

Gabo Trust Travelling Scholarships

IIC announces new award for sculpture conservators

IIC Listings

See the back page for the comprehensive listings including job vacancies and conferences

Out of the ashes

Tatjana Bayerova reports on saving a 9th century Buddhist temple after it was gutted by fire (centre spread)

No.1, August 2007

News in Conservation

The newspaper of the International Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works

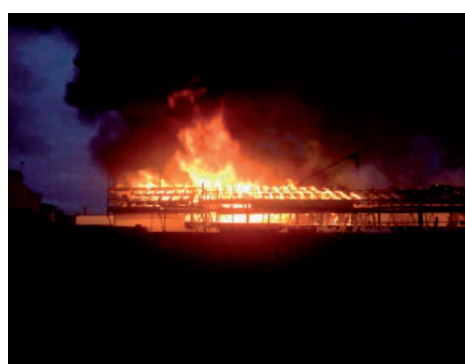


Cutty Sark fire: latest update



An aerial image of the main deck showing the extent of the fire. It remains to be seen how much damage the ironwork has sustained

Early in the morning of 21 May, the ship Cutty Sark was severely damaged in a devastating fire. Now moored in London, Cutty Sark once brought tea from India and China to Britain and is the world's only surviving tea clipper. At the time of the fire, she was undergoing a major conservation project to treat the iron frame and remove earlier restorations. Fortunately, many timbers and fittings had already been removed from the ship during the conservation project. George Monger, Conservation Consultant to the Cutty Sark Trust, reports on conservation efforts since the fire.



The blaze that devastated the Cutty Sark in London

There has been a great deal of discussion in the press and media as to whether the ship will be 're-built', whether the 'restored' ship would be a replica and how much of the ship has been destroyed. However, these speculations arose from a position of misunderstanding or ignorance of the progress of the conservation works before the fire.

The situation at the time of the fire was that all of the deck housing, furniture, cabin fittings, collections, masts, figureheads and 50% of the hull timbers had been removed in preparation for, and as part of, the conservation work.

The major loss has been the decks. However, the deck in the hold area was not original and was due to be removed and replaced with a decking which will allow visitors to be able to see the ship's construction in the bilges. The 'tween deck was a 1930s restoration, and the main deck – although having some original timbers – was a composite structure laid during the 1950s restoration and was going to be replaced because it leaked badly. Some of the remaining hull planks were charred by the fire but are thick, dense wood so suffered little loss.

The big question is how much of the ironwork has been damaged. It is evident that some of the deck stringers, the sheer strake and hatchway coverings have buckled. The iron frames have yet to be properly surveyed and measured but appear to have suffered little damage. At the time of writing the clean up and salvage operation is under way, after which there will be a proper and detailed assessment of the damage to the frames.

The result of the fire is that the project has been put back several months, with much of the work in planning and designing the roofing over the dry dock and the cradling and support system having to be started again. All of this inevitably has increased the cost of the whole project by about £5m so that the Cutty Sark Trust now needs to raise an additional £10m.

Meanwhile the conservation project continues, and during the interim period of investigation and clean-up the project team is reviewing all aspects of the conservation treatments to the ship's material. We are determined that this fire will only be a set-back, and that Cutty Sark will soon be properly conserved, interpreted and displayed in all her glory.

Preserving the digital heritage

Conservators have been aware for some time that our increasing reliance on digital documents is a pressing issue: most major libraries and archives have departments devoted to digital preservation, and there are many organisations working to save such digital ephemera as old websites, computer art and video games. Several recent developments suggest that other organisations are now starting to take up the challenge of preserving our digital heritage.

Microsoft announced in July that it was joining forces with the UK's National Archives (NA) to assist in the preservation of millions of digital records. Many of these records are stored in obsolete file formats and can only be read with software that is no longer available. Microsoft has provided the NA with software that emulates earlier operating systems and applications, allowing access to files in outdated formats. "The ephemeral nature of digital information, resulting from the rapid evolution of technology, is a major challenge facing government and our society today," says Natalie Ceeney, Chief Executive of the NA. "Unless we take action, we face the certainty of losing years of critical knowledge."

It is not only digital records that need careful preservation, however. Museums are starting to wake up to the need to preserve the hardware itself, both as a record of our scientific heritage, and as a practical resource. Europe's first permanent, travelling computing exhibition has opened in Paris, supported by the AntéMémorial project. AntéMémorial hopes that this will develop eventually into a permanent computer museum, where the history of information technology can be preserved. The UK's Codes and Ciphers Heritage Trust (CCHT) also announced that it is to establish a National Museum of Computing in Block H at Bletchley Park with the help of the British Computer Society. Bletchley Park is famous as the location of Britain's code-breaking efforts during the second world war: Alan Turing, who cracked the German Enigma cipher, and Tommy Flowers, who designed the Colossus computer, both worked there. There is already a Computer History Museum in California and a Computer Games Museum in Berlin.

Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of *News in Conversation*, the IIC's new conservation newspaper!

News in Conversation is an exciting departure for IIC. It updates the current Bulletin with a new format and expanded content, including full colour pictures. The newspaper complements IIC's existing publications by providing a place where members can share opinions, news and information. *News in Conversation* will also have a closer relationship with the IIC website, enabling you to stay up-to-date more easily with developments within IIC and the wider conservation world.

