The blaze that devastated the Cutty Sark in London the fire.

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

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

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

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

The major loss has been the decks. Although the deck in the hold area was not original and was due to be removed and replaced with a decking which will allow visitors to be able to see the ship’s construction in the bilges. The ‘tween deck was a 1950s restoration, and the main deck – although having some original timbers – was a composite structure laid during the 19th century’s restoration and was going to be replaced because it leaked badly. Some of the remaining hull planks were charred by the fire but are thick, dense wood so suffered little loss.

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

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

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

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

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

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

There is already a Computer History Museum in California and a Computer Games Museum in Berlin.

No. 1, August 2007
Welcome to the first issue of News in Conservation, the IIC’s new conservation newspaper!

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

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

Editorial

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

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

I hope you enjoy the final result!

Christina Rozeik
Editor

News in brief...

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

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

British Library Centre for Conservation opens
The British Library has celebrated the completion of its new Centre for Conservation in London by launching an online ‘microsite’ (http://www.bl.uk/conservation). The site includes videos of conservators at work. The Centre for Conservation contains book conservation facilities, a visitor centre, and state-of-the art technical facilities for the nation’s Sound Archive. It also provides training for students and professionals and will soon offer a two-year Book Conservation course in conjunction with Camberrer College of Arts.

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

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

Vincent Daniels

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

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

IIC & EERI join to support students

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

“Conservation by its very nature is an interdisciplinary profession,” said the IIC President Jerry Podany. “We, as conservators, directly and indirectly rely on scientists in an ever growing span of specific expertise. Seismologists and seismic engineers are no less our partners in the effort to preserve cultural heritage and to protect it from harm. The IIC has joined with EERI to encourage such collaboration at an early stage, among students and young professionals, so that they too can contribute and begin the dialogue that will move our efforts forward.”

IIC members and looks forward to their future work.”

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

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

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

An ambitious series of conferences aims to address this by bringing together seismic engineers, conservators and architects who are trying to lessen the effects of earthquakes on cultural property. The series is intended to remind us all that the inevitability of earthquakes should move conservators, governments, engineers and architects alike toward action to mitigate the damage. Although we cannot prevent or control earthquakes, these conferences show how we can lessen the resulting damage.

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

The first conference in the series was held at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles in May 2006. It brought together sixteen experts in seismic engineering and conservation to review the latest research in seismology and seismic engineering, and to report what efforts were underway to protect works of art, collections and whole museums. Museum collections were especially emphasised since this is an area in much need of development. The proceedings will be available in a few months (details on the Getty website, http://www.getty.edu).

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

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

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

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

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

NiC: What is the greatest seismic threat to cultural property in your country?
KK: We are never far from potential earthquake damage. In particular, simulations of earthquake cycles for fault lines in the area indicate that the greater Tokyo metropolitan region could be affected by four possible events, including a major rupture of M5 or M6 (which is classed as an active volcano). Seismic activity will cause serious damage to every exhibited object, and even to houses and temples... so there is no economical solution.

NiC: What should be our spending priorities for research into cultural heritage in your country?
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NiC: What is the greatest seismic threat to cultural heritage from earthquake damage in Greece, Turkey, and India?
KK: We need more research on long cyclical earthquakes. I know an institute (University of Tokyo) is researching base isolation shock absorbing devices such as wire hanging display for paintings, or simulation of damage and its treatments in the museum galleries and depots.

NiC: What should be our spending priorities for research into earthquakes and conservation?
KK: We need more research on long cyclical earthquakes. I know an institute (University of Tokyo) is researching base isolation shock absorbing devices such as wire hanging display for paintings, or simulation of damage and its treatments in the museum galleries and depots.

News in Conservation No.1 August 2007

The NiC interview

Mustafa Erdik spoke to two people involved in the protection of museums, sites and collections from earthquake damage.

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

Mustafa Erdik: To buildings, yes. There were several damaged historical structures, architectural and archaeological sites, monuments of cultural importance and historic village or city centres at these locations are under constant threat from earthquakes. While seismic mitigation approaches are well studied and developed for architecture and engineered structures, few museums have taken appropriate precautions to protect their collections. As a result, the world’s cultural heritage suffers with each seismic event.

News in Conservation: How can we encourage collaboration between conservators and engineers?

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

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

KK: We are never far from potential earthquake damage. In particular, simulations of earthquake cycles for fault lines in the area indicate that the greater Tokyo metropolitan region could be affected by four possible events, including a major rupture of Miura Peninsula (which is classed as an active volcano). Seismic activity will cause serious damage to every exhibited object, and even to houses and temples... so there is no economical solution.

NiC: What is the greatest seismic threat to cultural heritage from earthquake damage in Greece, Turkey, and India?

KK: We need more research on long cyclical earthquakes. I know an institute (University of Tokyo) is researching base isolation shock absorbing devices such as wire hanging display for paintings, or simulation of damage and its treatments in the museum galleries and depots.

NiC: What is the greatest seismic threat to cultural heritage from earthquake damage in Turkey?

ME: To buildings, yes. There were several damaged historical buildings in Istanbul as a result of the 1999 Kocaeli earthquake of magnitude 7.4. Damage to items in museum displays from toppling, sliding, crushing, etc.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ME: COST(Earthquake) technologies for the structures. But disaster planning and preparation are not [currently] defined as part of the duties of Museum staff, weakening the potential for such programs to be developed and implemented.

