

News in Conservation



The e-paper from the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works

Issue 38, October 2013

IIC SECC 2013: The Student Organising Committee's Experience

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COPENHAGEN - The 2013 IIC Student and Emerging Conservators Conference in Copenhagen can be considered a continuation of the Student Conference held in London two years previously, in 2011. A few of us participated in the London Conference, as students from the School of Conservation in Denmark, and were so thrilled by the experience that we thought it would be exciting to host a similar conference in Copenhagen.

We started by approaching Mikkel Scharff (now Head of School) with the idea. He encouraged us to write an email to Graham Voce, IIC Executive Secretary, expressing our enthusiasm for the proposal.

In March 2013, two years later, we were informed that the IIC had decided to hold the next student conference in Copenhagen in September.

2014 IIC Hong Kong Congress call for student posters -

Check out details and deadlines in the IIC News section on page 17

The Staffordshire hoard conservation project -

Read the full story of this amazing collection and its conservation on page 7

The British Library/Qatar Foundation Project -

Meet the conservators working on the project. Full interview with NiC from page 11

IIC Reviews –

The next in the series of reviews of international conservation periodicals and journals, this time from Germany
Read it on page 20

www.iiconservation.org

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Throughout the summer, leading up to the conference, we worked hard to organise the event conference in collaboration with IIC and KADK (The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Schools of Architecture, Design and Conservation).

The three themes of the conference were defined by the IIC and Student Organising Committee: 1) education and employment across borders, 2) presenting oneself in a professional context and 3) optimising skills and networking: locally and further afield.

We allocated the various tasks between Committee Members; budget and funding, contacting speakers, IT, programme/poster layout and printing, advertising, catering, the evening arrangement, registration, studio visits, the Saturday arrangement (a social event), and later transcription. As planning progressed, however, individual roles merged and we ended up not taking the initial division of work too literally.

Planning overlapped with regular meetings and correspondence principally with Graham Voce from the IIC and Mikkel Scharff. In our experience, communication between the School of Conservation, KADK, participants, speakers, IIC and the Student Organising Committee was essential to the realisation of the conference. It was a significant part of the planning process and required a great deal of effort.

All work, which was done by the Student Organising Committee was voluntary but not without reward. The planning experience has given us an appreciation for international collaboration, and has provided insight into how IIC and other conservation associations are organised. The knowledge acquired will be beneficial for our future careers within conservation. We have become familiar with the administrative side of work, which is necessary to organise a larger event, such as a conference, and has thereby provided us with training we can use to execute similar tasks in the future.

The conference itself made the work worthwhile. It made the School of Conservation more visible at international level. The number of students who participated from Copenhagen and over the web was encouraging. The conference created a forum to discuss relevant themes and questions for students and emerging conservators. International and institutional differences and similarities in opinion, practice and standards, were illuminating. The event presented the chance to discuss the challenges students and emerging conservators are faced with, and students were able to directly address experienced and established conservators for advice.

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Editorial

Welcome to the October issue of *NiC*. Let's be honest, conservation is often in the media for the wrong reasons – a disaster, a lady repainting the face of Christ and so on. It is therefore rather refreshing to see Conservation occupying a conspicuous space in the media thanks to an event that has managed to capture the attention of the public both from the profession and non. I'm talking of course of the ICCROM Forum on Conservation Science that took place in Rome. Through a well-conceived blog platform, the Forum managed to blend the voices of both seasoned and emerging professionals – and IIC participated with posts from Adam Klups (IIC volunteer extraordinaire) and myself.

In this issue we hear the story of the Staffordshire Hoard and how the conservation team has managed to connect with the public and bring conservation at the forefront of this important project.

Following on, *NiC's* interview with the conservators working for the British Library/Qatar Foundation digitisation project. Often people wonder about the skills that a conservator should develop with regard to digitisation; starting from the conservators' own experiences, this interview will hopefully answer some of these questions.

I shall now leave you to enjoy this issue – please make a note of the upcoming deadlines and submit your work!

Barbara Borghese
Editor



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The Organising Committee - from left Matte Falk Paarup, Charlotte Graminius, Marie Bitsch Christiansen and Louise Tiedemann



© Mikkel Scharff

Relaxing outside the Conference main venue

Discussions continued outside the sessions during the social event. Here a platform was created for professional networking, which may result in further collaboration between people within the field, nationally as well as internationally.

Finally we would like to encourage students to take on a similar initiative, to create future student conferences, as they are extremely beneficial to themselves as well as to fellow students and the conservation field in general.

The Student Organising Committee:
Marie Bitsch Christiansen
Charlotte Graminius
Tora Hederus
Lea Jensen
Mette Falk Paarup
Louise Tiedemann



News in Brief...

3D map of the leaning Tower of Pisa created

PISA – A 3D map of the leaning Tower of Pisa has been developed using a laser scanner mounted on a hand held spring. The three-dimensional map of the famous monument includes its interior and provides data that could be used by conservators and to build interactive multimedia installations. The project is the result of a collaboration between an Italian team from the Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna of Pisa and the National Research Council of Australia (CSIRO).

The technique employed to obtain the map is the first application of a particular laser scanner technology for historical monuments.

The scanner used, called "Zebedee", is a type of hand-held scanner that floats around a spring while the user is holding it walking through the structure to be mapped.

The device allowed the research team to produce a detailed map of the tower despite its complex architecture and the spiral staircase.

The data obtained from the scan is converted by a software in a 3D map in less time than it takes to collect the data. The map can be displayed as a cloud of points in a 3D projection room.

To watch the BBC-produced video on the scanning of the Tower go to:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQoFR7iH7ck>



@Sotheis via Wikimedia

The Tower of Pisa

European ancient material research platform IPANEMA launched

PARIS – A new European ancient material research platform was inaugurated on 12th September 2013 on the eve of the European Heritage Day. The ceremony was opened by Geneviève Fioraso, French Minister for Higher Education and Research together with Jean-Paul Huchon, President of the Region Ile-de-France, and the representatives of the Ministry of Culture and Communication, the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), the National Museum of Natural History, the SOLEIL Synchrotron facility, and the Smithsonian Institution of the United States.

Located on the same site of the SOLEIL Synchrotron facility, IPANEMA claims to be the only facility of its kind worldwide, assisting specialised laboratories and institutions with the study of materials in the fields of archaeology, palaeontology, heritage conservation and preservation. IPANEMA is a laboratory working on the development of advanced methods of material characterization in archaeology, paleo-environments, palaeontology and cultural heritage, research and supporting synchrotron through external user projects hosted on the platform.

To this aim, IPANEMA will develop and provide a set of techniques for sample preparation, the study of samples and artefacts, and the statistical analysis of the data collected.

For further information on IPANEMA visit the website at: <http://ipanema.cnrs.fr/spip/> or download the full brochure from: http://www2.cnrs.fr/sites/communiqu/fichier/di_ipanema_inauguration_vfin_2.pdf

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Freer and Sackler Galleries announce Mellon grant to preserve the art of Chinese painting conservation

WASHINGTON - The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and Freer Gallery of Art announced a new \$1 million (£621,000) grant by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, for the endowment of a position for a Chinese painting conservator to work in the museum Department of Conservation and Scientific Research.

The museum is home to the only programme in the U.S. that teaches conservators how to care for delicate and invaluable Chinese paintings. In order to receive the grant, the museum has to match the funds with an additional amount of \$750,000 (£466,000) by 2016.

This endowment will provide both a career pathway to aspiring conservators and the teaching structure necessary to create a new generation of master conservators in a field that is growing and that laments a general lack of expertise. The training to undertake such type of work is in fact lengthy and highly specialised; apparently at present there are only four senior Chinese painting conservators in the USA and all are close to retirement.

