

ISSUE THREE

timecare[®]

MAGAZINE

From Tradesman to the Tate

A PROFILE OF THE LEGENDARY PIERS TOWNSHEND

Cartier and the British Museum

BESPOKE STORAGE & DISPLAY SOLUTIONS

The Endeavour of Joseph Banks

A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

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

Celebrating Conservation....

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

Now in its twenty-third year, The Montefiascone Summer School continues to champion the ancient arts of bookbinding and paper conservation. We hear from both teachers and students who talk with passion and commitment.

The British Museum, the archives of iconic French jeweller Cartier and the Catholic Church's Shrine of St Manchan are amongst the case studies featured in this issue – all with their own unique challenges and all with a bespoke solution.

Piers Townshend's story makes great reading as he enthuses about his three decades in the profession, which included looking after some of the world's greatest masterpieces during his time at Tate.

We hope you will agree that the work of The Anna Plowden Trust plays a vital role in promoting continuous professional development as well as training new entrants.

Inspired by Westminster City Archives, the 'All About Paper' initiative seeks to raise awareness of the facility's collections and its relevance across diverse community groups with a contemporary twist.

Conservation framer Mal Reynolds is one of three contributors to our Joseph Banks feature. It is a truly fascinating tale – embracing art, geography, natural history and science – with a particular focus on his travels with Captain Cook on the Endeavour on that famous voyage of exploration and discovery.

Whether you are a collector, a curator or a conservator, we really hope you enjoy reading the magazine. Do let us have your feedback on this latest issue timecaremagazine@cxdltd.com



Emma Murphy
Editor

Inside this issue:

	Art of Conservation Preserving ancient book construction techniques 04		Insiders View Asking the questions that really matter 13
	Project Profiles Real-life solutions to real life conservation problems 06		Future Success Supporting heritage conservators 14
	Tradesman to Tate A profile of the legendary Piers Townshend 10		Joseph Banks A voyage of discovery 16

Dates for your diary

Cambridge College Librarians' conference

The Queens College, Oxford
Thursday 26th March 2015

This conference takes place every other year, taking place at each university in alternation. It provides an opportunity for College Librarians to find out more about how other Libraries are dealing with similar problems, to share best practice and to meet each other: especially important when some Colleges only have one person on their staff.



Icon Book & Paper Group Conference

The Foundling Museum and
Brunei Gallery, London
8-10 April 2015

Adapt & Evolve 2015. Explores the introduction, formalisation and evolution of East Asian materials and techniques in the conservation of Western book and paper collections. A number of centres for conservation – including museums, archives, large collections, a library, a research facility, and a private studio – have kindly agreed to open their doors to Icon's conference delegates to provide studio tours. Please contact ICON for further information.

We will be at stand no.2



Association of Art Historians Annual Conference and Bookfair

SCVA, University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK
9 - 11 April 2015

This event will highlight the breadth, diversity and vitality of art-historical research today. The annual conference and bookfair will take place in various locations in Norwich city centre and will include academic sessions, lectures and the bookfair itself. This event brings together established scholars and emerging speakers to form an exciting mix of content to engage with.

Museums and Heritage Show

Olympia, London, UK
29 - 30 April 2015

The Museum and Heritage Show was a unanimous success in 2014 and it is back again in 2015! It is a great opportunity for you to get top rate guidance and advice from cultural attraction and sector specific experts through a range of free talks, seminars, demonstrations and one-to-ones. This event encourages innovative and creative ideas and is a great platform for discussion and development within the industry.



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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

Front Cover: Piers Townsend



CONSERVATION BY DESIGN
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CXD Expands Team

NEWS



As CXD continues to go from strength to strength we have recently made two new appointments to the team.

Laurent Martin has been appointed as new product development manager, responsible for working closely with our customers in various countries to search and develop new conservation products. Laurent will not only work with CXD, but also for its conservation sister companies in other countries'.

Laurent has been a book and paper conservator for over 16 years. He studied bookbinding at the Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs and history of art at la Sorbonne in Paris. He joined the National Library of France and then the National Archive in Paris, where the diversity of documents led him to practice medieval book conservation as well as maps and paper records. In his previous role as conservation manager at the National Archives, he also supervised the installation of the new conservation lab in Pierrefite.

In this new role, Laurent will travel extensively between the group's offices both in the UK and France. Laurent commented: "As a conservator I always wanted to find the best products or tools to do my job. Now that I've joined the CXD team I can ensure that we continue to raise the bar with our products, offering the newest and best products possible to meet the needs of conservators and museums in the fight to conserve and protect our cultural heritage."

