

ICCM NEWSLETTER

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ICCM Newsletter
Art Gallery of NSW
Sydney NSW 2000

Registered by Australia Post
Publication No. NBG 5961

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NEWS LETTER

Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material Inc.

No. 10 October 1983
ISSN No. 0727-0364

EDITORIAL

Is conservation a low profile issue?

I was most concerned and more than a little disappointed to hear a prominent politician say, "Yes, conservation is a low profile issue." But how low a profile does it have?

At the time ICCM was established in 1973, the conservation of buildings had achieved some political significance, leading to the establishment of the Committee of Enquiry into the National Estate. In 1974, the Report of the National Estate recommended that the National Estate should consider cultural property part of our cultural heritage and announced that a Government Committee on Museums was to be established. This was to be known as the Committee of Enquiry on Museums and National Collections, chaired by Mr P.H. Piggott.

A detailed submission prepared by the ICCM Council in 1975 was submitted to the Committee of Enquiry on Museums and National Collections. ¹

The Piggott Report discussed three main issues. Of major concern to conservators was the recommendation that a central conservation laboratory be set up, and that post-graduate and supporting training course for conservators be established. These recommendations were the direct result of the ICCM submission.

In September of 1976, ICCM still had its finger on the pulse of the Federal Government by monitoring parliamentary comments on conservation ² which referred to the Piggott report's recommendations to conserve cultural property: the establishment of a training course in the conservation of cultural material; the implementation of a realistic conservation programme, facility and staffing requirement at the Australian War Memorial; and the establishment of a National Museum of Australia.

While the effect of the Piggott Report was still being felt in 1976, many of the issues debated in Parliament that year concerning conservation, saw fruition. The Canberra College of Advanced Education gained approval to establish a course for conservators within their School of Applied Sciences. The War Memorial established a conservation facility on a more realistic scale and staffed with a more realistic number of conservators to cope with a vast, rapidly deteriorating collection. However we are yet to see the establishment of a Central Conservation Institute as outlined in the 1975 ICCM submission.

In 1981, ICCM again made a submission to the Department of Home Affairs and the Environment, concerning

proposals to be considered by the Interdepartmental Working Committee "set up to review and submit recommendations to the Government on the nature of cultural property which is of national or historical importance to Australia; and measures aimed at controlling and protecting this property including possible legislation". The submission recommended a co-ordinated national conservation effort, in order that cultural property should survive to benefit future generations. This could be effected through national registers of cultural material; the formulation of a national preservation policy; the implementation of a national preservation advisory council for the co-ordination of preservation activities; the development of existing conservation and preservation resources; continued funding for training courses for conservators and job creation schemes in order to achieve the level of staffing necessary to mitigate the rampant deterioration in collections throughout Australia.

Other areas identified as areas requiring immediate government support were research and development of public awareness to the problems of conservation and public responsibility to cultural preservation. The submission also referred to energy consumption in cultural institutions in times of energy crisis and the need for the provision of tax incentives for conservation work in order to encourage the conservation of works held in private hands.

We would like to think that ICCM still has its finger on the pulse of Federal and State governments who are responsible for the collection, display, storage and preservation of our cultural heritage. On this score we should acknowledge the effort and success of the ACT Division in the organisation of a seminar titled: "The Australian Bicentennial Celebrations 1988 and Conservation: Past, Present and Future".³

I cannot believe that conservation has a low profile in Australia.

- 1 Submission to the Committee of Enquiry on Museums and National Collections ICCM Bulletin, Volume 1, Number 1, 1975, pp.3-19
- 2 Parliamentary Comments on Conservation ICCM Bulletin, Volume 2, Number 3, September 1976, pp.21-26
- 3 See report under section titled REPORTS AND HAPPENINGS

NEWS FROM THE DIVISIONS

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

May Meeting

This took the form of several short talks on recent overseas experiences. David Button, paper conservator, the Australian War Memorial described his visit to Kyoto, Japan for the IPC Conference; Ruth Norton, lecturer in Ethnographic conservation at C.C.A.E. covered her recent tour with Dr Colin Pearson of Museums Galleries Archives and libraries in South East Asia for the UNESCO Regional Conservation Centre; and George Dimitriadis talked of his experiences in Switzerland and Austria.

June Meeting

Dr Josephine Flood, Senior Conservation Officer, Australian Heritage Commission gave a talk entitled "The Conservation of Aboriginal Rock Art", outlining the problems involved with the conservation of Aboriginal rock paintings and engravings in Australia.

July Meeting

A one day seminar entitled "The Australian Bicentennial Celebrations 1988 and Conservation: Past, Present and Future". Senator G. Georges opened the meeting which aimed to bring together Museum administrators, Conservators and the General Manager of the Bicentennial Authority to discuss methods of planning for the adequate conservation of historic material required for display as part of Bicentenary Exhibitions.

August Meeting

This was the AGM of the ACT Division. The following new council members were elected.

President: Josephine Carter; Treasurer: Lydia Preiss; Secretary: Anne I'ons; Assistant Secretary: Sharon Towns; Council Members: Margaret Alexander, Ian Batterham, Ruth Norton.