The name *News in Conversation* has been chosen to fit in with the other IIC publications, and we hope the content will be equally complementary. The new name also reflects the ways in which this publication differs from the old Bulletin. *News in Conversation* will be more outward-looking than the Bulletin, containing general conservation news as well as IIC news and features. It will also have a more international flavour as a result. This issue contains articles by IIC members who have worked in Northern India and Bhutan, and future issues will reflect the exciting work that is carried out by conservators globally, as well as encouraging contact between IIC members worldwide. However, we have also tried to retain much that was good about the Bulletin, so you will still find news from the IIC Council and regional groups, as well as job vacancies, conference listings and notices.

News in Conversation provides a place where IIC members can share opinions, news and information

Above all, *News in Conversation* is your paper, so we look forward to hearing what you think about the new design and content. E-mail your comments and suggestions to news@iiconservation.org. We also hope that you will want to contribute to the newspaper, and we welcome news stories, feature articles, project reports, comment and opinion. You can find information about submitting an article on the IIC website.

It has taken several months for *News in Conversation* to reach its final shape, and much work has gone into deciding the format and content of the newspaper. Thanks are due to the IIC Council and Officers, and especially David Leigh and Graham Voce, for their patience and advice during this period.

I hope you enjoy the final result!

Christina Rozeik
Editor

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News in brief...

New World Heritage sites named

Twenty-two new sites have been inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List this year. Sixteen of the new additions are cultural sites, bringing the number of inscribed cultural properties to 660. Among the new inscriptions are Samarra Archaeological City in Iraq, Sydney Opera House, and the Roman palace of Galerius in Serbia. Samarra was also placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in recognition of current threats to its preservation. Other heritage sites added to the list this year include the Old Town of Corfu, rock carvings in Namibia and Azerbaijan, and a Japanese silver mine.

Textile conservation goes green

A group of Portuguese scientists claim to have developed an environmentally-friendly method of cleaning textiles. Researchers from the New University of Lisbon used liquid and supercritical carbon dioxide (CO₂) to clean the garments of an eighteenth-century sculpture. Compared with traditional solvents - many of which are highly toxic and damaging to the environment - CO₂ is claimed to be relatively inert and non-toxic, and is said to remove dirt equally effectively without damaging the textile fibres.

British Library Centre for Conservation opens

The British Library has celebrated the completion of its new Centre for Conservation in London by launching an online 'microsite' (<http://www.bl.uk/conservation>). The site includes videos of conservators at work. The Centre

for Conservation contains book conservation facilities, a visitor centre, and state-of-the art technical facilities for the nation's Sound Archive. It also provides training for students and professionals and will soon offer a two-year Book Conservation course in conjunction with Camberwell College of Arts.

NucleArt Award for the Ruder Boskovic Institute

Scientists at the Ruder Boskovic Institute Laboratory for Radiation Chemistry and Dosimetry in Croatia have been presented with a Special Award for their use of gamma irradiation in conservation processes. As yet, only French and Croatian scientists use this technique, and it has yet to meet with widespread approval for conservation. Laboratory NucleArt is a part of the Institute for Nuclear Research (CEA) in Grenoble and the leading institution for using nuclear methods in conservation.

"New seven wonders" vote condemned

Following a global campaign and an online vote by members of the public, the new "seven wonders of the world" were announced in Lisbon by the New7Wonders Foundation. They include the Great Wall of China, the Palace Tombs of Petra, the archaeological sites Machu Picchu and Chichen Itza and the Taj Mahal. However, UNESCO condemned the competition as a "mediatised campaign", claiming that the shortlist was too limited to be useful. There are also concerns that publicity resulting from the competition could lead to a damaging increase in visitor numbers at vulnerable archaeological sites.



Royal Warrant Holders Association

Vincent Daniels

Congratulations to IIC Fellow Vincent Daniels, who has won the UK's prestigious Plowden Medal for his long and significant contribution to the conservation profession. Dr Daniels is a conservation scientist and a frequent contributor to *Studies in Conversation*.

Dr Daniels was presented with the medal by the Lord Chamberlain, the Earl Peel, at the Royal Warrant Holders Association lunch in London on 5 June.

Dr Daniels (left) with the Lord Chamberlain



Jerry Podany

The six IIC/EERI sponsored students at the Istanbul conference, with two of the conference organisers

IIC & EERI join to support students

The IIC and the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute (EERI) have joined together to support six students and young professionals to attend the recent Istanbul Congress on Seismic Mitigation for Cultural Heritage. Three young conservation professionals from Istanbul will receive memberships to the IIC and three engineering students also from Istanbul will receive memberships in the EERI. Each of the six recipients also received a small stipend to support their attendance at the Istanbul conference.

"Conservation by its very nature is an interdisciplinary profession," said the IIC President Jerry Podany. "We, as conservators, directly and indirectly rely on scientists in an

ever growing span of specific expertise. Seismologists and seismic engineers are no less our partners in the effort to preserve cultural heritage and to protect it from harm. The IIC has joined with EERI to encourage such collaboration at an early stage, among students and young professionals, so that they too can contribute and begin the dialogue that will move our efforts forward. IIC welcomes the new members and looks forward to their future work."

The students will be writing a review of the conference and their impressions of the challenges of seismic mitigation for cultural heritage. Look out for these reports on the IIC website!



Delegates from 8 countries at the recent Istanbul conference on the protection of cultural heritage from earthquake damage

Earthshaking news

Many of our greatest museums and cultural heritage sites are in areas affected by earthquakes. *News in Conservation* reports on a series of conferences on earthquakes and museums.

A considerable portion of the earth is seismically active, and museums, historic structures, archaeological sites, monuments of cultural importance and historic village or city centres at these locations are under constant threat from earthquakes. While seismic mitigation approaches are well studied and developed for architecture and engineered structures, few museums have taken appropriate precautions to protect their collections. As a result, the world's cultural heritage suffers with each seismic event.

