tennant@icssydney.com

Publications Officer

Marika Kocsis
Tel 03 9348 5700
Fax 03 9348 5656
marika.mudangel@gmail.com

SIG Convenor

Sophie Lewincamp
Tel: 02 6262 1566
Email: slewincamp@nla.gov.au

Professional Membership /

Accreditation Officer

Christine Ianna
Tel 07 3131 7704
Fax 07 3131 7764
christine.Ianna@archives.qld.gov.au

Ordinary Member

Ian Mac Leod
Tel 08 9212 3839
ian.macleod@museum.wa.gov.au

Public Officer

Ian Batterham
Ph 02 62123424
Fax 02 62123469
ianb@naa.gov.au

State Representatives

ACT President

Ian Batterham
Ph 02 62123424
Fax 02 62123469
ianb@naa.gov.au

NSW President

Elizabeth Hadlow
Tel: 02 9673 1788
Fax: 02 9673 1760
conservator@records.nsw.gov.au

QLD President

Davina Hacklin
Tel: 07 3840 7684
Fax: 07 3846 1918
davina.hacklin@qm.qld.gov.au

SA/NT President

Jodie Proud
Tel 08 8207 7520
Fax 08 8207 7529
proud.jodie@dpc.sa.gov.au

TAS President

Cobus van Breda
Tel 03 6211 4146
cvanbreda@tmag.tas.gov.au

VIC President

Alexandra Ellem
Tel 03 9348 5700
aellem@unimelb.edu.au

WA President

Jonathan Schmidt
Tel 08 9427 3317
jonathan.schmidt@liswa.wa.gov.au

Bulletin Editor

Marcelle Scott
Tel 03 8344 0091
mmscott@unimelb.edu.au

Web Editor

Karina Palmer
karina_palmer@hotmail.com

AICCM Secretariat

Tel 03 9013 0933
Fax 03 9527 2383
secretariat@aiccm.org.au

AICCM Home Page

www.aiccm.org.au

All correspondence should be addressed to:
AICCM Inc.
GPO Box 1638
Canberra ACT 2601
Australia