Professional Conservation Workshop

The first workshop in this programme was given by George Dimitriadis entitled "Solvent Systems and Sticky Situations". Held at the National Gallery it was well attended by conservators from all the major institutions in Canberra.

Australian Archives

The Conservation staff is back to full strength and more. Dara Rome is fresh back from holidays, Colin Webb's contract has been extended a further 3 months, and a new addition SYETP trainee Greg Lyons.

The major conservation job at present is the treatment of a number of linen backed maps of South Australia and Northern Territory, dated ca 1884.

Australian National Gallery

A number of items have been conserved for display in 'Melbourne Mood - Cool Contemporary Art' exhibition which opened at the Melville Hall, Canberra.

More recently the staff have been preparing works to be displayed in the exhibition 'Art Zoo' which is aimed at children from 4-8 years, and encompasses a large number of works with animal images, displayed at child height. Other items are being conserved for the A.N.G. Birthday Celebrations Exhibition and will include the cartoons by Napier Waller, the French Wallpaper, and garments designed by Mariano Fortune. The textile store is now nearing completion with storage units designed by Josephine Carter arriving at a steady rate. It is anticipated to be operational by the end of the year. Carol Kains and Debby Ward have returned from a six week holiday in Kashmir; Ian Urquhart has moved to assist with painting conservation, and Andrew Powell has been appointed assistant mountcutter. Helen is on extended leave.

Australian War Memorial

Jennifer Edwards has been appointed Acting Head of Conservation while Antoon Bos is on an executive development programme. Bruce Ford has been appointed Chemist II. Mark Nizette and Jan Lyall (National Library of Australia), are involved in the publication of an article in Photographic Conservation for the Photographic Yearbook.

Textile Conservator, Michael Bogle has resigned. His expertise, leadership and sense of humour will be greatly missed. Beth McConghie is a new part-timer in the textiles lab, and Michael Hunter comes in once a week.

The 2½ year Conservation survey of the organic materials collection (excluding wood) will be completed shortly. The textiles conservators prepared an exhibition of basketry from the collection for the ACT craft council exhibition. In the paper lab, work continues on the A.H. Fullwood watercolours for the Lanyon Exhibition in November; Photography has been working on colour duplication of the collection of Autochrome Transparencies; and fine art have dispatched an exhibition to Victoria, and a loan to America, whilst dealing with multiple hangings in the repainted Aircraft Gallery.

Museum of Australia

The Museum of Australia Interim Council Report was tabled in Parliament on 5 May by the Hon. Barry Cohen MP, Minister for Home Affairs. The report entitled "The Plan for the Development of the Museum of Australia", has been accepted in principal by the Government. It provides a blueprint for a national museum of Australian history, as recommended in the Pigott Report in 1975.

Particular attention is given to the role of Conservation in this report. It includes a collections and conservation policy, which makes it clear that conservators will have a great deal of responsibility for decisions which the Museum will take about the care and use of the National Historical Collection.

A staffing proposal for 23 full-time staff (including a Director) recommends the appointment of 2 conservators, an assistant-conservator and a museum assistant to carry out conservation work on the present collections.

Pending formal approvals by the Government to proceed with the Museum and subsequently by the Public Service Board to the actual establishment of the Museum, agreement was given in April 1983 to engage two part-time Conservators Grade 1. Jane Lavrencic and Margaret Alexander were appointed in April. Jane has since left to accept a full time position with the Queensland State Archives. Therese Mulford joined the Museum in her place in August.

National Library of Australia

CCAIE students, Wendy Smith and Janine Beardmore have just completed their 6 months internships.

Brian Hawke has mounted a display on leather used in bookbinding to coincide with the National Leather Conference. Ian Gilmour is the new acting-head of a new section, Sound Preservation and Technical Services.

The Monash Exhibition, organised jointly with the AWM is now open, and an exhibition of the Library's oil painting treasures is nearing completion.

In the Rare Books and Sheet Materials section the 'Anson Log' project has culminated with each of the 5 volumes beautifully encased in vellum boxes made by Brian Hawke.

Many of the staff were involved in preparing for the ICCM Brisbane Conference, and the Workshop held by Mr Katsuhiko Masuda.

Canberra College of Advanced Education

Staff recently presented a week long introductory course in Conservation to Museology students at Victoria College, Melbourne, and a weekend workshop for members of the Historical Society of the Department of Aviation.

The College has gratefully accepted a grant from the Ian Potter Foundation towards the purchase of video equipment to make educational tapes for historical societies and small museums in Australasia.

Unfortunately Tom Dixon has tendered his resignation, effective from the end of 1983. He will be very difficult to replace.

The regular series of student seminars is continuing this semester to which all conservators are invited. They cover a wide range of topics given either by students and where possible by visiting conservators.

NEW SOUTH WALES

June Meeting

This was the divisions A.G.M. with guest speaker Don Ellsmore from the Government Architects Branch following the business side of the meeting with a talk entitled "The work of the New South Wales Government Architects Branch in the area of restoration of finishes, with particular relevance to the Mint Building, Macquarie Street, Sydney."