An ambitious series of conferences aims to address this by bringing together seismic engineers, conservators and architects who are trying to lessen the effects of earthquakes on cultural property. The series is intended to remind us all that the inevitability of earthquakes should move conservators, governments, engineers and architects

alike toward action to mitigate the damage. Although we cannot prevent or control earthquakes, these conferences show how we can lessen the resulting damage.

"We hope to see a dramatic increase in collaborative efforts, as well as increased awareness and support from ministries and collection administrators. Ultimately it is in everyone's interests to do more before the inevitable earthquake strikes. More to safeguard the collections at risk and more to minimise the need for the dramatic and costly responses often required in the past," said Jerry Podany, IIC President and coordinator of the conference series.

The first conference in the series was held at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles in May 2006. It brought together sixteen experts in seismic engineering and conservation to review the latest research in seismology

and seismic engineering, and to report what efforts were underway to protect works of art, collections and whole museums. Museum collections were especially emphasised since this is an area in much need of development. The proceedings will be available within a few months (details from the Getty website, <http://www.getty.edu>).

The Getty Museum was a suitable site for this first colloquium because conservation staff there have been developing seismic mitigation efforts since the late 1970s. Efforts range from simple, inexpensive approaches (such as the use of monofilament to tie down objects) to far more sophisticated base isolation techniques that allow the floor (earth) to move freely under an object without affecting the object itself. For decades the Antiquities Conservation Department has been improving a base isolation unit that was designed within the department and the plans for this unit are made freely available to other museums.

The papers presented at the Getty conference addressed many of the most pressing issues in the protection of cultural heritage from earthquake damage, including risk assessment, the nature of earthquake damage and its secondary effects. Collections may also be injured by collapsing museum buildings, or by rushed efforts to salvage a collection after an earthquake.

Mounting exhibits suitably is one of the most important preventative actions that museums can undertake. A good seismic mount need not be complex or costly: one of the most common, low-cost methods of restraining small objects is by sticking them down with small amounts of wax.

The success of the 2006 Getty conference resulted in a plan to hold five additional conferences in countries threatened by earthquakes. The first of these was held in Istanbul in June 2007 and drew a broad range of professionals from Turkey and elsewhere. Papers covered topics as diverse as the use of wax to anchor small objects, base isolation systems for indoor and outdoor sculpture, and seismic mitigation efforts in Greece, Turkey, and India. The IIC co-sponsored the attendance of six students to the congress (see opposite). Details of the congress, the papers presented and the unanimously supported declaration produced by the attendees can be found at <http://www.eqprotection-museums.org>. Future conferences in the series will be held in Athens, Tokyo and New Delhi.

The NiC interview

***News in Conservation* spoke to two people involved in the protection of museums, sites and collections from earthquake damage.**

Mustafa Erdik is the Chair of the Department of Earthquake Engineering in Boğaziçi University in Turkey. He was a co-organiser of the 2007 Istanbul conference on earthquakes and museums.

News in Conservation: How is your department involved with protecting cultural heritage from earthquake damage?

Mustafa Erdik: We assess the earthquake performance of important historical structures and make structural intervention designs for their retrofit (strengthening). These studies involve both empirical and analytical investigations. We also implement precautions to protect museum displays from toppling, sliding, crushing, etc. These precautions are important since shaking on museum floors increases in proportion to the degree of strengthening applied to the museum building.

NiC: Have you seen this kind of damage in museums already?

ME: To buildings, yes. There were several damaged historical buildings in Istanbul as a result of the 1999 Kocaeli earthquake of magnitude 7.4. Damage to items in museum collections is also common.

NiC: Are earthquakes a serious risk to heritage in Turkey?

ME: [In Turkey], Istanbul has the highest risk, due to the concentration of cultural property and the very high level of earthquake hazard. Among the most threatened historical buildings in Istanbul are the Fatih and Mihrimah Sultan (Edirnekapi) Mosques. Several public and World Bank financed projects are active to assess and retrofit these historical structures. We are advocating [protection] measures to the government and to private foundations.

NiC: Do you think conservators are sufficiently aware of seismic threats to cultural property?

ME: I am sure it is in their minds with other concerns! It is

essentially a prioritisation problem. Earthquake damage is a probabilistic issue and most conservators deal with daily and deterministic problems. Specific positions that deal only with earthquake protection may need to be created. Raising awareness, solidarity, sensitisation of decision makers and promotion are the keywords. There are several (UN) organisations that should pursue this cause. This is a long term job. You need stamina and perseverance.

NiC: How can we encourage collaboration between conservators and engineers?

ME: Once the 'DIY' technical manuals and resources for conservators are prepared (where the collaboration of engineers and curators is needed), the involvement of engineers will be limited to specific applications.

NiC: What is the most important research area in conservation and earthquake engineering today?

ME: Low-cost earthquake isolation technologies are the most important research being conducted today.

NiC: Where should we spend money on protecting cultural heritage from earthquake damage?

ME: I am afraid that we may not have enough time for protecting cultural property in Istanbul from pending earthquakes. I would start immediately with temporary shoring up of the vulnerable historical buildings and also implement a campaign to stabilise museum displays.

Kimio Kawaguchi is the Chief Conservator at the National Museum of Western Art in Tokyo.

News in Conservation: How did you first get involved with protecting museums from earthquake damage?

Kimio Kawaguchi: After the Kobe earthquake of 1995, I joined the [Japanese] National Museum Association, the

Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Jerry Podany from the Getty Museum in saving the [affected] museums and cultural properties. Since then, I have participated in the seismic protection of museum collections. [At Kobe], my colleagues participated in some restoration works at museums without their own conservator. Mostly we had to carry out first aid to prevent further damage from aftershocks. Other treatments were sometimes necessary.