Christian Freeman has also joined CXD as manufacturing manager. With an engineering degree from Greenwich University, Christian brings with him a wealth of experience in time and motion studies and the design and manufacture of flow metering products used in the process control industry. ■

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“Conservation is a very different sector than dealing with Oil & Gas or Power Stations but I'm extremely excited by the new challenge and the opportunity to focus on product development and innovation. CXD has an unrivalled track record and I'm looking forward to using my skills to further enhance its product development programme as it continues to lead the market in innovation. Making a product for customers that satisfies their timeframe, purpose and within budget is exciting,” explains Christian.

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CXD Expands International Conservation Offer

Recently, CXD has become part of a bigger network of Conservation companies, its parent company acquired Museo Direct and Atlantis-France.

Museo Direct is a leading supplier of exhibition materials and presentation design; conservation storage solutions (including a comprehensive range of boxes and polyesters) and materials for public spaces and museum shops. Atlantis-France is a well-respected reseller of a wide range of conservation materials, originally co-founded by Stuart Welch, founder of CXD.

Dirk Hendrickx, managing director for the global conservation business including CXD, Atlantis-France and Museo Direct, commented: "Museo Direct and Atlantis-France have a strong heritage in France and the partnership marks an important strategic step in our development plans, allowing us to broaden our offer internationally. Both companies' ranges will be complemented by the existing CXD product line-up, providing customers

with a vast selection of high quality conservation equipment and materials, backed up by the service excellence for which each business is renowned."

Patrick Mock, commercial director for Museo Direct and Atlantis-France, added: "This move marks the start of a momentous new chapter in the successful history of Museo Direct and Atlantis-France. We're looking forward to continued development as part of a larger, global company with an outstanding conservation pedigree and to maximising the growth opportunities that this offers. Our collaboration puts all our combined conservation resources under one roof to offer customers an even greater selection of high quality products and excellent, reliable customer service."

For more information on Museo Direct visit www.museodirect.co.uk and for Atlantis-France, visit www.atlantis-france.com
For UK enquiries visit www.cxdltd.com

CONSERVING THE ART OF CONSERVATION

FOCUS FEATURE

The preservation and conservation of historic manuscripts and books is a skill not solely born in modern day society, but with a rich and varied past dating back to the early centuries. While advancements in technology have undoubtedly made the task of protecting our written heritage easier and less time-consuming, being able to harness the knowledge of ancient book construction techniques can result in an overall more sympathetic conclusion, which could mean these documents are able to remain in useable conditions for a much longer time to come.

Situated in a medieval hill town next to Lake Bolsena and close to the beautiful Etruscan City of Orvieto, the world-renowned Book Conservation Summer School in Montefiascone, Italy, is one place that students, skilled conservators and book binders can still go to learn more about the intricacies of ancient bookbinding and paper conservation.

At the head of this group is the Australian conservator Cheryl Porter. Since 1987, Cheryl has endeavoured to restore the poor state of the collection in the library of the town's Seminario Barbarigo, much of which was damaged during the Second World War. Cheryl organised a group of conservators to begin repairing the books and manuscripts that would soon become the heart of a thriving conservation summer programme attracting students and professionals worldwide.

The programme, now in its twenty-third year, continues to offer classes taught by conservators from the most prestigious institutions around the world, introducing new techniques and insights into some of the oldest materials. Kicking off the programme each August is Cheryl Porter's course called 'Re-creating the Medieval Palette, a look into the history, chemistry and re-creation of pigments used in medieval manuscripts. The course is a favourite among old and new conservators alike, and many returning students continue to take part in it. The course offerings for the rest of the summer vary widely in subject and time period, but they are always aimed at the most popular and widely debated issues in book conservation.

However, with such a niche curriculum, places on the courses often come at a premium and are keenly contested by those wanting to hone their skills base. For the

past ten years, one space in particular has been reserved for the winner of Conservation by Design's Nicholas Hadgraft Scholarship. Offered in memory of Dr Nicholas Hadgraft, a much applauded conservator, lecturer, and scholar of note who died suddenly in 2004 aged only 49 years old, the scholarship aims to fund the cost of summer school tuition for one deserving applicant each year.

One such recipient was Shaun Thompson, a book binder from Cambridge University Library who won the scholarship in 2012. Shaun comments; "I had applied for the scholarship four times previously but hadn't been successful. I was about to give up but friends and colleagues encouraged me to try again and I'm so glad I did!

"The outstanding training and skills I gained whilst on the scholarship were second to none. The guidance of the experienced and knowledgeable tutors, in and out of class, gave the opportunity to engage in dialogue with them and fellow students tutees. You don't get that level of one-to-one training anywhere else. The teaching was truly inspirational and really energised and enabled me to develop professionally.

"One of the courses I undertook was run by Ana Beny, looking at the Mudejar Binding. It was a very hands-on module with practical work, backed up by academic research. I was fortunate enough to assist Ana and some of the other students in the practical elements. When I mentioned to Cheryl Porter about an interesting book, 'Preces et Meditationes', which I had been studying at the University Library that has some very unique and unusual structural features; she thought it would make a good topic for the summer school and asked me to come back and teach.