The new committee for 1983/1984 is: President: Rosemary Peel; Treasurer: Graham Whale; Secretary: Susie Bioletti; Local Representative to Federal Council: Rosemary Peel; Council Members: Cathy Lillico, Harlan Hall, Gill McMillan, Karen Coote, Kay Soderlund, Dominique Wever.

September Meeting

The speakers, Donna Midwinter and Graham Hinton gave a talk on their recent experience as conservators at the

Hong Kong Museum of History. This involved sorting out storage problems, coping with insect attacks, cat litters, and environmental conditions, for a start; and treating an extreme diverse collection of artifacts such as cannons, ceramics, paper mache, forming implements. Chinese style refreshments preceded the meeting and a Chinese meal followed.

The Australian Museum

All returned from the Brisbane conference refreshed and inspired. Six conservators are working on preparations for the new Aboriginal Gallery.

Research is currently underway involving the delicate use of a buzz saw for the conservation of painted wooden surfaces.

Australian Archives NSW

A recent graduate of the C.C.A.E. Materials Conservation Course Mary Cheah, has joined the staff at Archives as paper conservator.

NSW State Archives

Doug Firth has resigned from his position as Manuscript Restorer, and has returned to the Registrar General, Book-binding Department. Gillian Yatras has been promoted to Manuscript Restorer, and three people are assisting in the department, employed under the 'wage pause scheme'. One of the major projects at the moment involves photograph albums.

Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences

Work has started for the opening display in the Barracks Building — Museum of Social History, mid 1984. The Trade Union barriers will also be displayed in this exhibition.

Antonia Syme has been treating a number of Ellis Rowan and Lucier Henry watercolours for display in the Mint Building. Janet Hughes has been working for a short time on recommendations for the Conservation, Storage and display of Firearms. Marian Landau continues to work on transport items. The team of Mawson and Scott sledges has just been completed. A number of wage pause students have also been working in this area, treating a Rickshaw and gig. Work has been completed on the Henry Japanese Comb collection which is on display in a special box designed by Alan Whale.

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Alan Lloyd is co-ordinating conservator for 'Mood and Moment, the Australian Landscape' a major loan of Australian paintings to travel to galleries in Peking, Shanghai, Canton, Hong Kong, Ying Pong and Manila in October; is preparing for the departure of the works, and for the five week tour will be the accompanying conservator. Peter Gill continues to function as chief acquisitions and loans conservator.

Gill McMillan has recently completed treating "Autumn Morning Milsons Point 1888" by Tom Roberts, a recent major acquisition by the Gallery which has been included in the Exhibition to China. Gill will shortly be leaving for a holiday with the family in England, via New York and Germany.

Ranson Davey has been accepted for a seminar in Hawaii on the conservation of Japanese screens, at the Pacific Regional Conservation Centre January 15 — March 15 1984. He has just finished a one week workshop in making Karibari boards with Silvia Bass (WA), Graham Hinton and Bridget Pears.

Susie Bioletti and Gill recently completed a short course in Photography run by Sydney Technical School of Biological Sciences, covering basic B/W and colour. Susie continues to use the S.E.M. on a regular basis to examine a variety of materials in the lab.

Regional Galleries NSW

Cathy Lillico is developing a Mobile Lab Programme which will be capable of carrying out major treatments on site at Regional Galleries.

New South Wales State Library

Mark Stryker has recently been employed as conservator to run a year's tarmoring programme for 'wage pause' students. He has students over a six month period. The programme liaises with four departments: Maps, Manuscripts, Pictorial, Books. Mark is teaching basic techniques of water based paper conservation such as washing, deacidification, mending, drying; as well as advising on storage, photography, general maintenance of shelves (dust etc.), research for section heads on various problems; and developing a policy for conservation at the library.

Conservation Art and Library Services

Rosemary Peel is completing the treatment of a number of Lawrence Hargrave drawings, a part of the collection from MAAS.

Museums Association of NSW

Donna Midwinter has taken up the position of Regional Conservator, based in Sydney at the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. Her time will be spent in the country assisting small museums with the care of their collections. So far Donna has been to museums in Young, Harden-Murrumburrah and Grenfell. She has also advised institutions and individuals in the Sydney area on artifact care, and has participated in a workshop at Kempsey on the care of Library Materials.

QUEENSLAND

The Queensland Branch have been fully occupied organizing the 1983 ICCM Conference 'Conservation, The Art, the Craft and the Science'. Held September 6th - 9th. Their efforts were well recognized in the professional organization achieved; and those attending enjoyed a high standard of papers, and warm social atmosphere. Congratulations and thanks go to Neville Agnew, Judy Dunlop, John Hook and ... for their hard work and hospitality.

August Meeting

This was the Divisions A.G.M. with the election of the following council members - Neville Agnew, Graham Reynolds, June McNicoll, Margaret O'Hagan, Judy Dunlop.

Queensland Art Gallery

Judy Dunlop and John Hook have completed treatment of "Apollo II" a large painting by Victor Passmore. John Hook commences a workshop on variations on the Dutch Loom Method at Canberra College of Advanced Education. Judy will participate in a Regional Galleries Seminar to be held in Brisbane and speak on Conservation Aspects, environmental control, disaster planning etc.

Returned from O.S.

