

ISSUE TWO

# timecare<sup>®</sup>

MAGAZINE

## Archiving Bedford School

CHARTERED LIBRARIAN LESLEY HARRISON DISCUSSES THE CHALLENGES  
OF MANAGING HISTORIC ARCHIVES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

## Renaissance Man

CONSERVATOR ALAN BUCHANAN ON THE ART OF REINVENTION

## Staying Alive

TEACHING PARCHMENT-MAKING WITH THE OXFORD  
CONSERVATION CONSORTIUM

FOR CONSERVATION, PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION

A publication from Conservation by Design



BY APPOINTMENT  
TO HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II  
SUPPLIERS OF CONSERVATION STORAGE,  
EQUIPMENT AND DISPLAY PRODUCTS  
CONSERVATION BY DESIGN LIMITED  
BEDFORD



# Back to the future...

Welcome to the latest issue of Timecare™ Magazine, a free publication from Conservation By Design, the conservation storage and display experts, who offers a unique industry insight for professionals working throughout the heritage sector.

It's been a busy few months for Conservation by Design (CXD). Meet Dirk Hendrickx, our new managing director and head of Larson-Juhl's conservation businesses globally, and hear his exciting plans for the business and sector as a whole. You can also find out more about the work of specialist UK manufacturer of museum display cases and cabinets, Armour Systems, acquired in July to complement CXD's existing product portfolio.

In September, we marked our 21st Anniversary by hosting an event for museum, gallery and library professionals who enjoyed a day of informal seminars given by a panel of industry insiders. Read on to find out about this special event and to hear our panel of conservators ponder on the past and future of the industry.

The birth of innovative conservation solutions will always be close to CXD hearts, so we were particularly delighted to welcome paper conservator, Alan Buchanan, one of the leading industry figures over the past few decades. Read his fascinating story about how his engineering training and passion for conservation have combined over the years to bring the industry some of its most useful inventions.

Inspired by the work of renowned conservator, Jiří Vnouček, we hear how the traditional techniques of the past are informing the work of the Oxford Conservation Consortium today. Élodie Lévêque, winner of 2013 Nicholas Hadgraft Memorial Scholarship, also recounts her experiences on the prestigious Montefiascone Conservation Summer School learning ancient bookbinding techniques. And we go back to school with professional librarian, Lesley Harrison, to learn about the challenges the past, present and future pose to archivists today.

Whether you are a collector, a curator or a conservator, we really hope you enjoy your read. Let us know what you think, or if you're interested in contributing to the magazine, please contact [timecaremagazine@cxdltd.com](mailto:timecaremagazine@cxdltd.com)



**Emma Murphy**  
Editor

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## Dates for your diary

### LUPC Conference 2014

1st April 2014

Institute of Education, Bloomsbury, London, UK

The second annual London Universities Purchasing Consortium offers delegates the chance to hear from prominent sector speakers and engage in focused workshops, as well as meet and network with framework suppliers. Those attending will have an opportunity to meet and influence buyers and procurement heads from across London's education, arts, science and cultural sectors.

### Museums and Heritage Show

14th and 15th May 2014

Olympia, London, UK

If you are looking to discover the latest industry developments by keeping up to speed with new product launches, current policies and thinking, plus the very latest in case studies and practical knowledge-based sessions, a visit to The Museums and Heritage Show is an absolute must.

Widely regarded as the principal buying opportunity for museum, gallery and heritage visitor attraction operators, The Museums and Heritage Show provides this crucial platform for the highest quality exhibitors to meet the people they supply.

The event brings together the most comprehensive programme of free seminars the industry has to offer, combining the perfect mix of hot topics, leading experts, inspiring cross-sector case studies, real advice and solutions.

### CILIP Academic & Research Libraries Group Conference

23rd to 25th June

University of Sussex, Brighton, UK

The Academic & Research Libraries Group Conference has always offered excellent best practice workshops from library and information practitioners working in the Further and Higher Education sectors. The workshop presentations will focus on innovation and new ways of working particularly where library services have not had to change or adapt to new environments and service delivery models.

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Timecare Magazine relies on submissions from experts in their respective fields, so we would love to hear from you if you would like to contribute an article. Please email the editor [timecaremagazine@cxdltd.com](mailto:timecaremagazine@cxdltd.com)

Front Cover: Lesley Harrison



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A Larson-Juhl Company

## News



### Bookbinders Celebrated

The winners of the coveted International Bookbinding Competition have been announced during a special ceremony at Leeds Metropolitan University held in August.

The competition, which runs every two years in conjunction with the Society of Bookbinders' biennial conference, attracted over one hundred entries from countries all around the world in nine specialist categories.

Winners included Jan Camps (pictured) and Dominic Riley who claimed first prize in the CXD-sponsored Historic Binding and Restoration categories respectively, taking away with them £150 of vouchers each.

For more information contact  
[www.societyofbookbinders.com](http://www.societyofbookbinders.com)



## New Managing Director for CXD

Larson-Juhl, the international custom framing and conservation specialist, has appointed Dirk Hendrickx to head up its conservation businesses globally. Dirk became the new managing director for Conservation By Design (CXD) in September 2013. He will also be responsible for its sister company, Stouls Conservation in France.

Dirk brings with him a wealth of international commercial and marketing expertise, gained most recently as Vice President, Sales and Marketing (Europe, Middle East & Africa) for Turtlewax, where he was responsible for implementing successful customer-driven product portfolio strategies.

CXD has an unrivalled track record in collaborating with the world's leading conservators," commented Dirk. "Founder, Stuart Welch, established a company dedicated to creative product design to answer the needs of all areas of cultural preservation and those values still remain at the heart of the CXD business. I'm looking forward to marrying my business skills with the industry expertise of Stuart and the wider CXD team.

"Improved customer insight will feed into our advanced product development programme to ensure CXD continues to lead the market in innovation, tapping into global expertise and supply chains to offer our customers the widest choice of conservation equipment at competitive prices."



## Armour Strengthens CXD's Museum Offer

CXD has strengthened its portfolio of conservation storage, equipment and display equipment with the acquisition of Armour Systems, a specialist manufacturer of museum display cases and cabinets.