NiC: What is the greatest seismic threat to cultural property in your country?

KK: In Japan we are never far from potential earthquake damage. In particular, simulations of earthquake cycles for fault lines in the area indicate that the greater Tokyo metropolitan region could be affected by four possible events, including a major eruption of Mount Fuji (which is classed as an active volcano). Seismic activity will cause serious damage to every exhibited object, and even to houses and temples ... so there is no economical solution. After Kobe we started to consider seismic isolation, seismic resistance, and seismic control for the structures. But disaster planning and preparation are not [currently] defined as part of the duties of Museum staff, weakening the potential for such programs to be developed and implemented.

NiC: How are you trying to mitigate or manage this threat?

KK: [By using] solutions like seismic isolation for sculpture, shock-absorbing devices such as wire hanging display for paintings, or simulation of damage and its treatments in the museum galleries and depots.

NiC: What should be our spending priorities for research into earthquakes and conservation?

KK: We need more research on long cyclical earthquakes. I would [also] found scholarships researching seismic mitigation methods for diverse objects. Engineers could give information about the mechanisms of seismic activity and destruction. Conservators could research the characteristic problems of art objects.

Longer versions of these articles are available on the IIC website

On 14 July 2006, a small 9th century Buddhist temple in the Indian village of Ribba, one of the most important and oldest preserved Buddhist monuments in the western Himalayas, was burnt out. Tatjana Bayerova reports how a team of Austrian conservators came the aid of the local villagers, giving them hope that their temple would rise once again from the ashes.



Out of the ashes



Ribba temple before the fire

CI-95 Western Himalaya Archive Vienna, Institute of Art History, University of Vienna



The temple two weeks after the fire, when the Austrian team came to visit



The elaborately carved wooden entrance portal suffered extensive damage in the fire



Burnt clay sculptures from the interior of the temple

Ribba is in the Upper Kinnaur, in the state Himachal Pradesh, and is located at an altitude of 2550 metres on an old pilgrimage route. The temple, placed on a raised platform, was probably built in the 9th century (Klimburg-Salter 2002), and from then until the recent past it has served as an important centre for all religious and cultural performances. Ribba is a living monastery with about 26 residential monks and 20 nuns.

The original single-celled temple has been integrated into the back of the recent larger monastic complex, serving as the sanctum. It consists of a nearly cubical building (the exterior measures 4.25 m by 4.00 m), and is made mainly from pine-wood with a shallow veranda on all four sides. The monument has become famous due to its extraordinarily fine woodcarving, especially the extensively carved front façade that can be attributed to the foundation of the temple; the intensive carvings and motifs on the wooden doorframes, columns, beams, cornices and original ceiling panels have been produced by Kashmiri craftsmen. Not all the wooden elements of the structure are original. Some parts – especially those that have been damaged through prolonged exposure to the weather – are copies, but it is a local practice to copy the originals closely during renovations. The outer walls retain their original decoration under a thick layer of whitewash.

The interior walls were blackened by smoke when we visited, but we could still distinguish a few rare sketches made in the Kashmiri style

Inside the temple are seven life-sized human sculptures made from clay. These are later additions, probably not earlier than the 13th century. The interior walls were blackened by smoke when we visited, but we could still distinguish a few rare sketches made in the Kashmiri style, together with some Tibetan inscriptions that were also not from the original decoration.

It is estimated that 85% of the Old Temple was reduced to ashes that night, so India has lost a very valuable jewel in her national living heritage

The fire, which began at 2am on Friday 14 July 2006, seriously damaged all seven clay sculptures and destroyed a huge portion of the wooden structure. In addition, about 160 handwritten old manuscripts written on birch paper rolls, murals of Lord Buddha, antique jewellery and other artefacts have been burnt up. It is estimated that 85% of the Old Temple was reduced to ashes that night, so India has lost a very valuable jewel in her national living heritage.

The people of the village were very brave and managed to save about 15% of the structure and to rescue some of the historic inscriptions, religious scriptures and small Bronze sculptures from the fire. A rough estimate made by the villagers and local lamas suggests that property worth about 2.2 million (£1.5 million) has been destroyed. In any case, it is impossible to evaluate the financial and cultural loss to the village folk.

The local community and people from neighbouring villages are currently fully engaged in making good the losses and conserving the remaining portion and the rare artefacts of this historically significant monument. As outlined above, it is still the practice in Kinnaur to copy the originals as precisely as possible during their renovation, and Ribba has always been an inspiration for local craftsmen and artists.

The local community is, therefore, confident that it will be possible to replicate the original art and architecture, and hence save its unimaginable religious, cultural and social significance. However, it is impossible to bring this aim to fruition without support from both national and international governmental and non-governmental organisations.

Fortunately, a team of restorers and students from the Conservation Department of the University of Applied Arts in Vienna was already working on the conservation of the Buddhist temples in the nearby village of Nako. That team was invited by the local community and political representatives to visit Ribba on 27 July 2006. After a visual inspection and discussion with the authorities, the team suggested several preliminary first-aid steps to preserve the remaining part of the burnt structures, including a temporary covering of the burnt areas to avoid rainwater seepage, circumvallation of the site to protect the fragile burnt structures against wind and restriction of entry to the area. The team also showed the local people how to remove mould from some of the objects rescued from the burning temple and gave them a supply of chemicals for this purpose. All these recommendations will count for nothing, however, without a concrete plan for dealing with the results of this devastation, especially as it has happened in a remote part of a developing country.