Sue Frost has returned to Sydney from Greece via Ayers Rock and the Victoria and Albert Museum. She is hoping to get a job in a textiles lab.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Art Gallery of South Australia

The Art Gallery adopted the following policy on 26th September; The board of the Art Gallery of South Australia has adopted a policy which recognises that the Art Gallery is unable to continue the Travelling Art Exhibition function beyond 1984 unless funds are supplied to provide for an appropriate vehicle equipped to minimize vibration and duplicate as far as possible the environmental conditions of the Gallery.

Museum of South Australia

David Tilbrook is still working on conserving the mummy, which is going to be fumigated with ethylene oxide for a couple of weeks. He has not been able to develop a culture for the mould growth.

Library of South Australia

Tony Zammit will be giving a course at the Crafts studio at the University for 9 weeks entitled "The Art of Book-binding".

He is also experimenting with Dr Michael Snow of Adelaide University into the treatment of iron gall ink.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

July Meeting

This was the Divisions A.G.M. The following council members were elected - President: David Wood; Vice-President: Ulli Broeze-Horneman; Secretary: Silvia Bass; Vice-Secretary: Fairlie Sawday; Treasurer: Geoff Dimmock; Local Representative to Federal Council: David Wood; Council Members: David Briegal, David Butcher, Ian MacLeod, Rodney Van der Merwe.

Western Australia Museum News

Conservation Staff have returned from an archaeological excavation in Thailand where they worked with members of the W.A. Maritime Conservation Department and the Thai Fine Arts Department on the 'Ko Sichay', a wreck approximately 2km off the northern end of Ko Sichay, an island in the Gulf of Thailand.

The Conservators are also preparing for the excavation of another ship wreck which may be 'lively' (ca. 1810) situated at Rowley Shoals, approx. 150 nautical miles north of Broome.

Fortnightly seminars have been introduced with conservators speaking about their work and/or special projects they have undertaken. Lectures have been given on Metal Concretion and its significance - Ian MacLeod; Marine Biological Research - C.J. Beagle; Six months trip and work in Europe - Ulli Broeze-Horneman; Problems in the Conservation of Iron - Jon Carpenter; Developments in Textiles Restoration - Rinske Car; Excavation of the 'Ko Sichay' in Thailand - Jon Carpenter; and Restoration of Vintage Cars - Eddie Riff.

Country Conservator Rodney Van de Merwe has been busy visiting museums in the South West and Mid West areas of Western Australia.

David Gilroy has recommenced his work in the identification and treatment methods of historical photographs with the assistance of David Butcher.

Jan Davies and Taki Dowamaris have joined the staff as temporary members to work on wooden objects and other materials for the Australian Netherland Committee of Old Dutch Wrecks (ANCOD).

David Butcher was awarded a grant from the ICCM National Body to assist with expenses involved in attendance of the Brisbane Conference, and paper workshop. He was unable to accept this grant owing to lack of support from other bodies.

David Wood had 6 weeks holidaying in Europe, and appears to have had an amazing time.

Western Australia Art Gallery

In July Sylvia Bass gave a slide lecture to the Friends of the Batty Library on the care and preservation of works on paper of historic Study House.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Linda Clarke is busy setting up and stocking the laboratory at the Darwin Museum and Art Gallery. She is working on the consolidation of some Pukamani Poles to be displayed outdoors, in collaboration with the Australian Museum.

OVERSEAS NEWS

NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF CANADA ISSUE CONSERVATION POLICY

In December 1981 the Board of the National Museums of Canada adopted as its three main priorities; new accommodation, collections management and conservation, and charged the Policy, Planning and Evaluation Group with the development of a Corporate Conservation Policy.

In March 1980 the Board approved a four point Policy on Conservation for National Programmes which consisted of conservation and research services provided by Canadian Conservation Institute's headquarters: a mobile laboratory service operated by CCI and staffed in part through a Conservation Internship Programme; the development of a financial assistance programme in support of in-house conservation facilities for qualifying museums; and the federal-provincial co-operation in all conservation matters.

This policy recommended that major museums across Canada should be encouraged to conserve their own collections in-house, while CCI would provide specialised research and treatment services which could not reasonably be developed by every museum and gallery. A CCI mobile lab programme, which would stress preventative conservation or treatment of objects, would assist smaller institutions with their conservation problems. At the same time, the Provinces would be encouraged to develop conservation policies of their own and would be given advice and other assistance where possible.

The intent of the 1980 policy was to give increased emphasis to the preservation thrust of the 1972 National Museums Policy, as opposed to the many activities which focused on access to heritage collections, both in the four national museums and in national programmes. The policy outlined here expands upon the 1980 policy by addressing conservation issues which are relevant to all of the National Museums of Canada.

The first conservation priority of the National Museums of Canada shall be the safe housing of its collections in the buildings which are secure from fire and vandalism, and which are environmentally controlled to internationally accepted standards. Space shall be sufficient to permit adequate air circulation, as well as access and handling which do not cause undue risk to the collections.

The second priority shall be conservation treatment and analysis. Attention shall be given to the stabilisation and structural consolidation of artifacts and works of art, then to cleaning, repair and cosmetic restoration where required, with conservation analysis undertaken in support of these activities.