For more information about the Freer and Sackler Galleries and their exhibitions, programmes and other public events, visit www.asia.si.edu.

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Winter landscape with barren trees and two horsemen by Song Dynasty Chinese artist Liang Kai, early 13th century, a hanging scroll with ink on silk, Freer Gallery of Art in Washington D.C.

ICCROM Forum on Conservation Science 2013

ROME - As this issue of *NiC* goes live, the ICCROM Forum on Conservation Science has just taken place in Rome, Italy from the 16th to the 18th October 2013.

The forum, organised in partnership with 15 other cultural heritage organisations (national heritage agencies, research institutions and universities) from 14 different countries with 80 participants from 25+ countries and different professional backgrounds, convened to reflect on the current role and impact of science within cultural heritage conservation worldwide, and to provide future orientation for the field.

The key themes of the Forum were based on three driving questions identified by the Consortium of partner institutions. These questions concern the role of science within conservation, and its contribution to wider societal priorities:

How can conservation science connect with and be of greater benefit to conservation practice?

How can conservation science connect with and contribute to wider societal priorities?

How can we build an integrated and impactful future for science in conservation?

The desired outcome of the event was to issue a strategic statement concerning the future of conservation science, develop a set of methodological tools to set priorities and enhance the relevance and impact of conservation science in a variety of contexts, produce a publication and digital resources, including the collected papers and contributed evidence used by the Forum, and other resources relevant to a variety of contexts. Showing an innovative way of engaging audiences, the event included some interesting and provocative blog contributions from a wide range of professionals, including IIC members. The posts can still be accessed at:

<http://forum2013.iccrom.org/blog/>

If you missed the live streaming of the event you can still view it following the link below:

<http://forum2013.iccrom.org/watch-online/>

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Cash injection for UNESCO World Heritage Site at Mohenjodaro announced

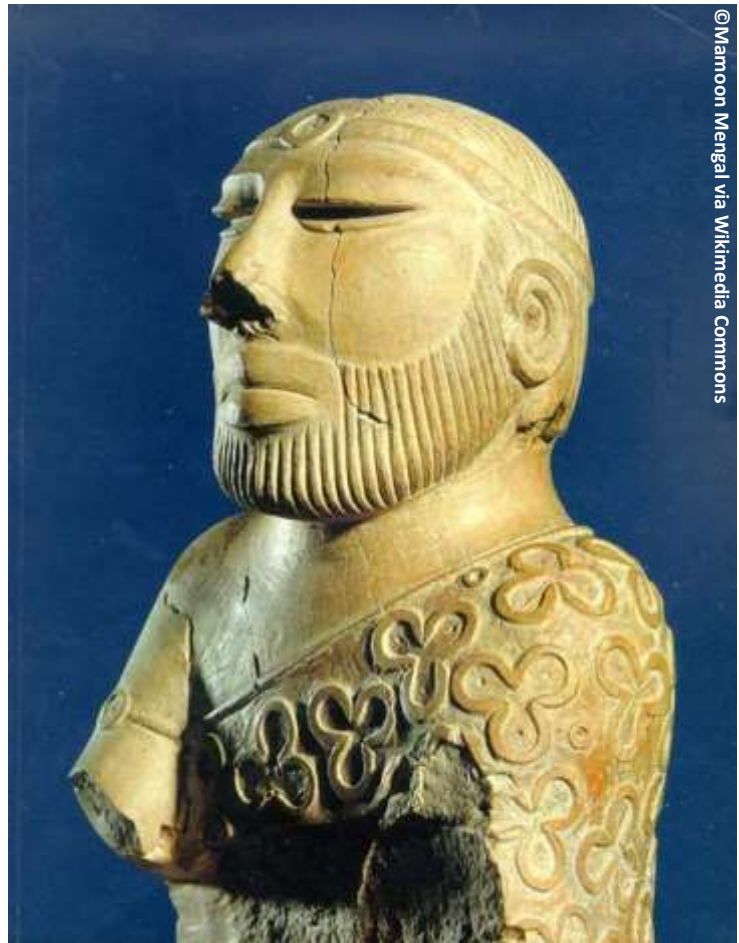
KARACHI – Described by UNESCO experts as the largest bronze-age city in the world and the first metropolis of the ancient world, Mohenjodaro, a ruined city located in the Larkana District of Sindh, Pakistan, has long been facing an uncertain future.

Built using unfired clay bricks, the 5,000 year old city is literally crumbling to dust, due neglect, public indifference and more recently tourists' fears of terrorism.

In a move that has given rise to hope, inaugurating the Mohenjodaro National Conference, organised by the Culture Department in collaboration with UNESCO, the Chief Minister Sindh Syed Qaim Ali Shah announced Rs100 million (US\$ 1.623m) for the preservation of the site.

Speaking at the event, Shah said "It is a great challenge for us to take appropriate and long-term protective measures under the research plan of archaeologists," calling upon the federal government, UNESCO and other world organisations to extend their support to fully preserving this very ancient historical monument. A preservation plan for the future of Mohenjodaro will have to consider the possibility of rebury those sections of the city that are mostly at risk, in addition to draw up a conservation strategy for the parts that are already heavily damaged.

The city was discovered in 1922 but it was not until the 1930s that major excavations were conducted at the site until 1965 when further work was halted due to increased weathering damage to the exposed structures. In more recent times, architectural documentation, surface surveys, and localised probing have taken place at the site.



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Indus Priest/King Statue from Mohenjodaro. The statue is 17.5 cm high and carved from steatite, National Museum, Karachi, Pakistan

Paul Banks and Carolyn Harris Preservation Award

LAS VEGAS - The deadline for nominations for the Paul Banks and Carolyn Harris Preservation Award is 1st December 2013. The award was established to honour the memory of Paul Banks and Carolyn Harris, early leaders in library preservation to recognise the contribution of a professional preservation specialist who has been active in the field of preservation and/or conservation for library and/or archival materials.

Criteria for selection of the winner will be determined by the person's accomplishments, as they relate to preservation leadership in such activities as leadership in professional associations at local, state, regional or national level; contributions to the development, application or utilisation of new or improved methods, techniques and routines; evidence of studies or research in preservation; significant contribution to professional literature; training and mentoring in the field of preservation.

The award, consisting of a cash prize of US\$1500 (£930) will be presented during the American Library Association Annual Conference that this year will take place in Las Vegas, USA in July 2014.

For more information about the award please visit: <http://www.ala.org/>

The Staffordshire hoard conservation project

Deborah Cane + Pieta Greaves + Natalie Harding + Ciaran Lavelle



The Staffordshire Hoard conservation programme was set up in 2010, following the discovery of a large Anglo-Saxon hoard of gold and garnet objects in a field by a metal detector operator. The finds were jointly acquired by the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (BMAG) and the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery (PMAG, Stoke-on-Trent) following one of the most successful public fundraising campaigns in English history raising the £3.285m (US\$5.255m) asking price in less than three months.

The project has taken a highly innovative, open and collegiate approach to conservation unlike any before it, and it is unique for archaeological materials recovered in the UK.

The conservation team based at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery has not only conserved the materials to a high professional standard, it has also successfully engaged both conservation professionals and public audiences, and through delivery of an extraordinary range of activities over a short time period, raised the profile of conservation in the UK and worldwide through the use of social media.