"I was extremely flattered to be invited to lecture given the calibre of other tutors. I spoke with my head of department at Cambridge University, Jim Bloxham, a long-standing tutor at Montefiascone. He helped me research the book and devise a plan for the course which focused on early Gothic binding (late 13th Century). The course gave an over-view of Gothic binding structures, examining previous influences on their evolution and how they, in turn, influenced later bindings, concentrating on Northern European bindings in particular. "It was very nerve-racking to return to Montefiascone as a tutor but the feedback I received was fantastic and very encouraging. I learnt so much through the whole process and was delighted when they asked me to go back again this summer. For this year's topic, Jim and I looked at 12th Century English Limp Tawed Skin Bindings."

"The courses at Montefiascone offer a fantastic opportunity to spend two weeks in beautiful surroundings, with a group of enthusiastic people learning new techniques, exchanging ideas and building networks for the future. In such great company one is able to hone one's skills and increase one's knowledge, evaluate oneself and be inspired by colleagues. The exchange of ideas and creativity in such an environment, away from the demands and stress of daily life, can only increase one's confidence and I think this should be encouraged.

"Training is vital and we need to make it more accessible and affordable for everyone. Many of the courses run in the UK tend to be more academic and don't offer the level of practical work that Montefiascone does and this is what many people find most useful." ■



Julie Tyrlik Montefiascone NH Scholarship winner



Elizabeth Ralph Montefiascone NH Scholarship runner up



Julie Tyrlik, a second year student from the Institut National du Patrimoine in Paris was the lucky recipient of this year's scholarship. She used the scholarship to attend the course offered by Shaun Thompson and Jim Bloxham, together with two others – Semi-limp Parchment Binding Styles with Anne Hillman and Embroidered Turkish Binding with Kristine Rose and Gaia Petrella.

She commented: "Knowledge of bookbinding structures is important for book conservation and practical experience is the best way to develop a better understanding of them. The approach offered by the Montefiascone Book Conservation School is truly unique. Everything is based on an attentive observation which has helped me to learn the skills used by ancient bookbinders and given me a better appreciation of the techniques.

"It was a privilege and a great pleasure to attend the Summer School which was only made possible by the Nicholas Hadgraft Scholarship. Thanks to the scholarship my experience was equally inspiring, confirming me in my ambition to pursue a career in book conservation. The combination of world-class tutors, enthusiastic participants, and Italian sunshine makes the programme immensely enjoyable and extremely worthwhile."

The entries received for the scholarship were so impressive that, for the second year running, a runner-up prize was also awarded. Elizabeth Ralph, a trainee book conservator from Cornwall, used the funding to attend the 'Two Semi-limp Parchment Binding Styles' course ran by Anne Hillman. She commented: 'After attending the course I came away with a greater knowledge of not only this binding style, but also of other materials from which it is made, and the history of the structure itself. The course has certainly helped me to broaden my knowledge of historic binding styles which I am now able to share with colleagues.' ■

To apply for this years NH Scholarship please visit www.cxdld.com/scholarship

Project profiles

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

Client:
British Museum

Location: London, UK

Background: The conservation team at the world-renowned British Museum recently benefited from the installation of a new state-of-the-art Paper Conservation studio in their World Conservation and Exhibition Centre.

Problem: The team needed appropriate specialist housing to look after the Museum's extensive collection of graphic art of old and modern masters including works by Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo or Rembrandt while in conservation. Previous facilities were antiquated and storing large-format pieces posed a particular problem.

Solution: CXD supplied a range of conservation furniture and equipment to provide much-needed storage facilities, including 25 Planorama cabinets in a variety of sizes to accommodate all types of artwork and high quality conservation supplies. The cabinets are secure and lightweight, offering the team flexibility to easily reorganise the space as required.

copyright by Trustees of the British Museum



“We are delighted with the Planorama cabinets from CXD. They not only look wonderful but provide secure, streamlined storage facilities which are a huge benefit to the team. Large-format pieces can now be stored safely while several large-scale conservation projects may be carried out at the same time and having the units on castors means they are highly flexible and easy to use.

Joanna Kosek, Head of Pictorial Art Section
Department of Conservation and Scientific
Research at the British Museum

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“Our archives include everything from paper and photographic slides including; glass plates, auto-chrome and acetates. It's also home to many plaster casts, fascinating sketchbooks and a wide variety of documentation with details of past designs dating back to 1847, so our needs were quite varied in terms of the type of products required. CXD offered us an extensive collection of high quality products that met all of our conservation storage needs. The CXD team is very easy to work with and always offer a fantastic service.