Combining the strengths of both companies, the partnership enables CXD to offer Armour Systems Showcases, this market-leading brand manufactured in the UK is available to the museum sector.

The Armour Systems Showcases brand will be complemented by the existing CXD product line-up, providing customers with a vast selection of high quality conservation equipment, backed up by the service excellence for which both businesses are renowned.

[www.armoursystems.co.uk](http://www.armoursystems.co.uk)



## New Catalogue

CXD has launched its latest comprehensive colour catalogue, offering an unparalleled range of solutions for conservation professionals. The catalogue brings together products from CXD and its French sister company, Stouls Conservation.

If you haven't already received a copy of the new catalogue, you can request one by emailing [sales@cxdltd.com](mailto:sales@cxdltd.com) or view on-line at [www.cxdltd.com/catalogue](http://www.cxdltd.com/catalogue).



# LESSONS LEARNED

**“Some of the items I have found are incredible - from Bedford School standard-issue gas masks (pic 6) to a 1946 Speech Day programme (pic 5) signed by the guest speaker, Field Marshall Montgomery of Alamein. Many school stories that people had simply forgotten over time are being uncovered and celebrated once again - it's an exciting time.”** Lesley Harrison

How do you tackle the task of protecting an archive's past whilst still securing it a high-tech future fit for the digital age? Here, chartered librarian, Lesley Harrison, reflects on inheriting responsibility for a goldmine of precious artefacts at the historic Bedford School that after years of being looked after by a number of willing and interested volunteers, needed to be brought into the 21st Century.

Dating back to 1552, Bedford School is the result of the sixteenth-century expansion in grammar school education. Having moved to its current premises in the 1890s, the school's estate, teachers and pupils yield a wealth of historically significant material. Indeed, many books have been written on the school, and much is known about the institution's rich heritage. But some of the most fascinating tales have only recently started to come to the fore again. This is due largely to Lesley's dedication and enthusiasm in continuing the work of others before her and developing the huge archive into a workable resource for the Bedford School community. Thanks to funding received from the Bedford Trust in 2012, she has been able to spend two afternoons a week working on the cataloguing and preservation of the material.

“Many dedicated people have worked on the Bedford School archive over the years. A previous director of studies, Richard Miller, was responsible for the archive for a considerable time, and managed to do an incredible job with minimal time and resources,” she explains. “He was instrumental in cataloguing the archive using a card index

which was the only available system he had at the time. With the advantage of more time, funds and modern technology, I recognised the opportunity to improve our facilities even further.”

Based in the attic room of a terrace house on the campus, the archive encompasses over 100 years of documentation and artefacts. Prior to securing funding, the collection had not been touched for a number of years apart from being partially cleared by volunteers.

“There were eight filing cabinets bursting at the seams,” recalls Lesley. “For those things that were logged, we had Richard's brown card system, but there was an abundance of additional items that had no description or protection from the elements.

“Unfortunately, the room suffered from some damp issues and direct sunlight was filtering through the attic windows which was not ideal, so the first thing I did was get a black-out blind fitted and have the roof repaired. Of course, some damage had already been done, but I knew this would help prevent further deterioration and protect any new items coming into the collection.

“Then the sorting started which was no mean feat, but was absolutely necessary so we could start building a living archive that people could actually use. We began collating information, first into alphabetical order, and then by keywords and dates. This is a process we are still going through, but is a worthwhile step before we commence the lengthy cataloguing process. For a number of years enquiries from old boys or historians were handled by the Old Bedfordians Club, who had to rely on their own experience and knowledge. Now we can work as a team and begin to source things alphabetically even if we can't as yet provide full catalogue details.

“Thankfully, we are an organised and professional team and we were able to approach the task objectively. For example, we have a school journal, The Ousel, which launched in 1876 and still runs today. We

had so many duplicate copies that we had to reduce the numbers to provide us much needed space.

“Some of the items I have found are incredible - from Bedford School standard-issue gas masks (pic 6) to a 1946 Speech Day programme (pic 5) signed by the guest speaker, Field Marshall Montgomery of Alamein. Many school stories that people had simply forgotten over time are being uncovered and celebrated once again - it's an exciting time.”

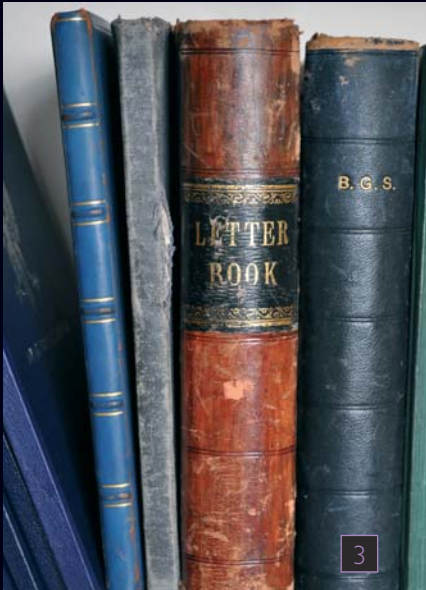
The lack of records for some historic artefacts in the collection brings home the importance of continual monitoring of school documentation. In Lesley's mind, this makes archiving of modern era communication and activity all the more important.

“We have artefacts dating back over 100 years which we can't place, and it's such a shame. The main difficulty has been identifying the masses of unmarked photos and documents, for which we have no names or dates. These are significant items, but ones we cannot fully record as there is no distinguishing information. It can be very frustrating but I still consider us to be in a very fortunate position.

“It was in the 1970s that one of the senior boys, Richard Barnwell, discovered a large cupboard that was loaded with school class lists, numerous programmes and other archive material. He recognised the importance of the conservation and preservation of the archive and managed to get it moved to a more secure location in De Parys Avenue. It was through his endeavours that the great fire of 1979 did not claim these items, but it did emphasise the point that if these archives were to survive, something needed to be done.

“We cannot let the present go the same way as the past by losing track of what is happening online in this digital age. I've started to work more closely with all the faculties to ensure we are building a vision of our time here and now for the benefit of future generations of teachers and students. ————— continues overleaf —————





# LESSONS LEARNED

“History is all around us at Bedford School, so it’s a relatively easy job to explain why we need to archive new information. Buildings such our Memorial Hall are a poignant reminder of just how important celebrating our history is.”