The third priority shall be conservation research and development into environmental deterioration, environmental standards and conservation methodology.

The fourth priority shall be information and publications concerned with the basic care of collections, environmental standards and control, and conservation treatment and research.

Conservation training is an integral part of each of the foregoing activities; therefore, training priorities shall reflect the priorities established for these other areas of conservation activities.

VISITORS FROM ENGLAND, USA, CANADA AND JAPAN

The 1983 Brisbane Conference attracted several overseas speakers. Robert Feller and his wife, Ruth Johnston-Feller from the Research Centre on the Materials of the Artist and the Conservator, the Mellon Institute, Pittsburgh, USA; Katsuhiko Masuda from the Restoration Techniques Research Department, Tokyo National Research Institution of Cultural Properties, Tokyo, Japan. Mervin Martin

from Furniture Conservation Associates, Downingtown Pennsylvania, USA. Angela Moor, of I.L. and A. Moor, Paper and Photographic Conservators, Restorers and Consultants, London, England. Tom Stone from the Canadian Conservation Institute, Ottawa, Canada. Mary Wood Lee from the Pacific Regional Conservation Centre, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA.

The conservation community in Australia appreciated the effort made by the overseas visitors to attend the conference and listened with interest to the papers presented. We hope they were able to take away fond memories of their stay in Australia and that they benefited in the information shared by the other speakers at the conference.

NORTH ATLANTIC REGION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, USA

It was reported in an earlier issue that Janet Stone had joined the National Park Service. Here Janet speaks of her new job.

In January I joined the North Atlantic Region of the National Park Service as Paper and Ethnographic Materials Conservator. Ed McManus, Metals Conservator, and I give advice to Parks located in states from New Jersey to Maine. These include numerous National Historic Sites such as Teddy Roosevelt's birthplace and house, the Statue of Liberty, Edison's Laboratory, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt's houses, The Vanderbilt Mansion, the sculptor, St Gaudin's house and studio. Natural areas which also have historic buildings and collections include Cape Cod National Seashore and Acadia National Park in Maine (with salty prints) and many others.

The job which will occupy the most time in the next few years is caring for the archival collection of Frederick Law Olmsted, the "father of American landscape art". He designed Central Park in New York City, numerous parks in Boston and hundreds of others. From glancing at some of the plans, I would guess that his thoughts influenced the design of Canberra. The collection of some 115,000 architectural plans, drawings, etc. is presently housed in 3520 cubby holes in a vault attached to his house surrounded by a beautiful garden. Papers are to be transferred to cardboard tubes and stored elsewhere while the vault is modernized. They will gradually be flattened, repaired and transferred to flat storage. Luckily I have an assistant and a good budget. The challenge of both the storage area and the temporary laboratory is to create something workable in the small space provided by the historic structure without changing the latter.

I extend an open invitation to any ICCM members who get to Boston to visit me. My home telephone is: (617) 491 7643 and work is 242 1977 or 223 3767. I presently live in Cambridge between MIT and Harvard.

Janet L. Stone
National Park Service
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Boston MA 02129

REPORTS AND HAPPENINGS

THE AUSTRALIAN BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS 1988 AND CONSERVATION

On Tuesday 5 July, 1983, Senator G. Georges opened a seminar titled 'The Australian Bicentennial Celebrations 1988 and Conservation: Past, Present and Future' held by the Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material at the National Library of Australia.

The major aim of the Seminar was to bring together

museum administrators, conservators and the General Manager of the Bicentennial Authority to discuss methods of planning for the adequate conservation of historic material required for display as part of Bicentenary Exhibitions.

Important issues raised during the seminar included:

1. Most collecting institutions have large backlogs of conservation work and it has been stated many times that a conservation crisis exists in the Nation's Museums, Art Galleries, Libraries and Archives.
2. One of the major causes of the current conservation crisis is the small number of conservators employed by the major cultural institutions throughout the country. Greater numbers of conservators are required to preserve significant numbers of important items related to Australia's heritage.
3. Conservators will be needed in the planning operations of the Bicentenary to evaluate selected materials for their physical and chemical conservation needs. Conservation advice will be required in designing environmentally controlled systems for the transport of displays to ensure the safety of National treasures.
4. Senator Georges stated that the planning of exhibitions for the Bicentennial should begin now. Once the material has been selected, those items requiring conservation can be identified. A conservation program, designed to bring all material to a stable condition for display during the celebrations, can then be planned.
5. The recently reaffirmed commitment by the Commonwealth Government of \$166 million to the program of National and International events which was presented to the Government in 1982 by the Australian Bicentennial Authority.
6. Conservators have a key role to play in the educational element of the Celebrations. As well as exercising their very special skills to enable the best examples of Cultural Material to be presented in Bicentennial Exhibitions, they can also use the opportunity to explain the importance of conservation work, the complexity of its processes and the basics of conservation operations which can be applied in the home.

The concluding session of the seminar identified the following areas of concern.

1. Approximately 100 trained conservators are needed in existing laboratories in the State and Federal Cultural Institutions. In addition there is a need for at least an equal number of support staff.