Violette Petit,
Head of Archives at Cartier International

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Client:
Cartier

Location: Paris, France

Background: The Cartier archives are a collection of ledgers, photographs, plaster casts, drawings and antique jewellery, stored and maintained primarily in Paris but also in New York and London.

Problem: Preservation of the archive which includes many one-off pieces was the main concern. Cartier needed a storage solution that would keep the artefacts safely protected, whilst still enabling easy access by conservators involved in restoration.

Solution: CXD supplied a variety of equipment such as cloth-covered archive boxes and acid-free materials for packaging; as well as bespoke products to offer custom-made solutions where needed.



Client:
Boher, Catholic Church and Blackwood Architects

Location: Boher, Ireland

Background: When the Shrine of St Manchan was dramatically stolen from the Boher Catholic Church in Ireland, the local community was devastated. Thankfully, the precious relic was quickly recovered but church officials were forced to place the 12th Century artefact in temporary storage until a suitable way of protecting the exhibit within the church could be found.

Problem: The team needed to balance the requirements of designing a case that would exhibit the Shrine attractively to visitors, while protecting the relic from damage and pollution, and also minimising the risk of theft. Due to the remote location outside of the normally secure museum environment, the requirement to incorporate, state-of-the-art security features which would allow the shrine to remain in-situ was of foremost importance.

Solution: CXD were able to develop a design which offered the high level of security, conservation properties and ease of use that was required.

The showcase is designed to look simple and elegant with a glass vitrine top-mounted on a satin-lacquered plinth. Discreet LED lighting all around the underside of the plinth creates a lifted, floating effect to the whole structure. The frameless glass top is made from low-reflective security glass of almost twice the standard thickness to resist penetration and is raised and lowered for access using a remote interface. In the event of an attack or tampering, seismic detectors in the case trigger a mechanism that lowers the shrine into a protected steel enclosure, and can only be recovered by way of a secure process.

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The team from Armour Systems, the showcase brand of CXD, initially met with me in Dublin, and then the client and I went over to their factory in Milton Keynes. Together we were able to develop a design, which offered the high specification we needed. It was a very challenging installation and we were extremely impressed with how they managed the complex, detailed design and manufacture of this bespoke showcase.

Benan Clancy,
Blackwood Architects

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Client: Colchester Castle Museum

Location: Colchester, UK

Background: Built on the site of the Temple of Claudius, Colchester Castle is the largest Norman keep in Europe. It first opened as a museum in 1860 and houses some of the most important Roman finds in Britain. It reopened its doors in May 2014 following an 18-month £4.2 million refurbishment project to refresh and update the interior and carry out much-needed repairs to the building itself.

Problem: The museum houses extensive archaeological displays ranging from the Iron Age in Essex to the Siege of Colchester in 1684. Amongst the new displays are major Roman finds like the Colchester Vase and Colchester Mercury statuette, as well as a full-size burial reconstruction.

The diverse nature of the exhibits meant that each of the new cases needed to be designed to a bespoke specification. As well as obviously meeting the highest level of conservation; security, accessibility and aesthetics were key priorities. The clarity of the glass and use of lighting was paramount in order to enhance the customer experience.

Solution: The 33 showcases provided by CXD were designed specifically to conserve and protect the many important artefacts from the hazards posed by issues including varying temperature and relative humidity in the aging building. Made entirely of mitred glass, the cases also allow for the viewing public to enjoy an unhampered view of the exhibits from all angles.

“The glass cases completely open up the exhibition space; enabling us to make more use of the fabric of the building and improve the interpretation of the Castle itself with projections and interactive displays.

With thousands of artefacts on display, accessibility and ease of use is particularly important. The bespoke designs from Armour Systems, the showcase brand of CXD, allow us to access all areas of the cases to make the necessary regular checks and maintenance; as well as easily manoeuvre some of the larger objects. With more sophisticated locking systems we've also gone from having almost forty keys to just four – which is obviously much easier and less time-consuming.

Stephen Yates,
Documentation Officer
Colchester Castle Museum

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Client: Russell Bernabo, Conservator

Location: Virginia, US

Background: As a leading conservator in private practice specialising in plaster and gold-leaf surfaces, Russell required the very latest in specialist equipment for the professional removal of dust in hard-to-reach places.

Problem: When restoring a Paul Evans cabinet with polychrome sculptural steel doors, very delicate suction and precise control was necessary to remove the cloying dust without disturbing the friable paint.

Solution: The Conservac from CXD was the perfect tool for the job. Compact, lightweight and portable, with infinitely adjustable suction and HEPA filter; it offered precision vacuuming for this highly delicate commission.