Here our boys can see for themselves how significant the Great War and World War II were to the school (pic 1 - WW1 Remembrance Book), and learn from the stories of the tragic impact these events had. It’s respectful and relevant in modern day teachings, and it brings home the essential role an archive plays in an institution such as ours.

“Of course to remain relevant you have to move with the times and engage with people in the way most accessible to them. For this reason we have started making elements of the archive available online through our intranet and Twitter. We mark current news and events and also celebrate the anniversaries and key milestones of the school’s history through an ‘archive of the week’ feature.”

Lesley now hopes that the online Heritage site, which already hosts the digitised copies of the entire Ousel collection, will expand as the historic archive grows. Although it will require additional funding, plans are to digitise other elements of the school’s history following completion of the cataloguing.

“We have a host of current videos and photos already active online, but what I would really like to do is create a web-based resource of old images from the archive. Sad as it is to say it, we are losing many of our old boys who had such colourful times at the school - I would also really like to create podcasts with them while we still can.”

Despite her great plans, Lesley remains concerned about the future - not because of how she will capture the knowledge, but of how that knowledge will be shared in an ever-evolving technological world.

“Technology is an integral part of our modern lives,” she concludes. “However, with technology moving so fast, I do worry what the future may bring. Projects such as this are all about safeguarding the past for the future’s sake. How can we be sure that the methods we are using to store and share this information now won’t become obsolete and unusable? The floppy disc did and so could Twitter.”

“It’s an unanswerable question, but one that should be asked nevertheless. If I didn’t, I wouldn’t be doing my job as archivist effectively. I am a member of The School Archivist’s Group and we are all dealing with similar issues – together, we all share the responsibility of maintaining, conserving and developing our school archives for future generations.”

## School Archive

Tips for starting an archive

- Communication: Make sure you are always sharing information with both your colleagues and all the people who have an affiliation with your institution – you never know what treasures they might be hiding away. Their knowledge could be the missing puzzle piece you are looking for.
- Information: To archive effectively you need information about the items you wish to catalogue, and lots of it! The background of the items is the most interesting part, so it should be investigated fully.
- Preservation: Make sure items are stored in the correct manner. Keep them away from damp, humidity and bright lights. Never keep anything in storage which isn’t acid-free and dust-resistant.
- Training: Don’t just assume you can jump right in. Archiving is a skill which needs to be learnt so seek advice from professional bodies. ■

For further information on membership for The School Archivists’ Group please email [elizabeth.wells@westminster.org.uk](mailto:elizabeth.wells@westminster.org.uk) Bedford School Website [www.bedfordschool.org.uk](http://www.bedfordschool.org.uk)

## Treasures of the archive...

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1 - WW1 Remembrance Book                     | 5 - Speech Day programme             |
| 2 - Stained glass rescued from the 1979 Fire | 6 - Bedford School gas mask          |
| 3 - Books and letters in the archives        | 7 - Illuminated text: Victoria Cross |
| 4 - Cricket bats in the Pavilion             | 8 - Heriz-Smith wooden cross         |

**1 WW1 Remembrance Book**  
The Memorial Hall at Bedford School is a fitting reminder of the vast losses to pupils and staff the school suffered during both world wars. Hanging on the walls is a collection of Victoria Crosses inscribed with illuminated texts (see pic 7), each describing the circumstances of the award to an Old Bedfordian. There is also a detailed book of remembrance for those lost in battle and inscriptions of those people’s names on imposing wall panels

**4 Cricket bats in the Pavilion**  
As well as its rich military history, Bedford School has also been the starting platform for a number of world-class sportsmen. For example, in the world of cricket, Sir Jack Hobbs, one of the game’s early masters, became coach groundsman at the school in 1902 after a career which saw him score more first-class runs than anyone else in the sport’s history. Another cricket legend with ties to the school is current captain of the English Test team, Alastair Cook, who was a student up until 2003. Both players have signed bats hanging proudly in the recently refurbished Cricket Pavilion, which was opened in 2012.

**8 Heriz-Smith wooden cross**  
Housed in the Memorial Hall cabinets is memorabilia donated by the family of former student Denzil Heriz-Smith, Head Boy of Bedford School in 1914. Whilst serving with the Northamptonshire Regiment on The Somme, he was killed in action on 17th February 1917. His story was well documented in the book From Bedford to The Somme - The letters and diaries of Denzil Heriz-Smith by Tim Machin. Perhaps the most poignant memorial to him hangs in the school chapel - the original roughly painted modest wooden cross from his grave in The Somme which was relocated from France to Bedford School where it now stands in memorial.

To help preserve your collection the following products may be of interest.

- Ringbinder Boxes and Polyester Album Pages
- Premier™ Drop Spine Boxes and polyester storage pockets
- EcopHant Box and lid

For more information please visit [www.cxdltd.com](http://www.cxdltd.com) and use the search box to locate the products.



# Project profiles

Exploring how Conservation By Design products and innovations have provided answers to a wide range of challenges for very different organisations.

Client:  
Lanhydrock House

Location: Bodmin, UK

**Background:** An historic parchment pedigree, written by Sir William Segar for Sir Richard Robartes in 1620, had been on display in Lanhydrock House since the turn of the last century. It had begun to cockle and was badly distorted as it had been framed in the early 20th century in a manner that was not designed to cope with changes in humidity to which it was extremely reactive.

**Problem:** Following restoration by Dr Nicholas Hadgraft, it became clear that a more sympathetic mounting was needed to ensure the pedigree's long-term preservation. A system that would restrain the document, which was made up from six separate skins and measured 2270mm x 1230mm, was required while also allowing it to expand and contract.

**Solution:** Professor Nicholas Pickwood turned to CXD for assistance in developing his idea for a mounting system using metal springs to hold the document under tension. The concept incorporated parchment tabs cut on a CXD Kasemake CAD cutting table. Brass eyelets were added to the tabs for attaching the small springs linking to adjustable plates held in a special profile within the frame. To create the desired tension whilst still allowing the document to expand and contract, around one hundred and fifty parchment tabs were adhered to the pedigree.