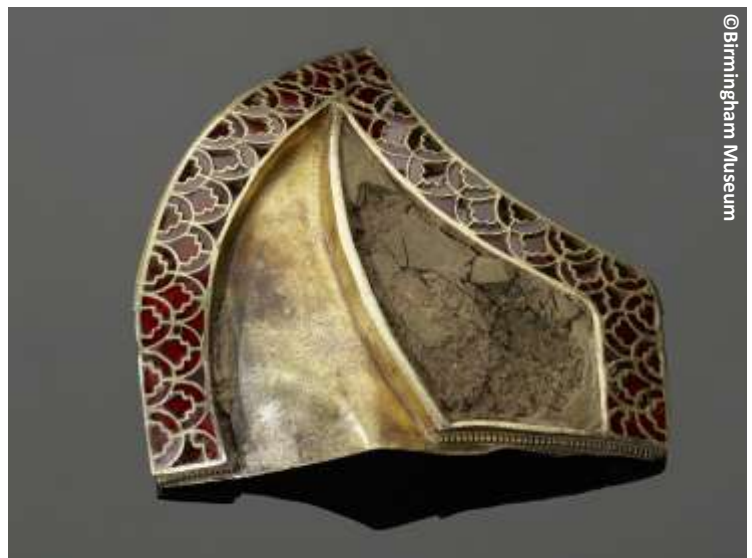
The project is now coming to the end of *Phase One*, with the team aiming to have conserved all of the 3500 objects and fragments by the end of 2013, allowing us to now reflect on what has been achieved since 2010.

Building a collegiate environment

The collegiate approach that has underpinned the project has proven very successful, attracting participants from, Germany, Canada, the Netherlands, Greece, the USA as well as the UK.

Since 2010 there have been 14 professional placements, 25 students and 10 non-conservation placements that participated in both the hands-on conservation programme and the public engagement programme. Experiences of the participants can be found on the Staffordshire Hoard website www.staffordshirehoard.org.uk.

In early 2013 emerging professionals Ciaran Lavelle and Natalie Harding joined the programme for 3 months thanks to funding support from English Heritage. Below they discuss their experiences.



K653, mystery object with intricate gold and garnet work, organic inlay

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Ciaran Lavelle

The Staffordshire Project as a whole was of interest to me, not just based on my own role within the project, but for the multi-layer approach to sharing the process.

During my time on the project I was part of an international team of professionals and students. As a recent graduate myself I understand the importance of learning from those with experience as well as to learn from students of various schools of conservation with different perspectives.

I am personally very interested in public engagement, teaching the public about the importance of heritage and its conservation, and the roles they can play in this. The public nature of the Hoard Project provides the opportunity to learn about all these aspects. It was a rewarding experience to work with, and to impart what knowledge I had to the public and the volunteers through the guided public tours of the conservation studio. The project also allowed me the opportunity to interact with the public in new and exciting ways, such as through the medium of social networking sites and blogs.

My short time on the project will hopefully benefit me thanks to the new skills acquired and the connections that I have made.

Natalie Harding

©Birmingham Museum

Natalie Harding during 'Family Day'

It has been expressed many times before: working on the Staffordshire Hoard is a 'once in a lifetime' opportunity. Saying that you have been directly involved with the Staffordshire Hoard conservation project as a conservator almost automatically brings an exclamation of amazement followed by the occasional hinted tone of jealousy. The widespread publicity surrounding the project has meant that finally even my parents recognise something that I'm working on! The public engagement programmes have increased the project visibility and from a conservator's point of view, I found this to be an interesting and enjoyable part of working on the Hoard.

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Having access to these forms of interaction and communication with the public reminds us of the importance of fruition of these collections and reinforces the reasons for our involvement with their conservation. Undertaking conservation on these objects meant that every portion of damage was scrutinised, studied and questioned. By being able to view inside an object, to see where solder had been placed to attach pieces together and identifying layout markings, joins, holes and rivets, more and more knowledge is gained.

Since leaving the Hoard I have successfully secured a position as conservator at the Science Museum (London, UK), working on their upcoming *Information Age Gallery*. Although the objects are very different, the principles to assess and conserve are the same.

Sharing our knowledge with the public



©Birmingham Museum

Deborah Cane, Pieta Greaves and Suzanne van Leeuwen examining an object

A programme giving access to a local, national and international audience has been achieved by open lectures, studio tours, family days, written blogs and video blogs. Launched by the conservation team, it creates a supportive public community of interest that feels engaged and involved with the team and the project.

Lectures are always well attended; so far we have given 41 lectures for general public, specialist conferences and one-off open events, with an estimated audience of 1,940 people. The written and video blogs focus on sharing the conservation process as well as some new and interesting discoveries, we use a mix of simple and more technical language to discuss conservation concepts such as cleaning with thorns and analytical techniques such as XRF and X-rays. Blogs have kept the public informed of the work and encouraged them to participate and engage through discussion threads. Comments from the public on the blog include: *“Really interesting, it’s great to have some focus on the work of the conservators which often gets overlooked. Thanks for such an informative and well-presented blog”*

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"This is a wonderful article! Thank you for showing so many examples and explaining in very clear language what you're discovering about the manufacturing processes. Can you suggest any good articles about the path to becoming a conservator?"

So far we have had 568,675 visits to the website, made up of 45.5% from the UK, 33% from USA and 21.5% from the rest of the world; we also have 1174 Facebook followers and 2318 Twitter followers.

More hands-on conservation activities include monthly Hoard tours, where conservation techniques and discoveries are shared with the public over an hour-long period, members of the public have the chance to ask questions about the process and look down the microscope at real objects. Tours are always very popular and sell out well in advance. To date we have had 26 public tours comprising 286 participants, we have also hosted 164 visits from dignitaries and specialist groups of varying sizes from 1-10 people.

The future

The future is also a positive one with Birmingham Museums Trust now focusing on a new Heritage Lottery funded hoard gallery due to open in autumn 2014. Audience consultation feedback has shown a keen interest in the desire for information about craftsmanship, warfare, language and life, as well as being able to view star objects.

In addition to this, understanding more about how the objects were conserved is a repeated request. The design concept has therefore reflected this with a stylised conservation table with a glass top, literally at the centre of the gallery, under which some of the finds will be visible. We have also included pull-out drawers with X-rays, XRF spectra and detailed photography; pull-out trolleys with educational handling materials with a conservation theme; videos of conservation in action and conservators talking about their work and finally interactive days where a conservator will be in the gallery to discuss the work they do. All of which should enhance the public interpretation of the beautiful finds displayed in the gallery.

We will also be moving into *Phase Two* of the conservation programme, which will focus on piecing the thousands of smaller fragments together as well as research-based analytical questions, plus continuing our commitment to the collegiate and public engagement programmes.

In conclusion

The Staffordshire hoard conservation project has been the most open and engaged conservation project of its kind, and has created and sustained a worldwide community of public and professional interest through the effective use of mainstream and social media.

Creating an open and collegiate project has helped to cement partnerships and built our public advocacy work, creating a wide following. This vibrant environment has positively contributed to the success of funding applications and kept the programme moving forward. Simon Cane who set up the programme believes that this approach has made the Hoard the most democratic archaeological find in history and offers a model of how conservation can better serve the diverse communities of interest, social, professional, academic, political, local, regional, national and international.