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I have used the Conservac heavily over the last two years, both in my studio and on-site in museums and historic homes. Of course I value the infinitely adjustable suction and HEPA filter, but the high quality silicone hose is also a huge improvement over the plastic hose of comparable vacuums. It's gentle and non-abrasive, quiet on floor and table surfaces and generally much more in keeping with the aesthetics of conservation practice.

The variety of attachments and hoses and the ease with which they can be interchanged make the Conservac function like a human assistant, constantly handing me the tool I need precisely when I need it.

Russell Bernabo,
Conservator, Professional Associate in the
American Institute for Conservation of
Historic and Artistic Works

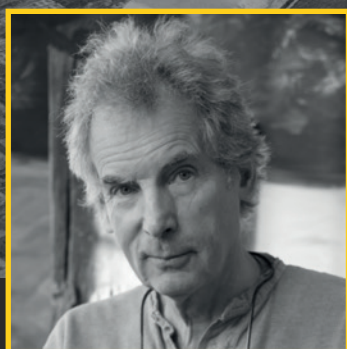
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FROM TRADESMAN TO THE TATE

“Tate has such a vast and varied collection of artworks - in a typical month, we might acquire seven hundred new works. Just to keep ahead of that sort of volume is difficult - something arrives and you never know if it's a time bomb in terms of preservation”

Piers Townshend



Piers and the Large View of Rome, G Vasi 1759

As former Head of Paper Conservation at Tate, renowned conservator Piers Townshend has had an illustrious career that spans over three decades. Responsible for looking after some of the world's greatest masterpieces, his skill and passion for conservation shines as bright today as it did at the start of his career. But Piers made a rather unconventional start to his time as one of the country's leading conservation professionals.

Piers has had what he describes as ‘a zigzag career’. He did well academically before going to Bristol University to read Psychology and Zoology, studying under the celebrated primatologist Dr John Crook. Unsure of his career path he returned to Cambridge and enrolled on a City & Guilds bricklaying course. After a few years laying bricks Piers decided that working outside in the cold wasn't for him. A chance meeting with paper conservator Ranson Davey put Piers on the path to a long and interesting career in conservation. But it wasn't all plain sailing. “At that time there were very few conservation courses available and competition was extremely fierce. My background was completely unorthodox and they wouldn't let me in. Applying to the Courtauld, for example, one of the entry tests baffled me completely. You had to identify Florentine Renaissance paintings from a tiny section of the bottom left-hand corner. A background in art history was absolutely essential for that one! It can be difficult to get people to take you seriously after changing direction.

“I had to spend a whole year proving that I was capable of completing the course and serious about a career in conservation. I got an internship at the Government Art Restoration Workshop in Regents Park. I made the tea, tidied up and did everything I could to be useful. I went for a week and ended up staying for a year. Eventually, at the age of 27, I enrolled on a two-year Diploma in Paper Conservation at Gateshead Technical College, now part of the University of Northumbria.”

Piers then got a job with the Area Museum Service for the North West of England, with responsibility for small regional collections, which nevertheless housed some very significant works of art. “Townshend like Blackburn had been very wealthy industrial towns and they had acquired great collections of art on paper. I had very little practical experience and it was a bit intimidating - the last thing you want is to be on your own with that kind of responsibility one year out of college. I was the only paper conservator there, working with Yvonne Ashmore's oil paintings conservators.”

An opportunity arose for a position at the Tate in 1980 and Piers applied. “Suddenly there were two conservators that I could learn from, Kasia Szeleynski and Sheila Fairbrass. The hands-on experience and training this new role offered really was the making of me.” Piers remained at the Tate, working his way up the ranks to become Head of Paper Conservation in 1990. During this time Piers and his team of expert conservators and restorers looked after one of the largest public collections of art in Europe, covering the entire paper holdings of Tate. This is custodianship on a gigantic scale. “Tate has such a vast and varied collection of artworks - in a typical month, we might acquire seven hundred new works. Just to keep ahead of that sort of volume is difficult - something arrives and you never know if it's a time bomb in terms of preservation.

“You're constantly trying to balance the need for conservation to protect our cultural heritage with the wish for more visitors to be able to see the collections. It's not just a question of funding either.

There are differing schools of academic and critical thought in conservation - from those who complain at the appearance of what they consider underprepared artworks to those who think that any kind of restoration is wrong.”

It's easy to see how balancing the imperatives of preservation and access could be a frustrating task, but Piers explains that this isn't how he sees the role. “Curators sometimes see paper conservators as 'the brakes' - as the people who say 'you can't do that' - but my pet passion is doing things that help us see the art. Art is to be enjoyed and we must continue to innovate and find new ways in which we can both protect and exhibit artwork.

continues overleaf

FROM TRADESMAN TO THE TATE

CONSERVATOR PROFILE

“As a profession we have made great advances but we must never stop looking for better ways to do things. When I first started my training we were still using Chloramine T bleach but soon after we realised that it was difficult to wash out, we stopped using it. Likewise gels that don't make the paper wet have largely replaced the use of poultices.