The temple of Ribba is a historical record of Indo-Tibetan art, developed and influenced by artists from the Kingdom of Guge in Tibet, and also from Kashmir in India. Ribba is not only part of India's national heritage but also a monument of international significance, and, above all, it is of great significance to the people of Ribba village, and the surrounding region as their major pilgrimage and cultural centre.

Any support from organisations or individuals, especially for the protection of the remaining portion and replication of the lost parts, would be highly appreciated by the people of the region.

To help with the recovery of the Buddhist temple in Ribba please contact:

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Further information

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Author Biography

Tatjana Bayerova graduated in chemistry in 1984 from the Technical University in Bratislava, Slovakia. She has since worked as a conservation scientist, freelance consultant, project co-worker and guest lecturer in Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Austria. Since 1999 she has been a conservation scientist and senior lecturer at the Conservation Department, University of Applied Arts in Vienna, where she is principally interested in paint layers, pigments and dyes.



Care in the Community

Ann Shafteel reports on the Thangka Conservation Training Programme in Bhutan



The author working in Dharamsala

The thangka treasures of Bhutan, located in nunneries and monasteries throughout the country, are cared for by resident nuns and monks. Thangkas are complex objects, with intricate iconography and technical construction, that are intended to serve as a visual guide for the contemplative experience. Thangkas are in active use in monastic shrine halls, the rooms of monks and nuns, meditation retreat centres, family homes and places of business and governance. The longevity and condition of these precious thangkas is determined every day as the monks and nuns unroll, display on Buddhist shrines, roll up and store the thangkas. The Home Minister of Bhutan, Lyonpo Jigmi Thinley, wisely decided that nuns and monks must be trained in the conservation of thangkas. The programme was organized by Friends of Bhutan's Culture, based in Bellevue, Washington, with funding provided by the Getty Foundation.

The goal of the Thangka Conservation Training Programme (TCTP) was to introduce and develop an understanding of basic conservation. The first phase of the course was offered in Bhutan in January–February 2006 to a class of six nuns, two monks, and four Department of Cultural Properties (DCP) employees. The participants were all hard working and demonstrated genuine commitment and respect for thangkas. Two of the DCP conservators were trained in thangka painting at Zorig Chusum, the government sponsored traditional arts and crafts academy.

Anatomy of a thangka

The monks and nuns had little knowledge of the thangka as a composite object so I asked the two DCP employees to create a thangka in the classroom. Watching the painstaking creation of a thangka was a surprise to the other participants and gave them a sense of the delicacy and intricacy that was central to the goals of the TCTP. I documented the creation of this thangka with digital photography and high quality recording of the oral commentary by the artists.

During the creation of the thangka, we discussed how its condition differed from that of thangkas in the participants' monastic institutions. We also reviewed the types of damage that could occur through the years, and how it might change a thangka's appearance.

Documentation

A computer entry documentation form had

been created by the DCP but was not used consistently. I brought several standardised forms to show as an example and adapted them for use in Bhutan. A new condition report form was especially created to better accommodate the skill level of the students. This form evolved during the programme and the final version will be used by the DCP in monasteries, nunneries and other sites after it has been translated into local dialects.

I also introduced museum standard computer-entry software. Some of the participants were not computer literate, but it was important for them to gain familiarity with the part computers play in professional conservation and how computer documentation can make their work easier.

An introduction to the importance of digital photography in documenting thangkas was presented, including the use of colour control cards, labelling of objects, and the digital manipulation of images.



Risk management site visit

Risk management

Each participant was asked to identify risks to thangkas in his or her institution. We discussed how to mitigate these risks through environmental control whenever possible. Scenarios were created to identify risks and the actions that could be employed to create safe environments for thangkas.

On field trips, students were asked to determine risks at specific sites, using the ICCROM Risk Management forms. I adapted these forms for local conditions, language and concerns. The participants were quick to point out dangers to thangkas they had not previously been aware of in their home institutions, including security, lighting, offering substances (such as butter lamps), pests, and moisture.

Safe storage

The thangka form has its origins in the nomadic monasticism of past centuries. Monastic communities travelled by yak through the Himalayas, set up tents and performed blessings, and then moved on again. Everything was transported by yak, thus thangka storage and transport in a rolled form was very practical.

Presently, tightly rolled thangkas are stored in metal or wooden trunks. Students practised safer rolling, unrolling and handling of thangkas. The use of acid-free paper or well-washed muslin as interleaves was demonstrated.

I introduced the benefits of flat storage and safer storage practices for rolled thangkas. I explained how low-cost flat storage units could be constructed in each nunnery, monastery or dzong, and we plan to create a sample storage unit in the coming year.

Field trips

The conservation training programme included field trips within the Thimphu area and a lengthy bus trip to Central Bhutan, including visits to sites around Bumthang and Trongsa. We also visited Jambay Lhakhang, Kurjey Lhakhang, Tamshing Lhakhang and Jakar Dzong, as well as the nunnery of one of the students. At each site, the participants spoke to the site's caregivers about storage, display and handling methods.

At Trongsa Dzong, we were given the privilege of seeing thangkas that are rarely displayed. During our field trips, various local government and monastic officials joined us and expressed deep interest in the project.



Bhutanese nun and DCP conservator working on thangka from Sisinang nunnery

Hands-on sessions

During the final weeks, the participants learned hands-on techniques in a closely supervised classroom situation. The hands-on sessions were divided into textile and painting components. The DCP provided thangkas on which to practise basic textile repair of mountings. This included stitching techniques used in textile conservation as well as work specific to thangkas. For

example, participants were taught how to create a leather protective corner for a thangka mounting top dowel sleeve, and how to add a cover, or jekheb, when the original had been lost.