Current exhibitions of the Hoard can be seen at the Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery (Stoke-on-Trent), Tamworth Castle and Lichfield Cathedral. Past blogs and future updates, can be found at www.staffordshirehoard.org.uk

Pieta Greaves BA, BSc, ACR

Pieta has been the Hoard Conservation Manager since January 2013. Previous to this, she worked in Scotland on some of the most internationally significant archaeological material recovered in recent times, including the Lewisvale Roman Altars, Ardnamuchan Viking Boat Burial and the Forteviot Bronze Age Dagger Burial. Pieta trained as a conservator at Cardiff University after a brief career as an Archaeologist and became an accredited member of Icon in 2011

Deborah Cane Dip Cons, MA, ACR

Deborah trained as an object conservator at Lincoln and she has worked at National Museums Scotland, National Museums Liverpool and Birmingham Museums Trust. Here she took on the role as Staffordshire Hoard Conservation Manager from 2009-2012 and ran Phase One of the project. She has subsequently taken on the role of Conservation and Environment Officer overseeing the Trust nine sites





The British Library/Qatar Foundation Partnership behind the scenes – an interview with *NiC*

Flavio Marzo + Anna Hoffman + Barbara Borghese

In summer 2013, News in Conservation was invited behind the scenes of one of the most interesting and forward-looking projects currently taking place at the British Library in London, UK. The project is based on a co-operation between the British Library and the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development with support from the Qatar National Library. NiC interviewed the conservators taking part in the project

The British Library/Qatar Foundation partnership is a collaborative project to digitise half a million pages of archival material relating to the Gulf, creating an online portal that will be available to a diverse range of audiences around the world. The partnership between the two Institutions was agreed for a period of 10 years with the aim of working on shared projects relating to Gulf history. Divided into phases, the work will see an initial stage (phase 1) costing £8.7 million. During this time the work will include the conservation and digitisation of maps, photographs, manuscripts, letters, audio and video files consisting of 475,000 pages from the India Office records and 25,000 pages of medieval Arabic manuscripts. The India Office Records include archives of the British East India Company (1600-1858), the Board of Control or Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India (1784-1858), and the India Office (1858-1947).

The official archives of the India Office Records are complemented by over 300 collections and over 3,000 smaller deposits of Private Papers relating to the British experience in India. Over 25,000 pages of medieval Arabic manuscripts will be digitised and made accessible online for the first time. These items will be made available with descriptions in both English and Arabic.

The project's vision, as explained by the its leaders, is based on the desire to make important collections as accessible as possible for researchers and future generations with the goal of creating a world-class, 21st-Century online library to transform the study of Gulf history and Arabic science. The partnership aims to improve understanding of the Islamic world, Arabic cultural heritage and the Gulf's contribution to modern civilisation.

It is envisaged that the partnership will both push research into new directions, and pull academic communities together.

One of the aspects of the project that *News in Conservation* was particularly interested in was the central role of Conservation within the general project's framework. The project includes a dedicated conservation team to ensure

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materials are in a suitable condition to be digitised. A conservation studio was specifically set up in order to accommodate the work and was strategically placed in close proximity to the other operations to optimize the digitisation workflow. The newly set-up conservation studio has the capacity to accommodate standard conservation treatments on books and paper-based material from a range of collections. Specifically, the Conservation Team is responsible for:

- Liaising with other members of staff involved with other aspects of the project,
- Assessment of items to determine their suitability for digitisation,
- Establishing treatment requirements,
- The development of treatment options to ensure improved condition, longevity and accessibility of collection items,
- Minimisation of risk to items by providing handling training for staff.

Flavio Marzo is the Conservation Team Leader and together with Conservator Anna Hoffmann was available to answer *NiC*'s questions on the project and generally about life as a conservator within a large-scale digitization project.

NiC - Flavio, as you know there has been a growing interest towards digitisation and in particular in the role of conservators in relation to digitisation projects. You are in the perfect position to give us your view on the topic. Starting from what prompted you to go for this job.

Flavio Marzo - My career as a book conservator started in a very peculiar way; I started training in a Benedictine Monastery in the small village where I grew up in the north of Italy.

The beauty of the place, coupled with the ideal of a religious communitarian life were the first driving factors to attract me to the place and gave me the chance to become an apprentice at the book restoration studio that was already active in the monastery. Once I started working with the monks I discovered a natural disposition for manual artistic work that I channelled with the love that I always had for history behind objects. When time was mature for a change I graduated in book and paper conservation in Spoleto near Perugia and moved to London where after different experiences in other institutions, I settled at the British Library (BL).

At the British Library I almost immediately started to interact with the "digital world" by joining the team working on the *Codex Sinaiticus Digitisation Project*, one of the pioneering projects in digitisation of library treasures and a starting point for the development of policies and procedures to apply in future projects within the BL. The *Greek Manuscripts Digitisation Project* followed and it is from this experience that I have actually started to build up a real "expertise" in digitisation projects of library material and its processes.

At this point in my career I consider a great achievement to have joined the Qatar Foundation/British Library Partnership Digitisation Project as conservation studio manager and this achievement is clearly due to the previous experiences and the knowledge acquired on the ground.

NiC -Anna, you have a very different story from Flavio as you are an emerging professional. I'll ask you the same question – what attracted you to the job?

Anna Hoffmann - My interest is in large-scale conservation projects. I have worked on large-scale projects in my first job after graduating from university, and instantly fell in love with this approach... I think large-scale projects like digitisation projects are a big part of our future and I'd like to get to grips with it. And of course it is a pleasure to work in a renowned institution like the British Library!

NiC - How important you think it is to have conservation expertise when embarking on digitisation projects?

Flavio Marzo - It is essential! It is very important that Conservation/Preservation aspects and expertise are incorporated into the early stages of projects such as this one.



Flavio Marzo at work in the studio at the British Library

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Scoping is one of the most important foundation stones when building a project. Gaining as much knowledge as possible at the early stages is crucial in order to optimise the use of resources available. Conservation/Preservation brings very specialist knowledge to the project; using these inputs from the early stages of planning can secure vital information not retrievable in any other way.

Identifying right from the beginning the portion of the collection that is fit for digitisation can save time while at the same time giving an idea for estimating time needed for future conservation. Having Conservation/Preservation expertise on board means being able to cover all aspects related to the security of the items. Conservators provide monitoring and risk assessment covering the entire workflow together with training for staff involved in handling the collection.



The photographic stand in the BL/Qatar digitisation studio



Anna Hoffmann at work

Anna Hoffmann – I agree with Flavio and I'd like to add that conservation should play a major part in any digitisation project although it doesn't mean that everyone on the project needs to have conservation expertise.

In my opinion, every digitisation project within a cultural institution is a big chance for bringing the preservation cause forward. There is rarely a chance for every single item in a collection to be looked at systematically, and a well-conceived digitisation project gives us exactly that opportunity. Even if there is no or very limited time for treatment, there should be time for a proper condition assessment. This will not only

ensure that most fragile items get the attention and care they need, but will also give us, if done in the right way, a lot of valuable information about the condition of the collection in general and insights into possible treatment selection at a later stage. Also, conservators can often act as communication links between different strands of a project as we hover somewhere in the middle between academic staff, curators or cataloguers on one side, and the more practically focused imaging or IT professionals.

NiC - Do you think that the conservator's role within such projects is slowly becoming more accepted?

Flavio Marzo - It is really hard to clearly and visibly quantify the importance and the "omnipresence" that conservation inputs have in such projects. It is every day more tangible to people involved in the planning stages how vital Conservation is. One of the most challenging tasks I have as a manager of the conservation studio is to find clear *key performance indicators* (KPI). KPIs are used to evaluate the success of a project, or to evaluate the success of a particular activity. Sometimes success is defined in terms of making progress toward strategic goals but it is extremely difficult to clearly define conservation goals when conservation is in fact supporting the entire workflow and so helping to achieve the goals of other strands of the project.

If you look at the different stages of a digitization process from proposal and selection via fundraising, condition assessment and preparation for scanning to the actual imaging and the processing of the images through to the final delivery for example via a database and the long-term sustainability of both the digital file and the physical item (after A.E. Bülow & J. Ahmon 2011: Preparing Collections for Digitization), it becomes clear that conservation is only part of a fairly complex process. However, one realises, that conservation and preservation input is the basis for many of the steps.

