

Report by the Secretary-General 2007

I took over as Secretary-General from Jonathan Ashley-Smith just a year ago. A lot has happened since then, much of it owed to his hard work. The big event was of course the Congress held in Munich. Continuing to serve also as Chair of the Technical Committee, Jonathan made sure that we had a programme of truly excellent papers. When I stepped into Jonathan's shoes Graham Voce was our new Executive Secretary, an appointment led by Jonathan. I am delighted that Jonathan has agreed to again Chair the Technical Committee, now for the London Congress.

The Congress is one of the key events in the IIC calendar and I think there is little doubt that this was one of our best yet, raising lots of important issues and taking thinking forward in a way which closely relates to the changing role of conservators worldwide, as they grapple with the ever more complex issues presented by the world's cultural heritage and society's changing attitudes to it. Attendance was in the end well up to normal, at around 400, the venue in the Technical University was ideal, there was an action-packed programme, and the whole thing ran like clockwork. And all this in the face of competition from football, the Bierfest and not least the Pope, whose late-announced visit forced us to change the date of the event by one week. The mounting of a congress is no small challenge, as we in London are in the process of discovering. The success of the Munich event owed very much indeed to Andreas Burmester, whose energy and supportive team in the Doerner Institute made certain that the whole thing went perfectly and in great style. And of course a huge chunk of the credit for the success of the event also goes to Graham Voce. The lasting record we have of that event is the excellent volume of Preprints, edited by David Saunders, Joyce Townsend and Sally Woodcock, and the complete set of abstracts and papers available to members and delegates on the IIC website.

Andreas has been a cornerstone of the Council, full of wise advice, some of it to me, which I much appreciate, and in general someone whom we have all valued for his contributions on many levels. Council is extremely sorry that Andreas has decided not to stay with IIC in any official capacity, needing now to focus his energies on some of his other many interests. Andreas, we hope you will bring your energies back to IIC at some future time.

This year was also remarkable because for the first time ever the complete booking process for the congress was handled electronically. We owe Tim Padfield a huge debt of gratitude for having made this possible, even if the process brought us all - including Tim - near to a nervous breakdown at times.

It was around this time also that Jean Clatworthy decided that she would retire from IIC after over thirteen years, firstly as clerical assistant / book-keeper, and then developing this role as Membership Secretary. Parallel to this, the finances of IIC grew in complexity, demanding considerable financial attention and control, which Jean wielded very effectively.

Jean has been succeeded by Valerie Compton-Taylor, who has wide experience of working in the UK not-for-profit field. Valerie has already taken a firm grip on IIC's finances. Here it relevant to say that IIC has finally moved into the twentieth century (yes I know which century we are in) and is in the process of computerising our accounting, with the assistance of Messrs. Jacob, Cavanagh and Skeet. We expect this change to lead to greater efficiencies all round.

One of the characteristics of the last couple of years has been the Council getting to grips with what IIC is all about, where it is going and how things have to change. They have to change because, despite publishing the world's premier conservation journals, and running world-beating conferences, our membership has continued to decline. We knew we had to address this problem and, in a series of working sessions, led by a facilitator provided via Arts & Business, Council members developed a clearer vision of how IIC must adapt if it is to continue to make a significant contribution to worldwide conservation and to satisfy the needs of a wider range of members.

Among the improvements we now anticipate an important one is the website. Developed over a period of some ten years by Tim Padfield on a largely voluntary basis, we now find that its rate of development needs to change, beyond what Tim has the time to offer us. Added to that, Tim himself has been feeling that it was time he moved on to other things, and in fact resigned in the last year. Officers are deeply grateful that he continues to hold that fort while we struggle to find a replacement for him, and not least for his considerable work on the Congress. Another area for development is the Bulletin. We have decided to revamp this in quite a radical way, so that it becomes a medium for the wider dissemination of worldwide news about conservation, not just news about IIC. To this end, we have appointed Christina Rozeik in a free-lance part-time capacity. Christina will also be looking after the content of the new website, once we get its technical aspects sorted out. We are also looking at our visual identity, as symbolic of the changes under way, to ensure IIC presents a 21st century face to the world and properly reflects the organisation we wish to be. We also continue to look at ways of widening our membership across the world, not least in the numbers of members from countries other than the USA and the UK.

One of the changes we felt was necessary was to establish a Finance Committee. This has been set up by our Treasurer, Sandra Smith, and is beginning to get into its stride in keeping an eye on our investments and providing general oversight, on behalf of Council, of the Institute's financial affairs.

David Saunders, in his capacity as Director of Publications, will be reporting to you separately on developments in our publications, but I should like to hi-jack his presentation slightly in the following way. I want to stress that *Studies in Conservation* remains the premier conservation journal, the only one which is fully recognised in the academic world via the official citation indices, a fact which was acknowledged in a recent House of Lords inquiry into science and conservation. *Studies* is a cornerstone of IIC's achievements. It has owed a huge amount over the years to its editors, among whom until recently has been David himself. Please could we recognise the current

editors: David Scott, René de la Rie, Marie-Claude Corbeil, Alison Sawdy and Maria Hayward. They work extremely hard to ensure the continued high quality of this world renowned publication.

Let me also say a word about *Reviews in Conservation*. Launched somewhat tentatively seven years ago, edited first by Sally Woodcock, and for the last five issues by Noëlle Streeton, it has also earned its place as a journal of immense value and significance, and Council is extremely grateful to Noëlle, as well as recently Christiana Rozeik as Assistant Editor, and again to David Saunders for this achievement. We are also indebted to the Editorial Advisory Board which has helped enormously in guiding it to this position: Bob Barclay, Dinah Eastop, Françoise Flieder, Melanie Gifford, Margaret Holben Ellis, Nobuyuki Kamba, Thomas Learner, Ian Macleod, Alice Paterakis and Clifford Price. Issue No 7 arrived on our door-mats this week, and you will be impressed by the quality of its contents. (See the IIC website.)

I look forward to working with the new Council and Officers in the coming year to further extend IIC's reach and make it even more significant to the global conservation community.

David Leigh, Secretary-General