The painting conservation section began with inpainting practice on "calendar thangkas" which are printed on paper or plastic. Students were then introduced to Gamblin paints for inpainting practice on real thangkas. Previous conservator-consultants had taught the use of watercolors for thangka restoration. Traditional thangkas are painted with mineral pigments in yak-hide glue, so the use of watercolours is not ideal. We discussed reversibility and the need for good documentation.

There is robust logic in training nuns and monks in the care of thangkas in their home nunneries and monasteries

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Thangka Conservation Training Programme was truly successful in achieving all of its goals. The accomplishments of the individual students far exceeded all expectations. They will benefit not only from their classroom learning, but from applying that learning to shrine halls and dzongs, and in their newfound confidence in written and verbal communication.



Author biography

Ann Shafteel has published and lectured on thangkas and served as Consultant and Conservator for museum and monastic collections for the past 37 years. Ann holds an MS in Art Conservation and an MA in Asian Art History and has worked and studied at the ICCROM Centre in Rome.

Ann apprenticed with Tibetan master painters for 15 years and interviews Buddhist teachers about thangkas. Her clients include Buddhist monasteries and high profile museums around the world, and she teaches at universities and museums in North America and Australia.

She dedicates this article to Garry Thompson.

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IIC News

The Gabo Trust Travelling Scholarships for sculpture conservators

The Gabo Trust, in partnership with IIC, is offering travelling scholarships to study the conservation of sculpture anywhere in the world. Applications for the 2008 Scholarship are invited from Individual Members and Fellows of IIC who are conservators practising in either the public or private sector.

Applicants will preferably have had several years' experience following their primary training. There will be a maximum of two scholarships per year awarded to applicants proposing study tours which, in the opinion of the selection committee, will most benefit their own careers and the worldwide body of knowledge of the conservation of sculpture.

These scholarships are limited to the conservation of sculpture in all its aspects and are not restricted to any particular period or culture. However, some benefit to modern and contemporary sculpture (post 1880) must be apparent in the application. The proposed tour should normally be completed within twelve months of the award being made.

The maximum sum awarded will be up to £5000 or 10,000 US dollars or 7,500 Euros.

For full details of the Scholarship, including an application form, please go to the IIC website. The closing date for applications this year is 30 November 2007. Awards will be made by the end of January and announced in *News in Conservation* in February 2008.

The Gabo Trust was founded in 1988 by the family of the sculptor Naum Gabo. Aware of the problems with new materials in modern and contemporary sculpture,

they set up the Gabo Trust to increase conservation resources in institutional collections and to further the education of conservators.

IIC Italian Group annual congress

Lo Stato dell'Arte 5, October 11-13 2007
Cremona, Italy

The IIC-IG's 5th congress will be held in Cremona, the city of Stradivari, during the celebrations for the 900th anniversary of its cathedral's foundation. Cremona cathedral is worldwide known for its glorious history and for its very important fresco paintings cycles.

The meeting's purpose is to offer professionals from any Italian region (and hopefully from other European countries) an opportunity to share experiences within a multidisciplinary framework, and to promote a national and international network.

Once again the congress will offer visibility to conservation professionals who do not usually have an opportunity to present their activities. We also hope that Cremona will offer us rich culture and musical tradition, beautiful surroundings, and good food and wine!

For more information or registration see www.igiic.org or e-mail info@igiic.org.

2008 London Congress update

Although the Congress in London is more than a year away, planning and preparation are well underway.

The theme "Conservation and Access" has proved very popular, attracting around 170 proposals for papers. The Technical Committee has selected 60 of these and has invited authors to submit draft manuscripts. These will be reviewed in October, when about 45 will be selected to appear in the congress pre-prints. Several groups of topics have emerged, such as digitisation,

packing and transport, collections for handling, coping with newly designed museums and the constraints of access to sacred sites. The types of object dealt with range from manuscripts to murals and from fossils to fireboats.

Manuscripts have been requested from authors in fifteen countries; the locations where the conservators are trying to improve access are truly global, extending from the Arctic to the Antarctic. The approaches vary from technical experimentation to philosophical analysis, yet a common theme of risk assessment and risk management can be detected.

Several changes to the time-honoured IIC Congress format have been proposed. Presentations will be shorter and there will be more time for discussion. More time will be made available to interact with the authors of posters. Lunches, tea and coffee are included in the registration fee. The most radical proposal is to dedicate a whole day for organised cultural tourism on the Friday, replacing the traditional mid-week afternoon.

The social programme is developing well with plans for an ice-breaker on the Sunday evening before the start of the congress, a reception at the British Museum, a boat trip on the Thames and a final party at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The venue chosen for the Congress is the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in Westminster, winner of the Best UK Venue 2007. You can see the conference facilities by going to the venue's website <http://www.qeicc.co.uk>. The conference centre is close to London landmarks such as Big Ben and the London Eye, convenient for public transport and for green open spaces in which to relax between presentations and receptions.

Jonathan Ashley-Smith
London Congress Technical Committee

Don't delay, renew today!

Have you renewed your IIC membership for 2007-8? The new membership year started on 1 July 2007. You can now renew online. Simply follow the links on the IIC homepage to renew your membership online with a secure credit or debit card transaction. You can still renew by post, if you prefer,

Susanne Nyegaard Kristiansen 1954 - 2007



Susanne Kristiansen, Textile Conservator at the People's History Museum, Manchester, UK died on 23 June 2007. She had been ill with multiple sclerosis and other complications, but her sudden passing was both unexpected and untimely.

using the form which has been sent to you; contact the IIC office for a replacement if needed.