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

KK: [Using] solutions like seismic mount (seismic mount is considered good for items at most risk, where the floor need not be complex or costly: one of the most common, low-cost methods of restraining small objects is by sticking them down with small amounts of wax). But disaster planning and preparation are not [currently] defined as part of the duties of Museum staff, weakening the potential for such programs to be developed and implemented.

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

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

Out of the ashes

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

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

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

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

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

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

The people of the village were very brave and managed to save about 15% of the structure and to rescue some of the historic inscriptions, religious scriptures and small bronze sculptures from the fire. A rough estimate made by the villagers and local lamas suggests that property worth about $2 million (£1.5 million) has been destroyed. In any case, it is impossible to evaluate the financial and cultural loss to the village folk.

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

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

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

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

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

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


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

Ann Shaftel reports on the Thangka Conservation Training Programme in Bhutan

The author working in Dhamaralsa

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

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

Anatomy of a thangka

The monks and nuns had little knowledge of the thangka as a composite object so I asked the two DCP employees to create a thangka in the classroom. Watching the painstaking creation of a thangka was a surprise to the other participants and gave them a sense of the delicacy and intricacy that was central to the goals of the TCTP.

I documented the creation of this thangka. We also reviewed the types discussed how its condition differed from its state in the classroom. Watching the painstaking creation of a thangka was a surprise to the other participants and gave them a sense of the delicacy and intricacy that was central to the goals of the TCTP.

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

Field trips

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

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

Safe storage

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

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

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

Conclusion

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

Ann Shaftel

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

There is robust logic in training nuns and monks in the care of thangkas in their home nunneries and monasteries. As this training continues over the next several years, Bhutan's thangka treasures will surely benefit. Friends of Bhutan's Culture has received funding from the Getty Foundation to enable it to continue this valuable teaching project.

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IIC News

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

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

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

The maximum sum awarded will be up to £5000 or 10,000 US dollars or 7,500 Euros. Applicants proposing study tours which, in the opinion of the selection committee, will most benefit their own careers and the worldwide body of knowledge of the conservation of sculpture.

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For full details of the Scholarship, including an application form, please go to the IIC website. The closing date for applications this year is 30 November 2007.

The Gabo Trust was founded in 1988 by the family of the sculptor Naum Gabo. Aware of the problems with new materials in modern and contemporary sculpture, they set up the Gabo Trust to increase conservation resources in institutional collections and to further the education of conservators. The Gabo Trust Travelling Scholarships are limited to the conservation of sculpture in all its aspects and are not restricted to any particular period or culture.

The theme “Conservation and Access” has proved very popular, attracting around 170 proposals for papers in 2007. A theme for 2008 is Clouds in the Conservation of Modern and Contemporary Sculpture. The theme will be presented in three sections: technical art history, analytical techniques, and conservation risk management. Applications from outside Europe are encouraged.

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**Calls for papers**

**Risk Assessment - Management Strategies**
14-16 February 2008, Aschaffenburg, Germany
Submit abstracts by: 1 September 2007
AIC Book and Paper Group Annual Meeting
21-24 April 2008, Denver, Colorado, USA
Submit abstracts by: 7 August 2007
AIC Textile Specialty Group: AIC 36th Annual Meeting
21-24 April 2008, Denver, Colorado, USA
Submit abstracts by: 24 August 2007
Art 2008
25-30 May 2008, Jerusalem, Israel
Submit abstracts by: 30 September 2007

**Conferences**

ICOM-CC Glass and Ceramics Working Group interim meeting
27-30 August 2007, Nova Gorica, Slovenia
Printed on paper: the techniques, history and conservation of printed media
4-7 September 2007, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK
Decorated surfaces on ancient Egyptian objects: technology, deterioration and conservation
6-8 September 2007, Cambridge, UK
International conference on wet organic archaeological materials (EOM-WAOM)
10-15 September 2007, Amsterdam, Netherlands
BigSniff 2007
11-14 September 2007, Dortmund, Germany

**Job vacancies**

Conservation Fellowships
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Closing date: 4 January 2008
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Shapero Family Foundation, through The Metropolitan Museum of Art, award a number of annual conservation fellowships for training and research in one or more of the following museum departments: Arms and Armor, Asian Art Conservation, The Costume Institute, Musical Instruments, Objects Conservation (including sculpture, metalwork, glass, ceramics, furniture, and archaeological objects), Paintings, Conservation, Paper Conservation, Scientific Research, and Textile Conservation. Also available is a Pollak Weissman Fellowship for conservation work in The Costume Institute. Fellowships are typically one year in duration. Shorter-term fellowships for senior scholars are also available. It is desirable that applicants should have reached an advanced level of experience in training. All fellowship recipients are required to spend the fellowship in residence in the department with which they are affiliated. The stipend amount for one year is $40,000 for senior conservators/scientific researchers and $30,000 for junior conservators/scientific researchers, with up to an additional $5,000 for travel and miscellaneous expenses.

Senior fellowships are intended for well-established professionals, with up to an additional $5,000 for travel and miscellaneous expenses. Senior fellowships are intended for well-established professionals, with advanced training in the field and proven publication record. A typed application (or the applicant should include full resume of education and professional experience, statement of work to be accomplished). The deadline for completed applications is January 4, 2008.

Applications should be sent to Attn: Marcie Karp, Fellowships in Conservation Program, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1000 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10028. For more information, visit the Metropolitan Museum's website: http://www.metmuseum.org/education/or_fellow.asp.

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

**Strange but true...**

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

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