These staff are required for the various collections in all types of institutions. Conservators are needed to treat documents, sound recordings, photographs, metal objects, glass and ceramic items, postage stamps etc.

2. There is an urgent requirement to develop the field of conservation of materials related to the Aboriginal Heritage, in particular the conservation of Aboriginal rock art. Additional staffing is required in this area.
3. There is a critical need to further research the degradation of materials especially those peculiar to Australia.
4. That the conservation profession be adequately represented where appropriate, in the planning activities of the Australian Bicentennial Authority.

Delegates of the Seminar unanimously agreed that the ICCM had a positive advisory role to play for both State and Federal Governments in future programmes to develop the conservation of cultural collections in Australia.

The Seminar highlighted the need for the development of the resources of the Institute such as permanent project staff. Such staff would be used to initiate programmes in education, training, communication and public awareness which are considered vital for the growth of conservation in Australia. It is believed that both State and Federal Governments have responsibilities in this area.

Ian Cook
President ICCM
(062) 62 1662

CONSERVATION TREATMENTS DATA BASE

The National Library of Australia is currently developing a conservation treatments data base for its own use. Considerable interest has been shown, through the conservation records questionnaire, in the concept of a national conservation data base. The National Library may extend its conservation data base to include records from other institutions. The Library is therefore keen to ensure that the data base record structure is suitable for all conservation treatment records.

A seminar was held at the National Library on 19 August 1983 to discuss requirements for the data base with representatives of Canberra institutions involved in conservation. Copies of the proceedings of the seminar and preliminary record descriptions for the data base are available should you be interested. Contact: Ian Cook, Director, Preservation Services Branch, National Library of Australia, Canberra ACT 2600.

CONSERVATION PROFILE 2

UNESCO REGIONAL CONSERVATION CENTRE CANBERRA

With a grant of US\$5,000 from Unesco, Paris, it was possible for Dr Colin Pearson (Principal Lecturer in Conservation of Cultural Materials at the CCAE and Director of the Unesco Regional Conservation Centre) and Ms Ruth Norton (Lecturer in Ethnographic Conservation at the CCAE) to carry out a tour of countries in S.E. Asia to visit cultural institutions — essentially museum, galleries, libraries, archives and historic monuments. Our aim was to meet and hold discussions with staff of these institutions and in particular to determine the situation as regards current and future requirements for conservation facilities and expertise. Due to limited funds and time available for the tour, and also ignorance as to exactly what conservation activities were taking place in S.E. Asia, it was not possible to visit all countries or cultural institutions in the Region. A future visit will enable us to cover all countries in the Region requiring involvement with the activities of the Unesco Regional Conservation Centre in Canberra.

Following a specific request from the National Library of Australia, a visit was included to Vientiane, Laos, to meet officers of the National Library of Laos. An inspection of the National Library and other libraries in Vientiane was carried out and a report and recommendations provided for the National Library of Australia which financed the visit.

It must be emphasised at this point that at present the activities of the Centre are restricted to the conservation and restoration of "moveable objects" housed in cultural institutions or historic buildings. We are unable to become involved with the restoration of historic monuments, buildings and sites even though the two are often inseparable.

At each country and cultural institution visited we were made very welcome and were able to tour the institution, hold informative meetings with staff of the institution, meet conservators, view conservation facilities and discuss conservation problems. The basic aim was to obtain an overview of conservation activities in S.E. Asia, evaluate areas of common problems and determine how the UNESCO Centre can best provide assistance.

Although individual cultural institutions experienced different problems concerning the preservation of their collections, there are several fundamental issues that were common in most of the institutions visited.

In most countries, the status of conservation, where it existed, was very low. Conservators were considered as technicians/craftsmen and were not on the same professional level as curators. They had little or no say in storage, display and conservation practices and priorities. This is a very serious problem. Cultural institutions have the responsibility for the preservation of collections for posterity. Unfortunately, in a number of the institutions visited, objects were deteriorating due to poor and overcrowded

storage, badly designed displays, lack of environmental control such as temperature, relative humidity and air pollution, excessive light levels and insect infestation. Unless these are detested to, works of art and artifacts will continue to deteriorate and the responsibility for this must lie on the shoulders of the institution. Conservators are trained to understand these problems and to recommend measures to be taken to overcome them. They should be fully involved with all decisions involving the storage, display, conservation and transport of collections.

In western countries and in Australia, for example, conservators have exactly the same professional status as curators and are also paid similar salaries. This means that there is respect for fellow professionals and communication is at the same level. Until this is achieved, conservation will always play a minor role in the preservation of collections when in fact, it should be playing a major role.

Another problem, not only affecting conservators, is that the salary levels of staff employed in cultural institutions is low. This means that staff, unless highly motivated, will not remain long with the institution.

One of the reasons for the low status of conservation in cultural institutions is the low level of training conservators have received. Most of the conservators met during the visit had received only basic training in conservation. This would have provided them with the knowledge to advise the preservation of collections. As mentioned previously, their understanding and ability in the theory and practice of conservation is very limited. They can only do those processes covered in their short training courses which are rarely of more than 3-6 months duration. They do not have the experience or knowledge to develop a conservation programme for museum collections, are not able to analyse deterioration mechanisms of materials, do not understand chemicals including their properties and health hazards, and cannot develop conservation procedures beyond those already taught.