Renewing your membership brings many benefits: you will continue to receive IIC's prestigious journals *Studies in Conservation* and *Reviews in Conservation* free of charge; you can enjoy concessionary rates at the forthcoming London congress in 2008; and you will gain access to the members' areas of the IIC website. You will also benefit from concessionary rates both on the Institute's own publications and on titles in the Butterworth-Heinemann Series in *Conservation and Museology*.

This year, there are additional benefits to membership, including free download of back issues of *Studies in Conservation*, a relaunched website and, of course, *News in Conservation*.

Reviews in Conservation: call for Papers

The Editorial Advisory Board and Editors of *Reviews in Conservation* invite preliminary submissions for the 2008 issue.

Contributions are welcomed on a range of topics, including (but by no means limited to) conservation treatments, materials, scientific research, technical art history, analytical techniques, historiography of conservation, training and ethics.

For author guidelines, please contact the Editors, Fi Jordan and Marika Spring, at reviews@iiconservation.org or consult the IIC website, <http://www.iiconservation.org>.

The deadline for preliminary submissions is 1 September 2007. Once commissioned, the deadline for manuscripts for the 2008 issue is 1 February 2008. Unless special arrangements have been made with the editors, drafts should be written in English.

The draft should be as comprehensive as possible. However, as some authors will only wish to carry out extensive library research once the paper is commissioned, any areas yet to be completed should be clearly indicated in the text. As the paper is a literature review, the draft paper should include an extensive bibliography, an abstract and reasonably complete introductory and concluding sections.

Susanne began her conservation work at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam in August 1976 and progressed to the position of Assistant Head of the Textile Department. In 1986, she returned to her beloved Denmark and the Royal Arsenal Museum in Copenhagen. Here she held responsibility for the textile collections and her skills in the conservation of flags and banners flourished. One particular specialist area she developed was the use of enzymes to release silk flags adhered to boards with animal-glue and this research was published in the journal of the Scandinavian Conservation Association. Susanne came to the Textile Conservation Studio in the People's History Museum in October 1990 to help conserve the museums Designated Collections and in particular, the collection of trades union and associated banners. Her dedication, expertise and great sense of humour made Susanne a very popular colleague and all who knew her will miss her friendship and generosity.

A gathering of friends and colleagues is planned for 17th September 2007 in Manchester and all are invited to help celebrate her life. Please send an email address to vivian.lochhead@phm.org.uk or admin@phm.org.uk. Further details will be forwarded when available.

Abstracts of International Conservation Literature



www.aata.getty.edu

A free resource for professionals engaged in the conservation and management of material cultural heritage in all its forms: works of art, cultural objects, architectural heritage, and archaeological sites and monuments.

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AATA Online includes all 36 volumes of *Art and Archaeology Technical Abstracts (AATA)*, its predecessor, *IIC Abstracts*, and over 1,600 abstracts published between 1932 and 1955 by the Fogg Art Museum and the Freer Gallery of Art. Also included are all of the original *AATA* special subject supplements and additional supplements added since going online.

For more information, please contact us at aata@getty.edu

Calls for papers

Risk Assessment - Management Strategies
14-16 February 2008, Aschaffenburg, Germany.
Submit abstracts by: 1 September 2007

Holding it all together; ancient and modern approaches to joining, repair and consolidation
21-22 February 2008, London, UK.
Submit abstracts by: 14 September 2007

AIC Book and Paper Group Annual Meeting
21-24 April 2008, Denver, Colorado, USA.
Submit abstracts by: 7 August 2007

AIC Textile Specialty Group: AIC 36th Annual Meeting
21-24 April 2008, Denver, Colorado, USA.
Submit abstracts by: 24 August 2007

Art 2008
25-30 May 2008, Jerusalem, Israel.
Submit abstracts by: 30 September 2007

Conferences

ICOM-CC Glass and Ceramics Working Group interim meeting
27-30 August 2007
Nova Gorica, Slovenia

Printed on paper: the techniques, history and conservation of printed media
4-7 September 2007
Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK

Decorated surfaces on ancient Egyptian objects: technology, deterioration and conservation
6-8 September 2007
Cambridge, UK

International conference on wet organic archaeological materials (ICOM-WOAM)
10-15 September 2007
Amsterdam, Netherlands

BigStuff 2007
11-14 September 2007
Dortmund, Germany

Art, conservation and authenticities: material, concept, context
12-14 September 2007
Glasgow, Scotland

Mass Spectrometry and Chromatography Users' Group (MaSC) Meeting
14-15 September 2007
Philadelphia Museum of Art, USA

Western Association for Art Conservation (WAAC) 2007 annual meeting
15-17 September 2007
Denver, Colorado, USA

Metal 07
17-21 September 2007
Amsterdam, Netherlands

LACONA VII: Lasers in the Conservation of Artworks
17-21 September 2007
Madrid, Spain

IADA XI congress
17-21 September 2007
Vienna, Austria

Preserving Aboriginal heritage: technical and traditional approaches
24-28 September 2007
Ottawa, Canada

Directions in preventive conservation
26-29 September 2007
Sibiu, Romania

1st European students' conference on object conservation
5-6 October 2007
Cologne, Germany

Cesare Brandi (1906-1988): his thought and the heritage debate
5-6 October 2007
Wilanow, Poland

IGIIC (IIC Italian Group) annual congress
11-13 October 2007
Cremona, Italy

Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials (AICCM) national conference
17-19 October 2007
Brisbane, Australia

III Congreso Chileno de Conservación y Restauración: patrimonio, conservación y ciudadanía
24-26 October 2007
Santiago, Chile