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Passport issued to Sir Lewis Pelly

If implemented from inception, conservation can also enhance the value of the project contents by adding expertise that focuses on the physical features of the items and their degradation processes. These inputs together with improving the final results of the project can be instrumental if further funds are needed.

Anna Hoffmann - From my personal experience, yes. I so far had the luck to work in institutions where the conservator's opinion is as valued as anyone else's.

NiC - How much did your training and skills help you in the new role?

Flavio Marzo - The conservation studio deals primarily with library material, paper-based items in a bound or loose format. In the context of a digitisation project such as this one, my paper and book conservation background is clearly the core from where all my working decisions are taken. Being now the studio manager I had to develop my skills in managing a team and having being appointed at a very early stage, I also had to set up the conservation studio, carefully managing the budget that was assigned to the task.

Many new and different skills are needed in my new role compared to the ones that were required during my previous work as a bench conservator but working in a big institution like the British Library gave me the opportunity and the facilities to attend a lot of internal training sessions that helped me to gain new knowledge and skills.

Anna Hoffmann - My previous four years of work experience as a project conservator at Landesarchiv (State Archive) North Rhine, Westphalia in Germany provided the foundations for this role. I worked in the main conservation centre as well as in the conservation studio of one of its branches and was involved in large-scale deacidification and conservation/digitisation projects. My former manager was - and still is - a mentor to me. His approach to large scale conservation projects, with a strong focus on efficiency, opened up a completely new area of conservation which I hadn't come across during my course at university and which is, as I instantly realised, totally 'my cup of tea'. But of course my formal practical and academic education – more than 7 years in total – both in Germany and the UK were a brilliant qualification and starting point.

NiC – Just to recap - what are the skills required for conservators dealing with digitisation projects?

Flavio Marzo - There is always a strong need of good manual dexterity and in the case of library and similar institutions, a sound knowledge of paper/parchment and bookbinding conservation skills. The conservator is responsible for the treatments he is carrying out on items taking into account the increased pace of working and the very tight deadlines. This pressure needs to be carefully evaluated meaning that the conservators need to have a good knowledge related to a wide range of treatment options to apply to a very diverse range of materials. Conservators have to be able to prioritise and to organise very well their daily work. On top of those standard requirements, the conservator also needs to have the ability to look and to understand the bigger picture. Conservators working in projects involving mass processing of collection items need to be interested in the analysis of the various aspects related to workflow processes and their conservation and preservation implications. Risk assessments and creation of databases are integral part of the work; these skills have not been part of the common conservation curricula at least not until recently, although I'm not excluding the possibility of their inclusion at some stage in the future.

Anna Hoffmann – Adding to what Flavio said, I think that conservators should be excellent communicators and not be afraid to interact and engage with people. Working on digitisation projects also means we need to be open-minded to other strands of the project and willing to attempt to understand their workflows and our impact on them, for example on cataloguing, IT and imaging.

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NiC – Flavio touched upon the subject of ‘standard education’ - Do you think that standard education institutions are providing such skills or there is a need to re-think training for conservators at the most basic levels?

Flavio Marzo - Teaching in conservation is a vast and very complex issue and the debate is today more alive than ever. The situation is exacerbated by differences in training provided in an international context. Without too deeply analysing such differences, one of the most controversial topics remains the balance between the teaching of theoretical and practical skills. My personal experience is that of someone who started his career as an apprentice in a book restoration studio and only later received his formal academic training.

I don't think there is a right or wrong answer to this question but I strongly believe that the formation of a conservator should include theory and practice in equal amounts. Hands-on skills are invaluable when treating items, especially when preparation treatments are carried out at a fast pace on a great range of material. On top of a deep understanding of material composition and behaviours and a sound knowledge of traditional skills, new skills in other fields like IT and management processes are also required.

Anna Hoffmann - I was lucky enough to train both in Germany and in the UK; I am therefore able to compare the two educational systems and draw the best out of each. Looking back at my training in both countries I have to admit that neither digitisation, nor large-scale conservation were topics included in the programmes. Still, I think there's always only so much you can learn at university, as for certain things experience is simply the best teacher.



A page from the Archimede Book on the Construction of Water Clocks

NiC - The project's approach to conservation is based on minimal intervention. Do you think that this type of approach sacrifices more advanced treatment skills that consequently become redundant?

Flavio Marzo - In the context of such large-scale projects, the level of treatment needs to be customised to specific requirements; the British Library for example has implemented a "fit for purpose" approach, implying the understanding of the scope and purpose of the treatment, the resources available in the context of the life cycle of the item treated, contextualised within the project.

Practical conservation treatments are therefore carried out on items in need of conservation up to a certain level. This approach not only reflects the more general requirements of the "minimal intervention" philosophy, but also keeps in mind the concept of "re-treatability". The success of the treatment is measured based on the achievement of the goals of the project, in this case to obtain a good image at the end of the imaging process. Degradation, especially of organic based material is unstoppable and what conservation does is to try to slow down these processes and to minimise risks related to the use of the objects that are part, in this specific case, of a public collection.

It is essential to have a very profound knowledge of the conservation field to be able to stop at the right point when treating items. We are all well aware of the negative effects of over-treating objects and it would be wrong to think that to customise the level of intervention means automatically to sacrifice the skills of an experienced conservators or making his professional life boring.

There are different aspects in this debate that are interesting and have to be considered.

In a project involving the mass digitisation of collection items, the conservator has the opportunity to process a greater number of items in a short period of time and this can become an amazing opportunity for gaining

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information about the collections. This is possible only if time has been allocated at the early stages of scoping and if the right kinds of skills are available. To define its role and making it meaningful is in my opinion one of the greatest challenges faced by conservation. This can be done only by understanding how conservation can enhance the value of the collections during the conservation process not only by providing practical treatments and minimising risks but also, I believe, by adding contextual specific knowledge.

Anna Hoffmann - I would like to speak about degrees (or levels) of treatment – we only treat items to a certain degree if preparing for digitisation. I don't think this approach sacrifices other treatment skills, and I don't think they become redundant. As with abstract art, you need to know how to draw properly to be able to judge what you can leave out... We should keep in mind that conservation is still a very young profession in constant evolution. By no means should we generally replace high degrees of conservation treatments by the more focussed treatment we apply for digitisation preparation! Both sides need to co-exist and complement rather than compete against each other. We should also take into account the financial side of conservation. If we want to secure our jobs in the future, I believe we need to be more aware of efficiency and how we can optimise the level of care. To this end, digitisation projects are a perfect learning opportunity.

NiC - Are you able to fit within your work routine any bench work time at all?

Flavio Marzo - As a manager I have many duties related to my position that are purely administrative and so my bench work time has drastically diminished. The pace of the Qatar Digitisation Project has seen many changes in the last few months and at times I had to spend more than the expected time carrying out practical treatments but I envisage that at normal pace I should be spending approximately 50% or less of my time on practical work.

Anna Hoffmann - My role within the project implies that most of my time is spent at the bench working or assessing objects. I am however available to support the manager in carrying out administrative tasks if required and I have to say that I really enjoy the organisational side of the project. We also regularly give handling training and support for our colleagues on the team.

NiC - Finally, what are in your opinion the key factors that make this project a success story?

Flavio Marzo – As far as I can tell, this is the first time that conservation has been so deeply imbedded in a digitisation project at the British Library. The conservation studio is located on the same floor as all the other elements of the project making the interaction easier.

Three conservators of various levels of seniority have been appointed to carry out treatments for the unfit items but most importantly to implement the entire process from a conservation/preservation point of view.

This unique situation has created a very interactive environment where problems can be solved efficiently with minimal waste of time.

Communication has become, more than ever, a vital element of our work and also an invaluable learning tool. The implementation of processes can happen in real time and the different expertise have in this contest found the common ground where they can easily interact and naturally generate solutions.