It was stated by the majority of institution directors that they could not send staff away for courses lasting longer than 6-12 months. This of course, immediately places a limit on the type of training that can be provided and for this short period, it will not be of the tertiary academic level required to produce a professional conservator.

In other disciplines such as anthropology, archaeology and librarianship, courses at tertiary level are available at local universities in S.E. Asian countries. Persons then join a cultural institution and can obtain further post-graduate training by the short-courses mentioned above, or by research. All this is based on a firm tertiary academic background. This system is not available in the Conservation of Cultural Materials in S.E. Asia.

It might be possible for some countries to select a suitable candidate from secondary school and send them for tertiary training overseas. Alternatively, a person having a relevant first degree could be funded to do a second degree at graduate or post graduate level in the Conservation of Cultural Materials. Such courses are offered at the Canberra College of Advanced Education and also in Europe, Canada and the U.S.A. A number of cultural institutions have plans for new buildings in the future which will include conservation facilities. Preplanning now will enable a professional conservator to be trained to not only look after the conservation facility, but also to advise on the storage, display and environmental control requirements of the new building.

The UNESCO Regional Conservation Centre, through the training programme at the CCAE, in addition to degree courses, can also offer short courses. These can be in a specialised field of conservation eg. Preventive Conservation (problems of temperature, relative humidity, light levels, insect and mould attack, air pollution and their control); the Conservation of Wooden Artifacts, Conservation of Bronzes, Conservation of Bamboo, etc. These could be held in Australia, or alternatively, in one of the countries in S.E. Asia. In the latter case, it is more likely

that the Unesco Centre will offer assistance with the short conservation courses already being provided, for example, at the National Museum in Thailand through the SPAFA Programme.

Another form of training that is being investigated is to provide periods of training of 6-12 months duration at the CCAE. Persons would join the students already undertaking the degree course at an appropriate level. The training would include course work, both theoretical and practical, at the College, and where possible, work experience in a relevant Australian Conservation Laboratory. This form of training would not produce a formal qualification, only a certificate of attendance. However, if the course was repeated over a number of years, each time at a higher level, it could slowly provide the necessary training to produce a professional conservator.

In a number of institutions, where trained and/or experienced conservators were employed, they were very limited in what they could do due to lack of laboratory facilities and equipment, materials, space and also support staff. A greater allocation of funds is urgently required for conservation. If a museum, for example, commits funds to train a conservator, it must also budget to establish a conservation laboratory and fully support the conservator on his or her return to the museum.

A common problem was lack of suitable materials for conservation work. When available locally, the requirement for the purchase of minimum quantities often made them prohibitive.

There were some conservation problems common to all places visited; there were also many specific problems with individual collections and institutions. Where conservation staff are available, the UNESCO Centre will provide direct assistance with these specific problems, giving details of appropriate techniques and materials.

The more general problems include the high temperatures and relative humidities experienced in S.E. Asian countries.

Another common problem is the presence of termites. They have infested buildings, displays and storage units and sometimes collections. This is, of course, an immense problem and the UNESCO Centre has commenced discussions with Pest Control companies and government agencies in Australia to determine what might be available to attack the problem.

In general, the conservation of collections is at a very low level throughout cultural institutions in S.E. Asia. This situation must be improved if the preservation of these cultural collections is to be ensured. Problems such as the professional status of the conservator, training, funding of conservation and overcoming specific conservation problems must be investigated. The UNESCO Regional Conservation Centre is willing to assist any country or cultural institution with these problems by providing their services. The Centre will be limited in what it can do, but it is hoped that this will be the beginning of the establishment of conservation on a firm professional basis throughout S.E. Asia.

Dr Colin Pearson
UNESCO Regional Conservation Centre

PAPER CONSERVATION WORKSHOP

5 Day Workshop held at N.L.A. by Katsuhiko Masuda in Basic Japanese techniques. This involved paste making, paper cutting, lining, flattening, mending use of karibari, and knife sharpening. 15 Conservators attended: Shamus Andrewartha (A.N.L.), Eric Archer (N.G.V.), Silvia Bass (A.G.W.A.), Ian Batterham (A.A.), Susie Bioletti (A.G. N.S.W.), Debbie Breen (A.A. Vic.), David Button (A.W.M.), Mary Cheah (A.A. NSW), Harry McCarthy (N.L.A.), Kerry McInnes (A.W.M.), Rosemary Peel (C.A.L.), Lydia Preiss (N.L.A.), Dara Rome (A.A. ACT), Antonia Syme (M.A.A.S.), Colin Webb (A.A. ACT). All appreciated the opportunity to work together and get to know each other, as well as enjoying the company and direction of a Japanese Master.

CONFERENCES

ICCM SYDNEY CONFERENCE 1984 PROGRAMME

The conference committee is at present drawing up a three-day conference programme, which is not yet finalized and we are still in correspondence with many of the prospective speakers. A very brief outline of the projected topics the sessions will cover; the artists' creative process and their opinions on what future they envisage for their works. It is proposed that up to six artists will speak, or possibly more. Some will be represented in the 5th Biennale of Sydney, others will be contemporary Australian artists.