“It's this constant evolution in practices and techniques that is our duty as conservators to strive for. But it's not easy, when I first joined the Tate we spent a lot of our time restoring artwork which had been badly neglected, but, over the years the job evolved to be more focused on conservation; dealing with new acquisitions and managing exhibitions. One of the downsides to this is that it's now much harder to get on-the-job, hands-on experience which is so invaluable to young conservators. I found it increasingly difficult to find challenging, varied work for the many interns who came to work at the Tate. Practical application is the only way to develop new techniques and to push the boundaries of conservation practice.”

Technological progress has given Piers some new weapons in the endless battle against the damaging effect of light and temperature. “Artworks can be extremely complicated; you're never quite sure what you've got and with most conservation work the ethos is 'if you don't know what you're dealing with, don't do it'. But that's very dull!

“By learning from other disciplines such, as biochemistry, we can begin to develop new techniques to give us a greater understanding and knowledge of what we are dealing with. If you can test accurately, often you can do more than you think. For instance, microfadeometers allow us to see how inks and paint will react to light, tracking minute changes in colour over time. Toys like this are very expensive and are only used by a small number of conservation scientists, but I think we'll see the use of them get much more widespread over the next ten years.”

It's Piers' passion for trying something new that in part lead him to leave the Tate in December 2013 to begin a new chapter in his life. “I'm not getting any younger and I decided it was time to refocus on what I love doing the most. I rent a small studio in Camberwell and now work on a freelance basis. The variety of commissions that come in on a daily basis is fantastic. I'm currently working on some 17th Century maps, sketches by Italian artists made during WWII and a modern collage piece with pink feathers! Being involved in a project from start to finish is wonderful, but not having the back-up of a team is quite sobering. I do miss the discussions with colleagues and I'm having to be much more self-reliant!”

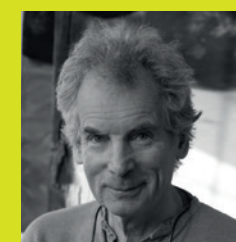
As well as working in private practice, Piers also lectures on paper conservation at Camberwell College. “If something seems impossible, see what you can do to make it happen anyway. I'm often asked by students what was the greatest piece of art I worked on at the Tate. But the most interesting projects weren't always that impressive. For me, the technical achievement of solving a problem is the real joy of conservation.” ■

INSIDERS' VIEW

Asking the questions that really matter

We ask three eminent conservation professionals to share their views on how the industry has changed and what the future holds. 'How have conservation practices evolved over the last 30 years and what will be the biggest changes affecting the industry?

Conservation practices have come a long way over the last 30 years as new technologies allow us a much greater understanding of materials and processes. Many of these advances are thanks to people questioning and continually looking for a better way of doing things. This is what we must continue to do. There is still so much scope for doing it better when it comes to conservation and we have to keep evolving. We must learn from other disciplines to develop new techniques and adapt processes.



“When it comes to artwork, we've made significant headway over the last few decades in terms of preservation; but art should be enjoyed. What's the point in restoring an item for it then to sit in storage? We must find new ways to exhibit these masterpieces whilst still protecting the artefact. Innovation is key to protecting our history's treasures for future generations to enjoy and appreciate.”

Piers Townsend
Former Head of Paper Conservation
The Tate Gallery, London

“There will undoubtedly be changes in the conservation and preservation world in the coming years; greater emphasis on scarce resources, collaborations, partnerships, storage and sustainability. We need to embrace cross fertilisation from other industries and technologies that we can adapt and use - more flexible and intelligent working. The internet has opened up communication and knowledge exchange opportunities for us all, although this can be challenging.



I believe that working closely with objects has a skill set that is often underestimated and makes us unique in a fast moving world where time is an increasingly precious commodity. These unique blends of craft skill, scientific, materials and collection knowledge need to be sustained - there is always more to learn often from re-looking and re-assessing the objects we preserve in our collections.

Linda Ramsay
Head of Conservation
National Records of Scotland

“There have been many changes to the field over the years but when you speak to conservators all over the world one of the advances is universal digitalisation. We used to do a considerable amount of book conservation works here at the National Archives, but last year, nearly every project we did, involved digitising documents.



“This new technology holds lots of positive benefits for the industry such as allowing access to rare manuscripts, but there must be a balance. If we place too much of our resources and investment into modern techniques and technologies we are in danger of losing vital technical skills that have been passed down for generations. The skill of traditional bookbinding has already almost disappeared in some countries and the loss of craftsmanship such as this will have a detrimental effect on the future of the conservation industry.”