During the early stages of the project we had the opportunity to spend time to prepare a very comprehensive document about conservation policies and procedures. Creating the policy document was a great opportunity for us to improve our understanding of the needs of a digitisation project and its processes and consequently to provide a document that could be used as a reference for other similar projects.

The Qatar Programme, part of the wider partnership agreed between the Qatar Foundation and the British Library, aims to digitise and make available to scholars and general public 500,000 pages of documents ranging from medieval manuscripts to recent documents related to the history of the Gulf area.

This material will be made available online in a multilingual format, English and Arabic, enriched by contextual pieces that will culturally and artistically support the technical content.

This is an amazing goal, especially in the challenging times we live in. We are not only increasing the value of the British Library collection by enhancing its access, but we are also creating a multicultural platform where different and geographically distant worlds can meet under the common intent of knowledge and mutual understanding.

To learn more about this project visit: <http://www.bl.uk/> and www.qf.org.qa

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IIC News



IIC Congress 2014: An Unbroken History: Conserving East Asian Works of Art and Heritage - Hong Kong, China (Monday, 22 September, 2014 to Friday, 26 September, 2014)

Call for Student Posters - Deadline: 3 March, 2014

IIC is delighted to announce a call for abstracts for the 2014 IIC Hong Kong Congress Student Poster Session. The aim of this session is to provide a peer-reviewed platform for research and work on conservation projects being undertaken by students and emerging conservators who have recently graduated. This is an opportunity for those who are starting out in the conservation arena to take part in conservation's international showcase. Student Posters will be displayed prominently throughout the meeting and, as with the main poster session, there will be a programmed session giving delegates the opportunity to speak to poster authors. A pdf-format file of your copyright-cleared poster would also be welcomed at a later stage to enable display on the IIC web-site. The abstracts are not published in the preprints of the conference however.

We invite current students and recent graduates to submit proposals for inclusion at the 2014 IIC Congress. If you would like to present a poster, please send your provisional summary of the poster content (500-800 words, one image may be included) to students@iiconservation.org by 3 March 2014. The choice of posters for display will be made by 2 May 2014 and final texts will be required by 30 June 2014. The proposal and abstract submission guidelines can be downloaded from the IIC web page: <http://www.iiconservation.org>

The IIC is delighted to announce that the 25th biennial IIC Congress will be held in Hong Kong on 22–26 September 2014, with the theme of *An Unbroken History: Conserving East Asian Works of Art and Heritage*. For the first time, IIC is holding its Congress in a sub-tropical region which brings its own, very particular problems of preventive conservation. IIC is delighted to be organising the 2014 Congress with the Leisure and Cultural Services Department of the Hong Kong Government, who have overall responsibility for the public museums, galleries and heritage sites throughout Hong Kong. The Congress will be held at Hong Kong City Hall, an important example of an 'evolved-Bauhaus' style architecture bordering the famous Victoria Harbour, which will provide a central, capacious and comfortable venue for the week. For more information on the 25th IIC Congress, visit:

<http://www.iiconservation.org>

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IIC Social Media update!

IIC's presence on the social media arena is growing and our presence is starting to get noticed with increased participation both to our Facebook page then on our forum on LinkedIn. Our Facebook page has reached the amazing number of 12149 followers, have a look at the graph below to get an idea of how many people are interacting with us on a daily basis!



Our forum on LinkedIn is also growing and has already hosted interesting discussions that we hope will continue to generate interest in the future.

Discussion posts from the past few months included a search for the owner and significance of two red seals on the back of a 16th-century panel painting of Cardinal Pucci, and a request for the name of a current manufacturer of AYAA (a polyvinyl acetate resin found in many products used in art conservation).

There was also a lively discussion on vandalism. The original discussion question, inspired by a blog post on the controversy of vandalism, asked: As conservators, what should we consider to be vandalism? Should we always remove the traces that vandalism leaves, or are there instances when the damage is worth preserving? Here are a few lines from the discussion in which documentation and the change of opinions over time were key points:

Kate Stonor (Partner at Tager Stonor Richardson)

...If, sadly, vandalism does occur it should, of course, be documented and we should all try to learn how best to avoid it in the future...

Julian Bickersteth (Managing Director at International Conservation Services (ICS))

...[W]hat constitutes vandalism from a conservator's point of view. Take the example of Cecilia Gimenez' restoration of Garcias' Ecce Homo, which gained such notoriety last year. Gimenez ended up charging people to view her work, claiming copyright, for which she may have some justification...

Sharra Grow (Paintings Conservator at Fine Art Conservation Group)

I think the definition of vandalism can change depending on whose perspective we are considering. For instance, The swaths of cloth painted over the genitals of Michelangelo's figures on his "Last Judgment" (added after his death) ... were removed during the Sistine Chapel conservation campaign in the 1980s and '90s...

Barbara Borghese (Conservator at The Conservation Space and Editor, News in Conservation, IIC)

I think the 'magic' word here is, as Kate states in her comment, documenting... Either we make the definite choice of leaving anything that happen to an object as part of its history - so we also stop intervening on the natural ageing process of a work of art - or we keep documenting and allow future generations to make informed decisions.

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Athanasios Velios (Research Fellow Conservation and Webmaster IIC)

I think another important concept is that of "significance". When the Saddam Houssein statue was being vandalised by American troops... the event of vandalising was historically far more significant than any concerns about public consent or preservation. Nobody even questioned it and most would probably not even consider it as vandalism.

Clare Finn (Conservator of Paintings at Clare Finn & Co Ltd)

The difficulties involved in a true subjective view may mean that only the problems can be pointed out but recommendations to treat or not to treat can only be made when specific cases are considered - but history will still alter the significance of such interventions.

Follow us by 'liking' our page on [Facebook](#) or ask to join our [LinkedIn Forum](#)

Studies in Conservation – looking at the year ahead

Starting in 2014 with volume 59 of *Studies in Conservation*, there will be six issues per year of 64 pages each, instead of the four issues per year of 64 pages each which have been produced since Maney became IIC's publishing partner.

Astute readers of *Studies in Conservation* will already have noticed that 2013 saw an increase in page numbers within that year's four issues. The expansion reflects the increasing popularity of the journal, as it receives ever greater numbers of high-quality papers which are relevant to the wider conservation profession. The growing number of papers on *FastTrack* but not yet in print enables readers to find them before they appear in print. IIC's busy editors have also been encouraging authors to state explicitly how the content of the paper is relevant to practising conservators as well as to specialists working right in its subject area. Not only have the page numbers increased, but the number of voluntary editors has been increased to cope with the papers.

Readers in 2014 will also notice that increasing numbers of the 6 issues are going to be themed: three of them in 2014, with one of these three including some invited papers on environmental standards, which will set the theme for the discussions on environmental standards to take place in the IIC 2014 Hong Kong congress, and also in the ICOM-CC triennial congress taking place in Melbourne, Australia, the week before. We hope that the theming will promote a wider readership of the papers in these issues. Authors in particular should note that no more than three issues per year will have a theme: conservation is a very wide field and we need to give equal access to all the papers which don't line up with the selected themes.

Reviews

IIC reviews of conservation publications - Germany

IIC's successful initiative to review international conservation literature in languages different from English continues in this issue with a very interesting review of conservation literature from Germany submitted by Sarah Fisher.

It is not surprising that Germany, with its long, proud history of research and writing on the materials and techniques of works of art, should have four impressive journals of interest to conservators of cultural heritage and those in related disciplines. This reviewer received much of her conservation training in German-speaking countries nearly 40 years ago but since then has been immersed in American museum conservation, with little recent exposure to the developments in the German-speaking conservation realm. It has been fascinating for me while working on this review, to be reminded of the wealth, quality and international breadth of information available to conservators in the German-speaking world through these journals.