“Working with the team at CXD, we were able to fine tune my design to produce a secure, streamlined conservation unit that would fit in stylistically with the surroundings at Lanhydrock, but also protect it from the harmful effects of climate, lighting, handling and movement.

Professor Nicholas Pickwood,  
Conservation advisor to the National Trust

Client:  
Durham University Library

Location: Durham, UK

**Background:** The conservation team at the award-winning Durham University library recently benefitted from the installation of a new purpose-built laboratory.

**Problem:** The team lacked appropriate facilities and specialist equipment to look after all the university's Heritage Collections, which include Special Collections, Archives and the University Museums.

**Solution:** The new lab provided much needed space to accommodate specialist equipment and host outreach sessions and training programmes. CXD supplied a number of pieces of conservation equipment, including a large-scale suction table, drying rack and archive boxes for the on-going repackaging of the library archives.



“I have used CXD in the past and have always found them to be both competitively priced and well stocked. The decision to source our new equipment from them was an easy one to make and we will continue to work with them to meet our conservation product needs in the future.

Liz Branigan,  
Head of conservation at Durham University Library

Client:  
Durham University Oriental Museum

Location: Durham, UK

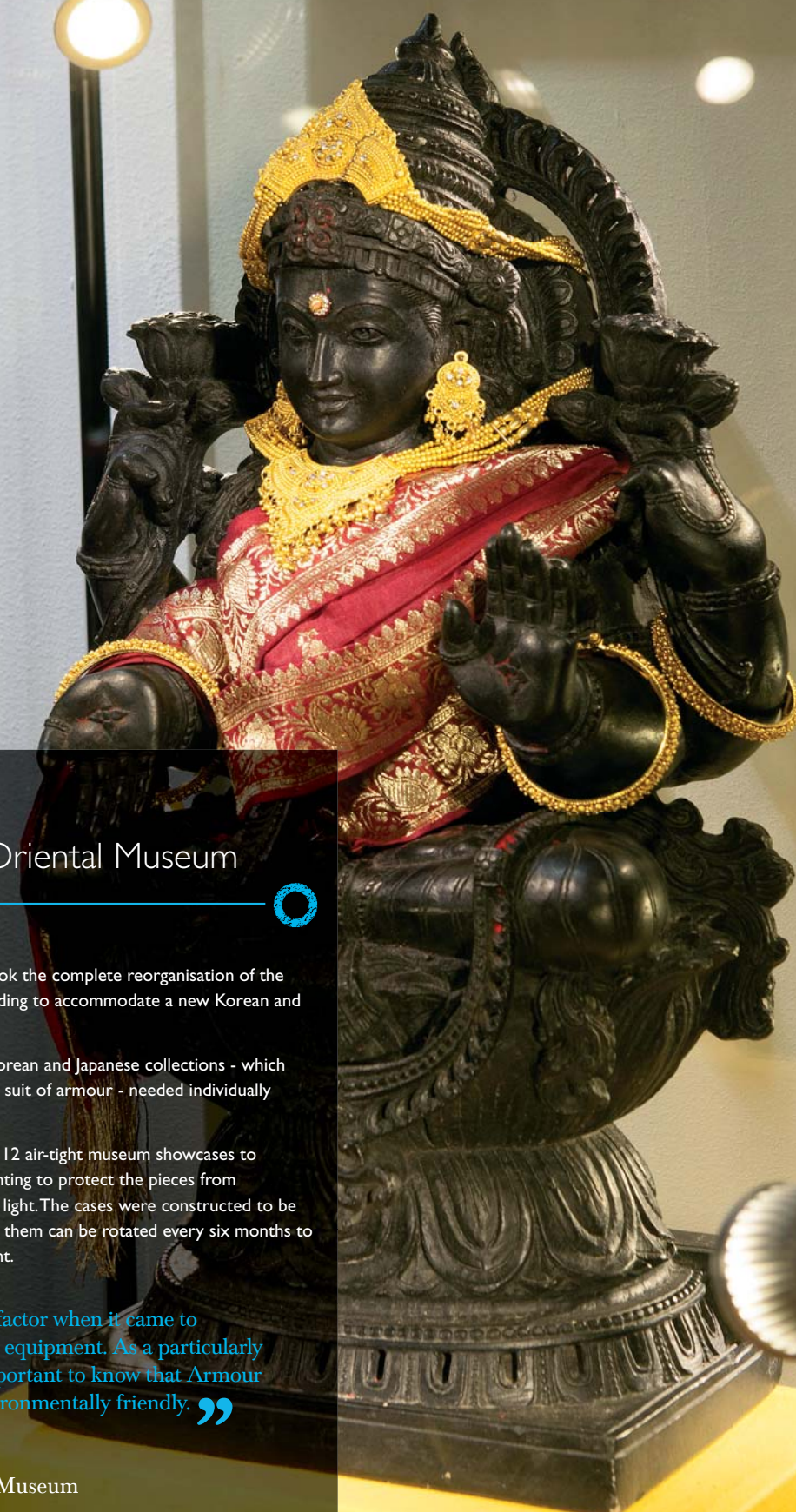
**Background:** Durham University undertook the complete reorganisation of the fourth floor of its Oriental Museum building to accommodate a new Korean and Japanese exhibit.

**Problem:** The artefacts featured in the Korean and Japanese collections - which include furniture, ceramics, statues and a suit of armour - needed individually tailored preservation solutions.

**Solution:** Armour Systems CXD created 12 air-tight museum showcases to bespoke specifications, featuring LED lighting to protect the pieces from deterioration and damage caused by UV light. The cases were constructed to be easily accessible so that the items within them can be rotated every six months to protect them from over exposure to light.

“The environment was a key factor when it came to deciding where to source the new equipment. As a particularly conscious organisation, it was important to know that Armour Systems CXD's products are environmentally friendly.”

Rachel Grocke,  
Deputy curator at the Oriental Museum





Client:  
British Library

Location: London, UK

**Background:** Inspired by the institution's treasure trove of design resources, Fashion History and Theory pathway students from Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design hosted a 'Fashion Flashback' as part of the British Library's annual Spring Festival.