The second session will be concerned with the manner in which conservators cope with some of the problems which are sometimes a result of the artists' creative process, and possibly deal with ethics. We would like this session to have an unrestrictive but positive approach. This session will be followed with a forum, with a panel which we hope will allow for an exchange of ideas between papers presented earlier in the day.

This will be followed by a reception at the Art Gallery of New South Wales and combine a viewing of the 5th Biennale of Sydney.

The third session will incorporate papers concerning artists and conservators' materials and techniques and will, we hope include aspects of paint and photographic technology.

The final session will aim to cover methods of safe packaging transportation, handling, installation and storage of contemporary works. We are also planning to hold a session for student papers, the day after. Grant applications have been made and speakers have been invited from America, Mrs Antoinette King, Acting Director of Conservation, Museum of Modern Art, New York, a specialist in the conservation of modern works of art on paper.

Germany, Dr Heinz Althofer — Director of the Restaurierungszentrum der Landeshauptstadt Dusseldorf, and Author of the book *Modern Kunst Handbuch der Konservierung* (Modern Art Handbook of Conservation) and from England, Gerry Hedley, Lecturer, Technology Department, Courtauld Institute of Art, London.

Let's hope the grant applications are successful.

We hope to see you all there. Any enquiries about the conference should be directed to —

Gillian McMillian
c/- Conservation Department
Art Gallery of New South Wales
Art Gallery Road
Domain, Sydney 2000
Phone: (02) 221 2100 ext. 73

ENQUIRIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

I would like to hear from anyone with information about Chinese "rice paper" — the brittle white pith paper with the layered cellular structure that was used in the nineteenth century for studies of figures and birds etc. In Chinese (Cantonese) it is called Mai Tong Tzi and the pith comes from the Chinese rice paper plant (*Tetrapanax papyrifera*/Fatsia papyrifera). Details and photos of its manufacture, uses, experiences of treating it, and knowledge of any source of supply would be welcomed.

Ranson Davey, Paper Conservator,
Art Gallery of New South Wales.

AN ANNUAL AWARD FOR INNOVATORY CONSERVATION

Working through the Society of Archivists, Archival Aids (a division of Ademco Drimount Ltd) are to offer a new annual award.

The award will be open to anyone working in the field of paper or parchment conservation anywhere in the world. The award shall consist of a cheque for £200.

Requests for nomination forms:

F.I. Dunn, Honorary Secretary
Society of Archivists Technical
Committee
Cheshire Record Office
The Castle, Chester CH1 2DN
Telephone: Chester 602573

The closing date for entries is June 1st of each year. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope!

POSITIONS VACANT

SCHOOL OF APPLIED SCIENCE CONSERVATION OF CULTURAL MATERIALS PAINTING CONSERVATION

Lecturer Grade 1

Salary: \$26,251 — \$29,467 per annum

The College offers undergraduate courses at Associate Diploma and Bachelor Degree levels, and also a Master's Degree by research, in the Conservation of Cultural Materials. Within these programmes the field of painting conservation is available as a major area of specialisation. The successful applicant will be appointed to a position in the Conservation of Cultural Materials Section of the School of Applied Science, and will take responsibility for the teaching and development of the painting conservation major under the direction of the Principal Lecturer in the Conservation of Cultural Materials. Subjects taught include the history and technology of painting materials and paintings; the properties and deterioration, both physical and chem-

ical, of paintings; and a comprehensive cover of the full range of conservation and restoration techniques used in the conservation of paintings. Teaching in other appropriate areas of the conservation of cultural materials will also be required.

The College has well equipped teaching laboratories for the Conservation of Cultural Materials, including one designed specifically for painting conservation. The Courses offered are the only ones of their kind in Australia.

Applicants should be professionally qualified and have substantial professional experience in the conservation of Western easel paintings, both modern and traditional, in a variety of media, style and structure. Teaching experience in this field, although not essential, is highly desirable. The appointment will depend on the successful applicant's experience and qualifications.

For further information contact Dr C. Pearson, Principal Lecturer Conservation of Cultural Materials, telephone 062/522368/9.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Assistance with housing will be provided for a person moving to Canberra to take up appointment. Fares for the appointee and family and reasonable removal costs will be paid. Appointees from the Australian Public Service, who are permanent officers, may preserve their existing rights under the Public Service (Amendment) Act.

Some prior service with an Australian University, College of Advanced Education or Australian Government Department or Authority may be recognised for purposes of furlough and sick leave.

Applicants should give personal particulars, details of qualifications and experience, present position, previous appointments, telephone number during business hours and the names and addresses of three referees. Applications quoting reference number 83/2094 are required by 30 November 1983 and should be addressed to The Secretary, Canberra College of Advanced Education, PO Box 1, Belconnen ACT 2616.

Do you want to see your name/
laboratory/division in print? If so please
send all articles to the Editor:

The deadlines are January 31,
April 30, July 31, October 31. The
Newsletter will accept photographs.
These should be Black and White and
no larger than 9.5 cm sq.

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