

Report by the Secretary-General 2008

The Munich Congress held in September 2006 was a considerable success, a tribute to the hard work of all concerned, not least the then IIC Vice-President Andreas Burmester and his Doerner Institute team. No sooner has one Congress finished than the planning for the next is under way. Hence this year has seen the creation of a Technical Committee, chaired by Jonathan Ashley-Smith, and an Organising Committee, chaired by Christopher Collins, both working on the details of what promises to be a memorable London event in September 2008 and addressing a theme - Conservation and Access - which is ever more pressing in the work of the heritage community. It has always been IIC's strength to address themes of current concern.

Much of the year was taken up with trying to fulfil the objectives of our development plans. Most notably, we were convinced that the IIC Bulletin should be replaced by a livelier newspaper providing a perspective on conservation worldwide and reflecting the international aims of the Institute. We were fortunate to recruit an editor for News in Conservation, Christina Rozeik, who by the end of the financial year had the first edition ready for publication in August. She has since produced two further very well-received issues. We continued to maintain the throughput and the quality of papers in our world-renowned publications Studies in Conservation and Reviews in Conservation. Our unbounded thanks go to the members of the Editorial Board of the latter and the Editors of the former who give their time and expertise so generously. Particular thanks to Noëlle Streeton who retired as Managing Editor of Reviews, after five successful editions, and a welcome to Fi Jordan and Marika Spring, who have taken over, under the wise guidance of David Saunders, IIC's Director of Publications.

We completed the uploading of all back numbers of Studies in Conservation which are now available freely to members and at a price to non-members, as well as all numbers of Reviews in Conservation. In the coming year we plan to extend the availability also of earlier Congress preprints.

In keeping with Council's intentions for a fresh approach, IIC commissioned a new visual identity which will become gradually apparent, firstly in the newspaper, then in our stationery, and in due course in the look of our congress material and our website. The latter is also being re-designed structurally so as to provide a better service and a greater range of current information. Christina Rozeik has also become IIC's web manager, replacing Tim Padfield who had served IIC so well in this capacity for so many years.

It is good to report that relations with our sister organisations ICOM-CC and ICCROM have been strengthened in the last year, most notably by better communication and by reciprocal attendance at the meetings of our governing bodies. IIC Council's regular use of telephone conferencing ensures that even when observers are unable to be present at meetings in person they are able to take part remotely. We very much welcome the participation in this way in our work of Mounier Bouchenaki, the Director-General of ICCROM and of Jørgen Wadum, on behalf of the President of ICOM-CC, Jan Wouters. Telephone conferencing has also enriched the workings of IIC Council itself, enabling far better 'attendance' at our meetings and resulting in wider and deeper consideration of IIC affairs.

Our future efforts will focus on two main areas: firstly, developing the programme and funding for the 2008 London Congress. A strong showing of proposals for a range of interesting papers implies a busy and interesting programme. Secondly we shall continue to implement Council's development plans for the Institute, improving yet further our publications and extending their reach and accessibility, being receptive to the changing needs of members, improving the website and liaison with IIC regional groups, and in general keeping alert to world developments - politics, climate change, tourism, armed conflict - which could adversely affect the care and management of the world's cultural heritage.

We hope that the fresh initiatives completed and to come will generate a new eagerness to belong to IIC and to benefit from its many services as well as a recognition that while national membership organisations have a vital role to play, so too does IIC, which takes a worldwide view and membership of which signifies belonging to the international community of professionals whose primary interest is in protecting the shared cultural heritage which is under threat as never before.

David Leigh, Secretary-General