**Problem:** Students were tasked with exploring the way the fashion industry has used paper as a material.

**Solution:** CXD provided rolls of Tyvek®, a material made from spun-bonded polyethylene olefin fibres, but that has a paper-like feel, which is well-known for its use in archival storage of clothing. Tyvek® can be stretched by up to 25 per cent before breaking, enabling a more robust garment design than could be achieved by utilising purely paper-based materials.

“Tyvek® was perfect for this project. It was used in more than one way during the event and is a really clever use of this material.”

Alistair O'Neill,  
Pathway tutor for BA Fashion, History and Theory  
at Central Saint Martin's College



INSIDERS' VIEW

# Asking the questions that really matter

In celebration of Conservation By Design's 21st Anniversary, we reflect on the past and look forward to the future with some pertinent questions for our panel of conservation professionals...

Which one person has inspired you most in your profession and why?



"I think I've been most inspired by how valuable the work is that you get to do in the conservation industry, rather than by any one person in particular. It's something that people who aren't involved in conservation don't really think about, but it's something that's so important to

our heritage. In our profession there's such creativity and ingenuity in designing solutions to meet even the most diverse conservation problem. That in itself is inspirational to people like me coming into the industry as it gives us a benchmark to really work towards."

Fay Humphreys,  
Student



"Over the 40 years we've been in the business, Stuart Welch's contribution has been huge.

We went with him to see the first silver safe paper come off the mill, and we still have the first piece of paper! It was the kind of product we'd been desperate to get made for many years. We provided the specification and Stuart did his utmost to get the orders and have it made - he was an absolute blessing to us. While they don't still make the product in the same form now, we've seen Stuart's work blossom and grow since that time. We're incredibly proud to have watched his success. The business he has built is brilliant."

Ian & Angela Moor,  
The Centre for Photographic Conservation



1747 German Bible printed in Nuremburg  
Bedford School

What advances in technology do you expect to see affecting the industry over the next 10 years?



"I think a lot of development in storage will be key because as an industry we don't have the time or the resources to spend 10 hours working on individual objects any more. Therefore, we need to think about preservation, not solely conservation. When you've spent the

time conserving something you need to know that you can put it away safely in storage without worrying about it. Even if it's not air-conditioned or perfect, there needs to be some provision for safe storage. I certainly think a move towards bettering that would be positive without impacting on practical conservation."

Caroline Barry,  
The British Museum



"Working on books, I still find that the tried and trusted methods of conservation are the most effective and I can't see that really changing as there are only the occasional few new materials and technologies that filter through to our sector.

The main worry for us is the loss of knowledge and skills in traditional crafts through digitisation, so we do need to continue with quality education and training to ensure those elements can be practiced well in the future. The problem as ever, is the money to do this. It's an extraordinary feeling to be entrusted with objects that are quite literally irreplaceable, so more funding is needed to strengthen the knowledge of people wanting to come into the industry in the future."

Philippa Räder,  
Royal Collection Trust





# RENAISSANCE MAN

With a career of two halves under his belt, renowned conservator Alan Buchanan made an unconventional start to his illustrious time as one of the country's leading conservation professionals. We look back at how his unique combination of engineering skill and passion for conservation resulted in some of the profession's most useful innovations and ask what the future holds for this most inventive octogenarian.

Work shy is not a phrase you'd use to describe Alan Buchanan. Indeed his rise to become one of the leading figures in the world of paper conservation over the past two decades came only after his earlier 30-year career as a civil engineer. Even now, at the age of 82, he shows no signs of slowing down.

"As a civil engineer I was travelling to the Far East once a month. I became exhausted and depressed. On recovery, the doctors warned me to be careful, which led my employer to offer me early retirement. Fantastic, I thought – the package was enough to allow me to retrain for a second career.

"At the time my daughter was reading art history in New York but had run out of funds. She'd asked me to look into alternative courses in London. I found some at Camberwell called 'Art History and Paper Conservation', so I let her know there was one which would suit her. What she didn't expect was for me to tell her that she'd be studying at the same college as me, as I'd decided paper conservation was what I wanted to do. She then stayed in New York!"

After receiving his diploma in 1991, Alan found work at the Oxford University Museum as an assistant conservator. The following year, he met Kate Colleran at the Institute of Paper Conservation (IPC) conference in Manchester. Kate had been his tutor at Camberwell and remains a leading light in the world of paper conservation. She invited him to work for her at the Worcester College Library in the summer vacations and Alan worked there for four summers.

"At times, I strained our friendship by using Kate as a mentor, for which I'll be eternally grateful," recalls Alan. "It was during this time that I designed and constructed my first vacuum machine – a suction point on wheels inspired by a machine on wheels I'd seen at Camberwell and one at Nick Burnett's studio at the Fitzwilliam Museum.

"At the time Oxford University was planning to digitise its early Celtic manuscript collection. I was invited to an interview to discuss the provision of a vacuum pad to put behind a page being digitised, and was asked about a cradle to hold delicate books safely during digitisation. I saw no problem. When I was asked about lighting, I heard myself say we could use these new fluorescent tubes. I've no idea why I said it as I knew nothing about fluorescent lights. A year later I was appointed as the designer, and the project manager said yes to the lighting idea. The digitisation project lasted for five years, and other organisations chose cradles for similar work, including the British Library, the National Libraries of Wales, Scotland and Ireland, Trinity College in Dublin, St Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai desert, and Mount Athos Monastery in Greece.

"When starting out on the project, there were no book cradles or book cradle operators. Although I read mechanical sciences at university, I became a civil engineer, not a mechanical engineer. My cradle was a sound engineering solution to a problem; but over the years it has become obsolete and needs input from a mechanical engineer familiar with computer aided design, who can order a part online from a manufacturer's catalogue and insert it into the design. I have withdrawn the cradle from the market, it's undergoing root and branch modernisation."

During the years in between the cradle's first inception and its current evolution, Alan was running his own paper conservation studio. In 1995 he was co-opted as Treasurer of the IPC and in 1997 was elected as the first Chairman who was a paper conservator. He and the committee introduced accreditation for members and merged the process with one developed in parallel by the UK Institute of Conservation (UKIC). Alan was succeeded by Kate Colleran, who led the convergence of the two organisations to become ICON, the Institute for Conservation.