Laurent Martin
Former Conservation Manager
Archives Nationales, Paris

INVESTMENT IN TRAINING IS KEY TO FUTURE SUCCESS

Conservation is a fascinating but highly technical discipline. Those wishing to pursue conservation as a career face increasing challenges to raise the funds they need to study their chosen specialism. But if we are to maintain a highly qualified cadre of conservators in order to protect the extraordinary heritage held in the UK and across the world, conservation training and research are vital.

SECTOR FOCUS

The Anna Plowden Trust is one of the organisations dedicated to supporting training and skills development in heritage conservation. Established in 1998, the trust was set up in memory of Anna Plowden CBE, one of the foremost object conservators of her generation who died in 1997. Its purpose is to contribute to the development of skills in the conservation of movable heritage and to help raise awareness of the profession of conservation. It is the only grant-giving trust in the UK solely to focus on supporting heritage conservators, be they students or practising professionals, and it has invested over £400,000 in conservation training since its foundation.

Susan Palmer, Chairman of the Trust explains how the organisation strives to continue the work of its pioneering namesake. “Anna would be very proud of the breadth and significance of the contribution this Trust has made, in her name, to the training of new students and to the continuing professional development of practising conservators.

“In the last two years we have awarded Conservation Training Bursaries to thirty students at thirteen UK universities and colleges who are studying on twenty different conservation programmes,

ranging from stained glass to textiles and from easel painting to furniture.

“And it’s not just new students coming into the industry that benefit from the work we do. As a professional conservator, Anna felt strongly that continuing professional development (CPD) was extremely important in order that practising conservators should keep up with new techniques and developments. However, at a time of increasing cuts, the staff training budget is often one of the first to be reduced or cut completely; yet conservators must maintain their skills as a requirement of their professional accreditation. Very few funders will consider supporting conservator’s CPD, so the Trust’s contribution in this area is significant.

“Since 2012 CPD Grants have been awarded to forty conservators working in over thirty UK institutions and private practices. They have attended conferences and courses on topics ranging from Asian lacquer, East Asian art and Egyptian collections to feathers, medieval books and totem poles.”

The Trustees are, however, acutely aware of the need to do much more. “We are able to support only a third of those who apply to us for Conservation Training Bursaries and, as fees on these

highly specialist and resource-intensive courses increase and student debt rises, aspiring conservators face an ever-greater challenge to fund their primary training,” explains Susan.

“We must redouble our efforts to increase the funds that the Anna Plowden Trust has available to support aspiring conservators. This is why the support of our corporate sponsors such as Conservation by Design and other companies in the sector is so important to us. We are also grateful to the many generous trusts and foundations, such as the J Paul Getty Jr Trust, the Garfield Weston Foundation and the Dulverton Trust, that have supported our work.”

To find out more about the Anna Plowden Trust and its work, visit www.annaplowdentrust.org.uk ■

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I received the support of the Anna Plowden Trust for my second and third years of the three-year postgraduate diploma in easel painting at the Courtauld Institute of Art. I am passionate about what I do, and am very grateful to the Anna Plowden Trust for giving me the financial support which makes it possible for me to undertake this study.

Sally Higgs, Postgraduate Diploma in Easel Painting Conservation Courtauld Institute of Art

“I have worked in the conservation workshops of the Tate for the past 5 years. The funding from the Anna Plowden Trust in 2013-14 helped me study the MA Conservation of Furniture and Decorative Arts as a part-time student. Through the course I have expanded my knowledge of conservation principles and techniques across a wider range of objects. This is helping me fulfill my current role of Conservation Technician at the Tate with greater understanding and in the long term will help me to progress to a position as a conservator working with furniture and decorative surfaces in the museum and gallery sector.”

Jon Slight, MA Conservation of Furniture (part-time) University of Buckingham

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ALL ABOUT PAPER

A recent project in South West London is bringing paper conservation to the masses. Inspired by the Westminster City Archives paper collections, ‘All About Paper’ aims to increase awareness of the Archives’ unique collections and the fascinating history of paper to diverse community groups.

Run by Georgia Vossou, Conservator at Westminster City Archives, together with a small group of volunteers, the project offers a number of workshops for local residents on bookbinding, paper cut and printmaking along with fascinating sessions on the history of paper. They also work in collaboration with Westminster Libraries, reaching school children during visits to local libraries.

Georgia comments: “Although the internet, computer and electronic files have changed our relationship with books, and in spite of predictions that society would shift away from the printed word; more documents and books are printed now than ever before. It is clear that paper and books are here to stay.

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“Our project aims to educate and inspire people about the history of paper and books and the importance of continuing with conservation practices. The workshops enrich classroom practice, while developing young people’s innate ability to express creativity. We also offer participants the opportunity to take a behind-the-scenes look at the conservation studio of Westminster City Archives and get first-hand experience of the conservation of paper collections. This has proved to be an extremely popular activity with our young friends and adult groups alike.”