Icon Stone & Wall Paintings Group: 'Polychromed wood'
26 October 2007 & 22 February 2008
London, UK

Facing impermanence - 6th North American textile conservation conference
6-9 November 2007
Washington, DC, USA

Photographic preservation and conservation meeting
7 November 2007
London, UK

Museum microclimates
19-23 November 2007
Copenhagen, Denmark

The care and conservation of Middle Eastern manuscripts
26-28 November 2007
Melbourne, Australia

Persistence of memory: stewardship of digital assets
28-29 November 2007
Seattle, USA

The 12th international conference of National Trusts
3-5 December 2007
New Delhi, India

Terra 2008: 10th international conference on the study and conservation of earthen architecture
1-5 February 2008
Bamako, Mali

Risk assessment - management strategies
14-16 February 2008
Aschaffenburg, Germany

Holding it all together
21-22 February 2008
London, UK

Infrared and Raman Users Group (IRUG) conference
26-29 March 2008
Vienna, Austria

AIC annual meeting
21-24 April 2008
Denver, Colorado, USA

11th international seminar on the care and conservation of manuscripts
24-25 April 2008
Copenhagen, Denmark

8th triennial meeting for conservators of the Baltic states
7-10 May 2008
Tallinn, Estonia

Art 2008: non-destructive testing, microanalysis and preservation
25-30 May 2008
Jerusalem, Israel

IIC 2008 Congress: conservation and access 15-19 September 2008 London, UK
15-20 September 2008
Torun, Poland

ICOM-CC triennial meeting, 2008
22-26 September 2008
New Delhi, India

Identifying and recording bookbinding structures for conservation and cataloguing
10-14 and 17-21 September 2007
Volos, Greece

Mass Spectrometry and Chromatography Users' Group (MaSC) workshop
10-14 September 2007
Philadelphia Museum of Art, USA

Islamic binding workshop
14-15 September 2007
Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK

Cultural material X-radiography course
24 October 2007
Bradford, UK

You've monitored the environment, now what? CPD seminar
3 October 2007
London, UK

Nineteenth-century silver-based photographic print processes
8-12 October 2007
New York, USA

The do's and don'ts of photographic conservation
16 October 2007
London, UK

1st Australian XRF workshops for conservators
7-8 and 14-15 November 2007
Melbourne and Canberra, Australia

Islamic binding workshop
29-30 November 2007
Melbourne, Australia

Indo-Persian miniature workshop
3-7 December 2007
Melbourne, Australia

For more information about these conferences and courses, see the IIC website: www.iiconservation.org

Job vacancies

Conservation Fellowships
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Closing date: 4 January 2008
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Sherman Fairchild Foundation, through The Metropolitan Museum of Art, award a number of annual conservation fellowships for training and research in one or more of the following museum departments: Arms and Armor, Asian Art Conservation, The Costume Institute, Musical Instruments, Objects Conservation (including sculpture, metalwork, glass, ceramics, furniture, and archaeological objects), Paintings

Conservation, Paper Conservation, Scientific Research, and Textile Conservation. Also available is a Polaire Weissman Fellowship for conservation work in The Costume Institute. Fellowships are typically one year in duration. Shorter-term fellowships for senior scholars are also available.
It is desirable that applicants should have reached an advanced level of experience or training. All fellowship recipients are required to spend the fellowship in residence in the department with which they are affiliated.
The stipend amount for one year is \$40,000 for senior conservators/scientific researchers and \$30,000 for junior conservators/scientific

researchers, with up to an additional \$5,000 for travel and miscellaneous expenses. Senior fellowships are intended for well-established professionals, with advanced training in the field and proven publication record. A typed application (in triplicate) should include: full resume of education and professional experience, statement (not to exceed one thousand words) describing what the applicant expects to accomplish during the fellowship period and how the Museum's facilities can be utilized to achieve the applicant's objectives, tentative schedule of work to be accomplished, official undergraduate and graduate transcripts, and

three letters of recommendation (at least one academic and one professional). The deadline for completed applications is January 4, 2008.
Applications should be sent to Attn: Marcie Karp, Fellowships in Conservation Program, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1000 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10028-0198.
For more information, see the Metropolitan Museum's website: http://www.metmuseum.org/education/er_fellow.asp.

For more information about this or other vacancies, visit the jobs page of the IIC website: www.iiconservation.org



Ad Stijnman

This curious example of an early Roman laptop computer was spotted in the Getty Villa in Los Angeles

Strange but true...

The musty smell of old, crumbling books is instantly evocative of second-hand bookshops and libraries. It appears, however, that this smell is not just a symptom of degradation, but also a cause... and researchers at Cambridge University are using it to 'sniff out' early signs of decay in the collections in the University Library.
Degraded books emit volatile organic acids, which then contribute further to their degradation. As these acids are volatile, they can harm surrounding books as well as the book which is emitting them. These are the same emissions that give old books their characteristic smell.

Cambridge University scientists and conservators will analyse the air quality in different parts of the library, to see if degraded books cause higher acid levels that could contribute to deterioration of other books in that area. They hope to develop an early warning system that will warn when books have become dangerously 'smelly'.
The conservators involved are looking at ways of reducing acid in storage areas, including air conditioning filters to remove organic atmospheric pollutants. While this can only be a good thing for the books, it is a sad day for everyone who loves the distinctive smell of old, decaying books!

Do you have any conservation-related photographs (humorous, dramatic or artistic)? Or have you spotted an amusing or unusual story in the news? Send your clippings to: news@iiconservation.org and share them with your fellow IIC members!