Alan was also concentrating his efforts on several other inventions. Perhaps the most notable of his developments during this time was the Imperial Plus One vacuum table with an in-built light box.

"The idea of a porous surface with a vacuum pump to draw air and solvents through belongs to Marilyn Kemp Weidner who invented the machine in 1972," Alan explains. "The use of sintered polythene for the porous surface (which is white and allows light through), came from a team made up of Jan Wouters, Gely Gancedo, An Peckstadt and Lieve Watteuw, who were developing ideas on parchment pulp infilling for the codex Eykensis. I added two vacuum pumps – one high volume, low pressure and one low volume, high pressure – together with filtering solvents out of the airflow in the design of the Imperial Plus One. The advantage of running a paper conservation studio is that these ideas can be put to the test, permitting immediate feedback before being released to the market."

Alan's next project came from the need for paper-making pulp to have a specific colour for a work of art under treatment in the studio. This led to dyeing cotton linters different shades of red, yellow and blue, from which you can make any colour. He created colour charts of the different shades and provided stock, and subsequently wrote a paper on the subject which was published in the journal of the British Society of Paper Historians.

In 2005, Alan was invited by Mark Sandy, leader of the post-graduate courses of conservation of art on paper, to teach his students at Camberwell College. Alan still teaches studio skills and tutors students in the preparation of their final projects. Now well into his eighties, Alan is planning to scale back his commitments at Camberwell. It's a role of which he has been fiercely proud to undertake in the later stages of his career, offering him the chance to nurture innovation in others, and thus safeguarding the future of the profession.

"Teaching MA students at Camberwell has some fairly rich rewards," he adds. "The students sometimes come up with some very clever ideas. For example, a couple of years ago a student called Melissa Lewis was treating pith paintings as her final project. She had researched the use of rigid gels and was using them to remove animal glue from the versos and to reduce stains. She now teaches the students how to use them in many ways, including the removal of those very difficult synthetic rubbers such as UHU, Cow Gum and Prit.

"Students like her are a source of inspiration, and there are many others driving innovation both in and out of educational establishments. Innovation doesn't come from nowhere – it's about making connections, sharing best practice and learning from what has been before. Progress depends on these things. ■

“

Letting my work at Camberwell take a back seat is a significant step for me, but my eyesight is no longer as good as it should be. I do plan on retiring properly at some point but I want to see through one or two projects - development of the book cradle and dyed pulp, which needs research into the dark greys and blacks.

The blacks are very difficult because each one is different in very subtle ways and this will be a departure from previous work because the dyes themselves will have to be mixed.

I can't imagine having nothing to do. So to avoid it, I have started to learn French...

”



# EVERY TRICK IN THE BOOK

While modern technology has undoubtedly made conservation of our written heritage easier and less time-consuming, knowledge of ancient book construction techniques is still of vital importance for today's conservators. Here Élodie Lévêque, winner of the coveted Nicholas Hadgraft Memorial Scholarship, recounts her experiences attending the annual Montefiascone Summer School for the first time to learn more about Gothic bookbinding.



## Q Why did you want to attend the Montefiascone Summer School?

**A.** Some of my former colleagues from across Ireland, the UK and the US regularly attend the prestigious Montefiascone Conservation Summer School classes so I knew of its great reputation, and was really keen to attend too.

Montefiascone offers the unique opportunity to learn from experts, and the chance to share a skill and a passion for bookbinding. I knew it would offer me professional development, keeping my mind sharp, which for me is one of the key attributes of being a conservator. Plus I was very attracted by the element of professional exchange and skills development, all while having a full cultural experience.

I currently work at the University Library of Montpellier, France where we have many ongoing medieval manuscript conservation projects. Indeed, our library collection is large and very diverse. About 900 volumes from the medical department are medieval manuscripts.

Currently, the Library of Troyes is digitising the remaining 1,450 manuscripts from the Abbaye de Clairvaux, France's largest medieval collection. Most of the collection is preserved in Troyes, but the University Library of Montpellier owns the second largest part of it, some 70 volumes. My conservation department will participate in this major digitisation project, and thus we will be mainly working on these manuscripts next year. I felt that undertaking the course at Montefiascone offered me the ideal opportunity to perfect my skills.

## Q How do courses like this benefit the industry as a whole?

**A.** Knowledge of historical bookbinding techniques seems to me to be the first basic skill that a book conservator needs. It is very important to constantly make sure that you are improving your knowledge and I believe that courses like this are one of the best places to find out how well you are developing and what you can do to improve your work.

The Montefiascone Summer School is the perfect forum for such an exchange, encouraging open communication and fostering new friendships. Exchange of information and making new professional contacts is very important and crucial for this industry. There are many interesting projects happening across the globe and there are lots of new procedures being developed, so it is very important that people are able to meet and discuss all the different aspects of their work with others who have different perspectives.

From my personal experience of working in France, there are more and more conservators in private practice because institutional positions are getting rarer and rarer and these facilities need to find external funding to get conservators to work on short-term projects. Most institutions cannot fund training courses that are specifically conservation related, so opportunities like Montefiascone are like gold dust in providing the rich and varied tuition the industry requires to strengthen and grow.

## Q What are the other benefits of attending the summer school?

**A.** This course brought me much more than I expected. Along with the anticipated high teaching standards, there was wine tasting, cultural visits, and even tapas sharing with the instructors!

But on a serious note, attending the course allowed me to meet a number of fellow conservators and bookbinders from all over the globe. Interacting with the tutors and other international attendees with diverse backgrounds, perspectives and cultures was very beneficial as a way of learning from others' techniques and skills, discovering new bookbinding methods and learning how to use specialist tools. The small class sizes allowed for more one-on-one time with tutors and closer interaction between participants, which was a real benefit.

The charm of the location as well as the conviviality of the group, made the working experience unusually relaxed. Waking up to do bookbinding under a breezy tree and next to the lake is way better than spending the summer at the back of the university library! I have already recommended it to my colleagues in France and elsewhere. I'd rate this experience with a 10/10. Over the 25 years of its existence, the standard of courses and tutors continues to excel.