The four publications most pertinent for this review are: **Beiträge zur Erhaltung von Kunst und Kulturgut (BEKK)** ("Contributions to the Preservation of Works of Art and Cultural Heritage") which is the journal of the German conservators' association, the Verband der Restauratoren (VDR); **Zeitschrift für Kunsttechnologie und Konservierung (ZKK)** ("Newsletter for Art Technology and Conservation") which is closely connected to the graduate conservation training programs; **Restaura** ("Restoration") an independent, broadly based conservation magazine; and **Rundbriefphotografie** ("Photography Circular"), in which photography conservation of both analog and digital media is one of the main topics within a broad focus on the collection and care of photographs. The majority of the articles in these four publications is written in German and focuses on subjects originating in the German-speaking conservation community. However, all may have a number of articles in English or other languages from the broader European community and are often outlets for articles from the UK, Scandinavia, the Netherlands and occasional others. They usually have English abstracts of their main articles both in their printed volumes and on their websites.

Beiträge zur Erhaltung von Kunst-und Kulturgut is a large-format, attractive publication with extensive color reproductions, appears twice a year and averages around 150 pages per volume. It covers all conservation specialties of all periods and its editing philosophy is to maintain this broad scope in each volume to best serve the interests of all its members. Subjects may include thorough reports on practical treatments, reports on academic research projects, recent association conference proceedings, the philosophy of preservation/ restoration, the history of German conservation education, or interviews with important figures in the field. The articles are peer-reviewed by specialists in the appropriate areas, a rigorous editing process that takes place among the authors and the editing staff and the editorial advisors, producing highly professional articles.



At the end of each volume are shorter commentaries and book reviews, covering both German-language and international publications. English abstracts of all its major articles are included. The **BEKK** is automatically distributed to VDR members, as well as being available for purchase in stores and online, and past volumes are available online. In addition to these printed volumes, the VDR also produces an online newsletter which appears every two months and an ongoing series of printed publications in German which are monographs on topics which were the themes of past association conservation conferences. The journal's website address is www.restauratoren.de.

Historically, the **BEKK** evolved as a consolidation of the publications of the eight individual local conservators' alliances existing in East and West Germany before the reunification in 1991. In 2001 the eight groups joined to create the "Verband der Resoratoren" and gave up their individual publications to create one publication to represent the output of the new association. The strong editorial direction already present in the earlier publication of "Beiträge zur Erhaltung von Kunstwerken", published by East German conservators' associations from 1982-1987, continued for the new group's publication which added "Kulturgut" to the new title to emphasize its all-encompassing breadth of focus on the conservation of all types of cultural heritage.

The **Zeitschrift für Kunsttechnologie und Konservierung** is another impressively produced, high-quality journal with numerous colour images, averaging 200 pages per volume. It also appears twice a year and has a strong international component, with many articles in English. It is the most academically grounded of the four publications and has as equally rigorous an editing process as the previous journal. Although it covers all conservation specialties and related fields, it focuses mainly on the research produced by the academic institutions involved in training conservators or involved in related research projects, in German-speaking areas and their European Union counterparts. It may, for example, dedicate all of one volume to the theses of graduates from the training programs, or feature the complete presentations of a specific conference or meeting. For example in Volume 1 of 2012 are the complete proceedings of the 2011 conference at the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, "Let Material Talk - the Technology of Late Medieval Cologne Painting in Context", and in Volume 2 of 2008 the proceedings of the symposium at the same museum on "The Newest Research on Painting Techniques of the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists". In these two volumes, all articles are published in their original languages but, very helpful for the English reader, there are English translations of all the foreign language presentations. The website contact is www.wernersche.com.

The **ZKK** first appeared in 1987 and at that time was produced by the East German restorers' group, the Deutsche Restauratoren Verband (DRV). When the consolidation of the German conservators' groups and their publications occurred in 2001, however, this one publication maintained its independence, severing its connection with any conservators' association. Interestingly, due to the different editorial goals and control of it and the **BEKK** there is apparently little competition between the two publications: most German-speaking conservators subscribe to both. A list of the contents of all the volumes of the **ZKK** printed since 1987 can be found on the publisher's website.

Restauo has a different focus than the previous two publications, appearing eight times a year in a thinner (c. 65 pages) format. As do the others, it has an attractive layout with colour images but it has occasional advertisements scattered throughout. It appears to have a less formal editing process, less academically rigorous than the previous two publications and acts more as a news bulletin which also presents timely, focused articles. Its subtitle "Forum for Restorers, Conservators and Historic Preservation Specialists", indicates its emphasis on the lively, topical presentation of its material and discourse with its readers. Its contents are divided into shorter topics of current interest such as a useful editorial, recent news, an opinion section, an "around the town" section, a literature reviews section. The second part contains longer thematic reports on conservation issues of all kinds. Well-written English abstracts are always included with these. The website provides an attractive combination of an up-to-date newsletter and access to ordering the available past volumes as well as lists of their contents back to 1996: www.restauo.de.

Historically, **Restauo** is the oldest of the four publications. Its roots can be traced back to the journal "Technische Mitteilungen für Malerei" (Technical Reports for Painting) which first appeared in 1894 and provided practical and technical information on paint for painters, early restorers, paint chemists and for the building trade. By 1942 when its publication was taken over by its present publisher and, after a hiatus from 1944 to 1955 due to the consequences of WWII, its focus had shifted to technical studies of paint for artists and restorers. After 1955 it reappeared quarterly with the title "Maltechnik" as a supplement to the painters' journal "Mappe". In 1972 it again

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became an independent magazine, “Maltechnik-Restaur”, and eventually became **Restaur** which emphasized its expansion to include all conservation specialties, not just paint and the painted surface.

The fourth journal on our list, **Rundbrief Fotografie**, “Photography Circular”, is the only specialty-specific publication of the four, being dedicated to covering all areas of the conservation, preservation, archiving and exhibition of all forms of photographic images, both digital and analog, in archives and collections, private and public, in German-speaking areas. It appears four times a year in black and white printed format, more modest in style than the previous three, and usually is 48 pages in length. The publishers work together with the museum associations of Baden-Württemberg, Saxony and a section of the German Association for Photography, as well as an editorial board of German and international experts, to produce the publication. It is tightly packed with interesting information ranging from reports on private collections of historic photographs, to new storage philosophies in museum photography collections, to an analysis of the *camera lucida*, to legal issues affecting photo collections, to new developments in the treatment of photos, just to mention a few. It has a strong current news component and regular sections on exhibitions and literature reviews, people in the field and notices of upcoming events. More than the previous publications, it has much material geared to the non-conservator, to the art historian, the archivist, the museum manager, the photographer: “Conservation and Restoration” is the title of only one of its sections. All of the longer articles have convenient English abstracts. This reviewer, being a painting conservator and knowing little about the world of photography conservation, archives and collections, found reading this journal a valuable introduction to the richness of German-area collections and to the long history and complexity of the issues involved with caring for them. Separately from the journal, the publishers have also produced a series of special manuals on specific topics of interest to its public, with one of the seven so far published appearing in an English translation, “Fundamentals of Photograph Archiving”. The website provides information about ordering back issues of the journal. **Rundbrief** started in 1989 as an informal newsletter for the working group “Photography in Museums” of the Baden-Württemberg Museums Association. By 1994 the publication had evolved into its present quarterly-appearing format. Its website is www.rundbrief-fotografie.de.

