

Report by the Secretary-General 2013

I would like to welcome you all to the IIC Annual General Meeting and reception here at the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining, also the London home of Maney, the publishers of *Studies in Conservation*. It is through their good offices that we are able to hold our AGM here this year and I would like to thank our hosts and Maney, in the persons of Laura Bradford and Michael Gallico, here tonight, for making this possible. I will summarise the events of the last reporting year, July 2011 to June 2012. A more detailed account is published in the annual report.

At the last AGM, David Saunders, David Watkinson, Michael von der Goltz and Hans-Christoph von Imhoff stood down from the Council and as always I would like to record our deep gratitude to them for all their help and assistance during their time on Council. It has, however, been a particular pleasure to welcome Amber Kerr-Allison as a new member of Council because, as a result of a change to the Articles of Association, IIC can have up to three members of Council who are not IIC Fellows and Amber, who has given – and is still giving – us so much service with student posters at the last two IIC congresses and with the IIC Face Book and Twitter feeds on the website, is the first one. In addition, Shing-Wai Chan was co-opted onto Council during the year and is standing for election today. On a sadder note, today we say farewell and express our heartfelt thanks to two of our Vice-Presidents, Gabriela Krist and Sharon Cather, and four ordinary Council members: Tuulikki Kilpinen, Anne Rinuy, Mikkel Scharff and Naoko Sonoda. Some of you here today may not realise the long association these people have had with IIC over the years; the generous help they have given us and, through them, the involvement we have had with conservation and conservators in their countries: Austria, Finland, Switzerland, Denmark and Japan, as well as the United Kingdom. We may have to be based in one country in order to function, but we are an international conservation organisation and we want to work for and with you all, wherever you may be.

Sadder still, we say goodbye to our President for the last six years, Jerry Podany. He has steered IIC through some extraordinarily dramatic changes over the past few years: a new publisher, new activities – most notably his wonderful series of *Dialogues for a New Century*, translated into a variety of languages – new challenges. I do not exaggerate when I say that he does not leave the same organisation he inherited six years ago: what he has done for us is unquantifiable. IIC has indeed entered a new century, an exciting new phase in its history under his leadership and I promise we will try to live up to and, I hope, exceed his hopes and expectations in the future.

The award of IIC Fellowship is an internationally recognised recognition of professional achievement in the field of conservation and it is a great pleasure for us to welcome Tatjana Bayerova, James Black, Ruth Keller, Kathrin Kinseher, Fiona Macalister, Iris Schaefer and Lisa Shekede as new Fellows of IIC. We want to demonstrate and publicise the achievements of those working in the field of conservation and look forward to members putting themselves or other suitable candidates forward for election.

To turn to some of the events and achievements of the year, this time last year I mentioned an event that took place in September 2011, so within the financial year at

present under discussion: the first IIC Student and Emerging Conservator Conference, entitled *Conservation: Futures and Responsibilities*, arranged jointly with University College London and held at the Institute of Archaeology. The reason I draw attention to it again is that its originator, Adam Klupś, was then a student and the event was largely organised by students: Adam Klupś, Kathleen Froyen and Marie Louise Liwanag, of University College London, and Francesca Lemass and Liz Ralph, of Camberwell College of Arts. Secondly, the aim of this conference was to introduce students to all aspects of conservation employment in practice: the real world of work. As the health of the conservation profession, and of IIC, depends on the enthusiasm and dedication of those who are at present students or recently qualified, it is extremely encouraging that, from the evidence of this event and the interest it generated, the future of the profession is in good hands. Through the good offices of Professor Elizabeth Pye, of University College London, and her colleagues the event was webcast, allowing participants from all over the world to take part on line. We are extremely grateful to Professor Pye, and also to Libby Sheldon, of the History of Art Department, University College London; to all those who took part in the discussion sessions; to the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, Maney Publishing, Willard Conservation Equipment Engineers and Rotaset Printers for their generous support of the event and, most of all, to Adam and his colleagues who brought it to fruition. Editing the proceedings has been quite a lengthy business, but these will shortly be made available on the IIC website. We look forward to the next such event, already in the planning stage, later this year.

A more specialised event, generously sponsored by the Getty Foundation and also with a long-term aim of benefitting students and the conservation profession, was a two-day seminar discussing the feasibility of providing access to conservation student theses through the IIC website. This was organised with Athanasios Velios of the University of the Arts, London and held at the UAL Chelsea College of Art campus in April 2012. The meeting was attended in person by Angela Weyer, from the Hornemann Institute, Hildesheim, (Hochschule für angewandte Wissenschaft und Kunst / HAWK); Karen te Brake Baldock, INCCA (the International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art), Amsterdam; Katalin Orosz, the Hungarian National Museum, Budapest; Panagiota Manti, the Department of Archaeology and Conservation, Cardiff University; Maria Gruber, the University of Applied Arts, Vienna; Edward Pinsent, the University of London Computer Centre Digital Archives and Repositories; Stephanie Meece, the UAL Repository and Gustavo Grandal Montero, the UAL Library Conservation Collection, postgraduate students and others. Attendees on line included Sara Gould, from EThOS, the British Library, London; Tatiana Ausema, the Department of Art Conservation, University of Delaware, and others. The results from an on-line survey, investigating the types and levels of student reports held, if they were searchable on-line and how copyright was handled, were used to inform the discussion. Methods of data handling were presented and frequently encountered problems, such as copyright and quality control, were discussed. Summaries of the proceedings and presentations will be made available on the IIC website. We found that IIC could indeed have a role in facilitating access to student theses in a more conservation-focussed manner and we are looking at ways of developing this. It was interesting to learn that many postgraduate and doctoral students were unaware of this 'grey' literature or how to access it: IIC could satisfy a need here. Perhaps a greater benefit was that that questions of archiving, information retrieval and the permanence of electronic media could be discussed with archivists