[www.monteproject.com](http://www.monteproject.com)  
[www.cxdltd.com/scholarship](http://www.cxdltd.com/scholarship)

## Q Which course did you attend?

**A.** I attended the "Early Gothic Binding" course by Jim Bloxham and Shaun Thompson. We also had the opportunity to explore the use of pigments for staining skins in medieval times with pigment specialist Cheryl Porter.

The course was based on a specific manuscript from Cambridge University Library, *Preces et Meditationes*, a very small scale Cistercian manuscript bound in the convent of Medingen near Lüneburg Heath in north Germany. The binding has interesting structural features, including a textile lining and a covering of dyed red alum-tawed skin over beveled oak boards with brass fittings and fixtures. The secondary endbands are braided - a technique which was widely used in Northern European bindings of the late 15th and early 16th centuries. We recreated the binding - sewing the text-block, sewing primary and secondary endbands, shaping and attaching the boards and covering with alum-tawed skin, tooling and shaping the brass fittings and fixtures.

The course helped me develop both technical and theoretical knowledge in book history and bookbinding. Working on a particular 13th century binding gave me a good overview of the diversity of medieval binding structures, the various influences on their evolution, and how this Cistercian binding influenced later Northern European bindings.

The course was extremely relevant for me since many of the manuscripts in the Abbaye de Clairvaux collection are from the late 13th century. I have gained a better understanding of medieval book structures, examination and condition reporting of medieval bindings. This will allow me to find the best treatment methods not only for the Clairvaux project, but also for the rest of our library's medieval collection. ■

## NORTHERN LIGHTS

Two northern UK cities have scooped prestigious titles to step into the limelight as cultural centres showcasing the UK's rich heritage.

Kingston upon Hull has been named the UK's next City of Culture, beating Leicester, Dundee and Swansea Bay to the right to hold the title in 2017. The creation of a long-term cultural legacy for the city and a £60m boost to the local economy are anticipated.

Hull's most famous cultural figure is poet Philip Larkin who lived in the city for 30 years and found fame while working as a university librarian. The city is also home to the Ferens Art Gallery, which broke visitor records with a Da Vinci exhibition last year, and the Hull Truck theatre company, which became a national force in the 1970s and '80s and moved into a new £14.5m home in 2009.

Earlier this year, Glasgow's Riverside Museum was named European Museum of the Year (EMYA). The prestigious award is presented to museums which have been built or extensively refurbished within the previous three years.

Designed by award-winning architect Zaha Hadid, the £74m Riverside Museum opened on the banks of the River Clyde in June 2011 and showcases the city's transport, shipbuilding and engineering heritage.

If you're travelling north to either of these cultural centres, visits to The Hull Maritime Museum and Glasgow Riverside Museums are highly recommended.

The Hull Maritime Museum features the city's seafaring history, once the nation's largest fishing and whaling port and third largest commercial port. Housed in bespoke museum showcases created by Armour Systems CXD are many artefacts, models and paintings showing the development of these industries in Hull as well as shipbuilding and inland waterways.

Glasgow's Riverside Museum tells the story of transport by land and sea, with a unique Glaswegian flavour through its collection of vehicles and models, many of which are housed in 70 individually designed showcases supplied by CXD. More than 3,000 objects are on display, from the oldest surviving pedal cycle to the finest collection of Scottish-built cars in the world. ■





This summer Conservation By Design (CXD) celebrated its 21st Anniversary as one of the industry's leading conservation storage and display experts. As we work in partnership with leading conservators from around the world to develop equipment to meet every conservation need, it was particularly fitting for us to celebrate along with some of the leading industry professionals with whom we've forged such strong relationships over the past two decades.

## OUR ESTEEMED SPEAKERS

Nicholas Burnett  
Museum Conservation Services

Piers Townshend  
Tate

Joanna M Kosek  
British Museum

Peter Bower (pictured right)  
Paper Historian

Chris Collins  
Natural History Museum

Alan Buchanan  
Private Conservator

Tony King  
Essex Record Office

Christopher Clarkson  
Freelance Conservator

Edward Adcock  
University of Oxford

Nicholas Pickwood  
University of the Arts London

Caroline Bendix  
Bendix Library Conservation



We welcomed more than 85 museum, gallery and library professionals from across the UK for a day of intimate and informal seminars given by a specially invited panel of key industry insiders, hosted at our Bedford-based manufacturing facilities. With diverse subject matter ranging from anoxic storage to money forgery, the event addressed many of the major discoveries that have influenced the conservation sector during the last 21 years.

The positive feedback we received from delegates and speakers has been overwhelming with many relishing the opportunity to network and share stories with other high profile conservators. We hear from some of them as we take a look back in pictures at the unique event to mark CXD's coming of age.



It was helpful to learn about new products, especially the ultra-thin pockets, and to see a vacuum machine in operation. However, I liked the way that the day was more of a tribute to CXD and we were given a sense of its history. All the speakers were passionate about their subjects and a delight to listen to".  
Jenny Kallin, Bishopsgate Institute

From the moment I arrived until the time I left the hospitality shown was overwhelming. The presentations were excellent and it was a wonderful opportunity to see old and new faces and discuss materials and equipment used in conservation. We at the Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, and myself in particular, look forward to continuing to work with CXD in future projects.  
John Mumford, Director of Manuscript Conservation, Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation & Dar al-Kutub Manuscript Project



It was so nice to meet so many old friends and colleagues to catch up on news, and to get to know the sales, office and warehouse staff who couldn't have been more friendly and welcoming. It will certainly make a difference to know who one's talking to when we next ring up to place an order.  
Clare Prince, ACR, Freelance Book Conservator



I really enjoyed Peter Bower's talk on the faking of money, it was a delight to listen to. But most of all, to me, the day has been about meeting people. That's the great thing about Conservation By Design - for many years they have been bringing together some fantastic people from across the industry as well as providing an excellent range of products.  
Jim Bloxham, Head of Conservation at Cambridge University Library



I think we would all agree that reaching 21 as a company, and such a specialised company, is no mean feat. It's been a real pleasure working (and playing) with Stuart Welch and the team over the years.  
Caroline Checkley-Scott