In summary, when I first started work on this review, I couldn’t imagine how the German-speaking conservation audience could support four separate publications on the conservation of cultural materials, three of which seemed to cover exactly the same material. The results of a careful sifting through of recent volumes for this review has shown that there are significant differences among the three publications, some subtle, some pronounced, which are produced by their varying histories, editing approaches and audiences. Each publication is useful and informative in its own way. Together, all four provide us with a richer and deeper insight into conservation at many levels in the German-speaking world than is available into conservation in any other country with which I am familiar, as well as providing important outlets for international articles.

Sarah Fisher retired in 2012 after 30 years of work for the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. first as Senior Painting Conservator followed by 20 years as Head of Painting Conservation. Previously she had worked at the Balboa Art Conservation Centre in San Diego, California and The Intermuseum Laboratory in Oberlin, Ohio. Following a B.A. in Art History from Wellesley College, she had been apprenticeship-trained in Europe between 1967 and 1975. Her focus has always been the care and study of old master European paintings and she has published and lectured in that field. She has contributed volunteer work to the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) over the years, including secretary on the board, head of the membership committee and the project guide for the publication of the painting specialty group’s catalogue “Varnishes and Their Solvents”.



More News

Mes Aynak Buddhas threatened by Chinese mining company



@Jerome Starkey via Wikimedia Commons

An ancient stupa at Mes Aynak, Afghanistan

MES AYNAK – A four-square-kilometre site in the Mes Aynak area of Afghanistan, which is home to a wealth of ruins as old as 5,000 years, is threatened with destruction after the Afghan government sold mining rights to a Chinese company in a deal that is reportedly worth US\$3bn (£1,86bn). The area is in fact also rich in copper, a very valuable commodity for a country that needs the cash desperately. The site, which is an hour's drive from the capital Kabul, also contains the remnants of many Buddhist monasteries that stood here for hundreds of years.

Archaeologists are now worried that when the mining activities will start, the area will be likely blown up and little care will be taken to protect the ancient ruins. These worries have prompted excavation work to step up the pace in a bid to unearth as much of the city as possible. Already a wealth of Buddhist statues of all sizes have been found some with astonishing details. Some of the artefacts recovered during excavation are on display at the National Museum in Kabul and there are plans to build another museum in Logar, an area close to Mes Aynak to house future finds.

The United Nations' cultural arm, UNESCO, is stepping in to help the excavation project. UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova visited the site in May 2013 securing the co-operation of the Afghan Ministries of Culture and Mining, as well as funding from the World Bank, to ensure preservation continues at Mes Aynak. In a statement she said: "We want to preserve and protect the maximum possible what is there at the same time we understand that economic development is a problem for the country. The good news is, I think, we have some time, probably some three years to work on this."

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WMF 2014 Watch List

© Daniel Schwen via Wikimedia Commons

Eero Saarinen's Gateway Arch, St. Louis, USA

NEW YORK – The World Monument Fund (WMF) has published its 2014 Watch List which this year includes 67 sites from a total of 41 countries worldwide.

Among the sites included in the list, the cultural heritage of the entire country of Syria was deemed at high risk with cities like Aleppo already heavily damaged as a result of on-going conflicts.

The list also includes modern sites at risk from neglect such as Battersea Power Station in London, UK and Eero Saarinen's Gateway Arch, a mid-century modern structure that was at risk due to corrosion, located in St. Louis, USA.

Published every two years since 1996, the World Monuments Watch List is a call to action for cultural heritage around the globe that is at risk from the forces of nature and the impact of social, political, and economic change.

The interactive map with description of the sites can be downloaded from the WMF website <http://www.wmf.org/downloads/press-kit/2014-Map-ENG.pdf>



© Geekchie via Wikimedia Commons

Battersea Power Station after the roof was removed

What's on + NiC's List

Call for papers

IIC Congress 2014: *An Unbroken History: Conserving East Asian Works of Art and Heritage*
 22-26 September 2014
 Hong Kong, China
 Call for Student Posters - Deadline: 3 March, 2013
 For more information about submission requirements please visit:
<https://www.iiconservation.org/node/3922>

IS&T Archiving Conference 2014
 13-14 May 2014
 Berlin, Germany
 Deadline for abstract submission 2 December 2013
 For further info please visit:
<http://www.imaging.org/ist/conferences/archiving/index.cfm>

Artistic techniques and forms of intervention on cultural heritage: Art History as reflection and commitment
 12-14 November 2013
 Valencia, Spain
 Deadline for submission: 8 November 2013

Call for Expressions of Interest - Conference on Cyclododecane Primary tabs
 Spring 2015 (date TBA)
 Cambridge, UK
 Please email Sophie Rowe with your expression of interest at rswr2@cam.ac.uk

A comprehensive list of events taking place around the world, in and around the field of conservation.

Write to news@iiconservation.org if you wish to add your event

Conferences/Seminars

Association for Gravestone Studies Meeting
 2 November 2013
 New York, USA
 For more information about this event please visit:
<http://www.gravestonestudies.org/>

Seminar on Movable Religious Heritage
 4-5 November 2013
 Utrecht, Netherlands
 For further information about this event please visit:
www.futurereligiousheritage.eu/utrecht-2013/

XII World Congress of the Organization of World Heritage Cities : Heritage Cities, Sustainable Cities
 9-22 November 2013
 Oaxaca, Mexico
 For more information about this event please visit:
www.ovpm.org

XVI Borsa Mediterranea del turismo archeologico : ArcheoVirtual : il "museo del futuro"
 14-17 November 2013
 Paestum, Salerno, Italy
 For more information about this event please visit:
www.bmta.it

Cultural Heritage and Disaster Risk Reduction International Conference
 18-20 November 2013
 Bangkok, Thailand
 For more information about this event please visit:
www.seameo-spafa.org

Digital Past 2014

12-13 February 2014

Llandudno, UK

For more information about this event please visit:

<http://www.rcahmw.gov.uk/Hi/ENG/Our+Services/Outreach+/>**The 1st International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies for Disaster Management**

24-25 March 2014

Algiers, Algeria

For more information about this event please visit:

<http://www.ict-dm.org/index.php>**Revisiting Kathmandu : Safeguarding living urban heritage**

25-29 November 2013

Kathmandu, Nepal

For more information about this event please visit:

www.unesco.org/new/en/kathmandu/culture/revisiting-kathmandu**First International Conference on Heritage Conservation and Site Management Heritage Tourism : Prospects and Challenges**

8-11 December 2013

Cairo, Egypt

For more information about this event please visit:

www.heritage.edu.eg/index-en.htm
hosam.refai@hq.helwan.edu.eg**Restaurer, conserver, mettre en valeur la mosaïque**

9-13 December 2013

Marseille, France

For more information about this event please visit:

www.inp.fr**Cleaning of Acrylic Painted Surfaces (CAPS)**

10-13 December 2013

Australia

www.getty.edu/conservation/our_projects/education/caps/caps_2013_aust.html
CAPS@getty.edu**Courses/Workshops****Airbrushing for Conservators Workshop**

9-10 December 2013

Haverhill, Massachusetts, USA

For a registration form, please contact either Tad Fallon or Stephanie Auffret -

sauffret@winterthur.org**2014 IAP Course - Giltwood Frame and Object Restoration**

16-20 June 2014

Oxford, UK

For more information

see: <http://www.academicprojects.co.uk/course-details.php?courseID=741>**NHIG Conservation of Architectural Ironwork Course**

7-8 November 2013

York, UK

For more information about this event please visit:

<http://nhig.org.uk/cpdcourses.html>**Workshop on Petrified Wood**

26-27 December 2013

Nakhon Ratchasima Province, Thailand

For more info please contact:

bantakpetrifiedforest@gmail.com**XRF Boot Camp for Conservators**

5-8 November 2013

West Haven, CT, United States of America

For more information about this event please visit:

ccap.yale.edu

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