by those who wanted to access information and were not necessarily aware of the factors involved in making it available.

The development of the website has, in fact, played a significant part in the work of IIC this year. Firstly, thanks to a generous grant from the Getty Foundation, a new website has been designed and built by Athanasios Velios, also one of IIC's two volunteer webmasters, using open-source software; this work was carried out in partnership with the University of the Arts, London. We now have a more robust and flexible site that will allow the introduction of web-based events, the development of discussion pages and other features so that we can serve the conservation community more creatively. It will also make IIC's internal administration easier and more efficient. We are extremely grateful to the Getty Foundation; without their help we could not have done this. We are also extremely grateful to Athanasios Velios, not only for building the site, but also for all the work that he and our other volunteer webmaster, Eike Friedrich, do for us behind the scenes; there is so much work, in fact, that they have been joined by a UAL postgraduate student, Heather Ravenberg.

Most of the people who work for IIC are volunteers. You may remember that in March 2012, Jerry Podany sent out a letter, 'Why wait?', which also appeared on the website, outlining IIC's aims and activities. We followed this up with 'What next? How can you add to the many activities and advances?' I am delighted to say that some of you did contact us with good ideas, or offering help – and, I hasten to add, we would like more: distance is no impediment! You will see the results of some of these ideas and people – Clare Finn in London and Liz Apap in Malta – appearing on the website. We are bringing together quite a team. Barbara Borghese in London, the editor of *News in Conservation*, brings us news, and so much more besides. An ever-growing stream of information on the work of IIC is carried through social media – Facebook and Twitter, coordinated by Amber Kerr-Allison in Washington, to be helped by Sharra Grow. Very recently we have asked Kate Stonor, now based in Dubai, to act as a text editor on the site. To control all this, IIC needs a Director of Communications and, until we find a suitable candidate to fill this role, Julian Bickersteth, one of IIC's Vice-Presidents, based in Australia, is acting in this role. On behalf of IIC, I would like to thank you all.

You will probably have noticed that, in the last week or two, the appearance of the IIC website has changed and, thanks again to the Getty Foundation, the new graphic design trailed in the annual report has in fact materialised. The design is by Andy Dark and it was put in place by Athanasios Velios.

The major event of 2012, the 24th IIC Congress, *The Decorative: Conservation and the Applied Arts*, held at the new campus of the University of Vienna in September, took place outside this reporting year, but it would be strange indeed to say nothing about such an enjoyable and successful event and only mention the preparations for it. As well as organising the venue and its facilities, the Organising Committee, under the chairmanship of Gabriela Krist of the University of Applied Arts Vienna and ably assisted by Maria Gruber, of the same institution, and Christa Hofmann, of the Austrian National Library, put together a wonderful social programme, including receptions at the Kunsthistorisches Museum and MAK (Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst) and the Congress Dinner, held in the Vienna Town Hall. Visits to a wide range of conservation projects and studios were organised, and a visit to the

Abbey of Klosterneuburg for a *Dialogue for the New Century*, on challenges in the conservation of contemporary decorative and applied arts. I would like to thank Gabriela, Maria, Christa and all their colleagues, including Márta Kissné Bendefy, from Hungary, Katarina Kosová, from Slovakia, and Petr Justa, from the Czech Republic, and also the IIC Austrian Group, for the superb and efficient organisation and for giving us such a wonderful time. I should not forget the technical programme and I must thank Sharon Cather, Chair of the Technical Committee, and all its members for their patient work on choosing and working on the papers and posters; this is a very substantial and time-consuming task. I would also like to thank Amber Kerr-Allison and her colleagues on the student poster committee, who, following the successful introduction of student posters at the 2010 Istanbul Congress, selected the student posters.

This has been a physically and mentally demanding year, above all for IIC's Executive Secretary Graham Voce. We would like to thank him and the Membership secretary Valerie Compton Taylor, for their tireless work on behalf of IIC, and also David Compton Taylor for help with administration of copyright reassignment, as well as during the office move. We would also like to thank Debby Byzantine, whose help as a volunteer with routine office administration over the last few months has been invaluable, and, indeed, all those who volunteer for IIC.

Jo Kirby Atkinson, Secretary-General