It has been really good to see behind the scenes at Conservation By Design. We do quite a lot of business with them so it's been fascinating to see where our folders and boxes are being put together, and hear a lot of interesting talks as well."  
Tony King, Essex Record Office



We have the catalogues and have seen the products online, but I'd never seen the resources here before so to actually see the products up close has been very interesting. I know Stuart Welch very well personally, but I have enjoyed meeting the rest of the CXD team immensely. I certainly commend them all on their organisation of the event which has been phenomenal.  
Jane Rutherford, Victoria & Albert Museum

It was wonderful to see the impact CXD has made on our lives - not only the products but also the feeling of belonging to a great and supportive family. There was a real warmth and sense of camaraderie throughout the group. It's clear that CXD has done a lot to bring us together and keep us in contact. There was also a feeling that the great success of the company and its future reflected on all of us; that we'd had a share in it.  
Cheryl Porter, Montefiascone Project Library of Alexandria, Egypt



I came to the event as I wanted to learn more about anoxia, and there were two talks about it so it has definitely been worthwhile. Chris Collins' talk was particularly enlightening.  
Éléonore Kissel, Consultant in Preservation

For more details on the subjects covered during the seminars, or to view further images and testimonials from the day please visit [cxdltd.com/21seminar](http://cxdltd.com/21seminar)





# STAYING ALIVE

“With no current market demand for traditional parchment materials, the craft will die out,” warned renowned conservator, Jiří Vnouček, in our last issue of Timecare Magazine. Here, Katerina Powell discusses how the traditional techniques of the past are informing the work of the Oxford Conservation Consortium, and recounts the challenges faced in keeping the dying craft alive.

“The mysterious process of parchment-making is much talked about in conservation literature, but not always fully understood,” says Katerina Powell, Senior Conservator at the Oxford Conservation Consortium, a co-operative conservation studio for 13 colleges of the University of Oxford.

“The idea of a parchment-making course first materialised at the Oxford Conservation Consortium two years ago when we heard of one taking place in Horn in Austria. The tutor, Jiří Vnouček, agreed to host a course for us and so our fascinating journey began.”

Bringing the course to the UK wasn’t without its challenges, however. Working with the Care of Collections department from the Bodleian Libraries, a suitable venue was found in one of the libraries’ warehouses and the team had to battle with the associated health and safety requirements.

Although Jiří would bring the frames and all the tools required, a number of additional materials, which could not be brought from overseas, had to be sourced by the organisers. They embarked on a fundraising mission and managed to win support from AMARC (Association for Manuscripts and Archives in Research Collections), the Leathersellers’ Company, Conservation by Design and the Wellcome Trust.

Two weeks ahead of the course, preparation work on the animal skins was also required; the goat, sheep, calf and deer hides had to be thoroughly washed and soaked in lime to make them ready for de-hairing.

“We wished we could have used a running stream of water, or even been able to soak the skins in the Thames instead of the endless containers of water,” recalls Katerina. “But all went well and everything was finally ready for the first day of the course.”

Participants from the Bodleian Libraries, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge Colleges Conservation Consortium, Oxford Conservation Consortium and the Wellcome Institute met in Oxford for the Understanding Parchment in Medieval Manuscripts course, which ran from 24th-28th June 2013. The course followed a simplified version of medieval parchment making under Jiří’s expert tutelage.

“The changes in the skins were remarkable,” Katerina remembers. “They swelled to almost three times their original thickness in the lime solution; but once de-haired, cleaned, and stretched on frames to dry, their thickness was reduced to a fraction again. The goat skins in particular increased in size when dried under tension, and some from older animals were difficult to handle.

“We were not intent on perfection; on the contrary, any faults were welcomed as part of the learning process. In spite of this, some of the finished skins were simply beautiful.”

All the delegates had the opportunity to try all parts of the process: de-hairing, fleshing, stretching and chalking the hides, and scraping them with knives, pouncing and pumicing after drying. The hard physical work gave them new-found admiration of the patience and skill of the parchment manufacturers through the ages.

The practical work was accompanied by a series of lectures during which Jiří discussed the parchment-making process and explained the origins of a variety of marks found in medieval manuscripts. One of the lectures was opened to the public and two others to associated curatorial staff.

The combination of practical workshop and lectures about the traditional parchment-making craft has given the delegates an invaluable new insight into the process, which is now informing their own conservation projects.

“We all knew there was a difference between holes made during the parchment making process, holes made (and likely mended) during the writing of a manuscript, and later damage,” said Katerina. “But with the experience gained on the course, we can now identify during which specific part of the making process some holes were made - if during fleshing, scraping or when removing the membrane from the frame.

“Spotting specific marks left in the parchment by different tools, or finding an uncut edge in a manuscript showing some hairs, or stretched areas leading to a point at which the skin was fastened to a frame now all seem like meeting an old friend.”

During the course, the delegates amassed a good set of parchment samples from different animal species and in various stages of completion. These will be used in future as teaching tools.

“Sharing knowledge and building understanding of traditional techniques is invaluable,” Katerina concludes. “Through this type of learning, conservators gain a far greater appreciation of how the items we work on ourselves were crafted, and will be able to conserve them more effectively for future generations.” ■



Far Left - standing from left: Gillian Boal (Wellcome Institute), Andrew Honey (Bodleian Libraries), Katerina Powell (OCC), Edward Cheese (Cambridge Coll. Conservation Consortium), Jim Bloxam (CUL), Jiří Vnouček, Arthur Green (Bodleian L), kneeling from left: Jane Eagan (OCC), Nicole Gilroy (Bodleian). Lying on the floor: Jonatan Vnouček (Jiri's son and assistant). Far Right - Jim Bloxham





Riverside Museum,  
Glasgow

Riverside Museum has won  
European Museum of the  
Year 2013 award.

## What does success look like?

Success is whatever your priority is. Success can be beauty without compromise to security. Or the coherence of a curating vision. Success may be project delivery on-time and on-budget. Ideally it is all of these. In reality it can be...

Just ask winners of European Museum of the year 2013, Riverside Museum, Glasgow.

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