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The Westminster City Archives provide a unique record of the life of Westminster, Marylebone and Paddington from Tudor times to the present day. It contains extensive collections on family, local, business and community history – including books, directories, maps, newspapers, images, local government records, electoral registers, census returns, parish registers and business archives. ■

For more information about the project please contact: Georgia Vossou, Westminster City Archives

THE ENDEAVOUR OF JOSEPH BANKS

- A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY



Mal Reynolds, conservation framing specialist, Dawn Heywood, curator at The Collection (Lincoln) and Konstantina Konstantinidou, paper conservator at the Natural History Museum write about their involvement with the Joseph Banks exhibition.

CONSERVATION CLOSE UP

In February 2014 the exhibition 'Joseph Banks: A Great Endeavour - A Lincolnshire Gentleman and his Legacy' opened at Lincoln's museum, The Collection. This exhibition grew out of a passing comment when The Collection hosted part of a conference on Sir Joseph Banks entitled 'From Shire to Shore' in 2009, in conjunction with the Sir Joseph Banks Society and the University of Lincoln. Joseph Banks (1743-1820) was one of the foremost naturalists of his time and president of the Royal Society from 1778-1820. He inherited his father's estate in Lincolnshire, at Revesby near Horncastle, when he was just 18, and he had spent much time as a child exploring the estate and fens, developing his first passion for botany and the natural world. One February evening, five years after the exhibition was first mooted; Sir David Attenborough came to The Collection to open the exhibition.

The exhibition's guest curator, Dr. Neil Chambers, and the museum's exhibition team had to define a focus for the exhibition as Joseph Banks's influence in the 18th Century was extraordinarily wide, and an exhibition in the space available would only scratch the surface of his achievements, which would not do them justice. It was decided to focus on Joseph Banks' involvement with the Endeavour voyage, when he accompanied James Cook on the first Pacific Ocean voyage, where they explored the coast of the Pacific Islands, New Zealand and Australia, and observed the Transit of Venus. Banks collected specimens and recorded information both on the natural history and the cultures of the indigenous people. He was the first explorer to take specialists such as botanist Daniel Solander and artists Sydney Parkinson and Alexander Buchan; to record the landscape, people and natural history and to collect specimens rather than purely surveying the coastlines.

The exhibition tracked the route and stopping points of the Endeavour, bringing together original drawings, engravings and documents, scientific instruments, and ethnographic objects and natural history specimens collected from each stage of the journey. The centrepiece of the display was the Usher Gallery's portrait of Joseph Banks by Anglo-American painter Benjamin West. The portrait shows Banks surrounded by artefacts from the voyage and alongside it were displayed a flax Maori cloak and a chief's headdress from the Pitt Rivers Museum.

This was the first time that many of these objects had been brought together since they were collected almost 250 years ago. Wherever possible, original drawings and artefacts were paired up, for example the Parkinson drawing of a Maori hei tiki and the nephrite pendant itself on loan from Her Majesty the Queen. As well as promoting an increased awareness of Joseph Banks and his achievements, the exhibition (and forthcoming publication) aimed to provide new ways of studying the disciplines promoted during the mission through the objects that were gathered, and to deepen the understanding of the significance attached to them at the time and since.

The exhibition team had to be pragmatic in how far-reaching this exhibition could be. There were restrictions in terms of the available exhibition space and the budget to bring the objects to Lincoln, so loans had to be restricted to those available from UK institutions. Starting with a long list of objects researched by Dr Chambers, the selection was narrowed down to those objects available for loan. Much of the material is extremely fragile and sensitive to movement and environmental conditions, and any items loaned to exhibitions within the previous five years were now not available. The end result however was an outstanding selection of first voyage material from national collections including the Natural History Museum, British Library, British Museum and the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford.

©The Collection: Art and Archaeology in Lincolnshire/Andy Weekes

A Conservator's Involvement: Konstantina Konstantinidou, Paper Conservator at the Natural History Museum

The Joseph Banks' loan from the Natural History Museum (NHM) consisted of specimens and artwork by Sydney Parkinson and others from the Endeavour voyage. The NHM Library sent 14 pieces of artwork on paper including, watercolour drawings, pencil drawings and colour engravings as well as an oil painting and a copper plate. Most of the items were dated from the eighteenth century with the exception of the colour engravings that were made in the 1980s. As a paper conservator, I also had to prepare for the display of the herbarium sheet that was on loan for this exhibition.

The preparation of the artwork prior to the exhibition was fairly straight-forward. The NHM Library is a research library and for that reason most of our collection is already housed in window mounts made

out of archival-grade museum boards. The majority of the watercolours were already inlaid on rag cotton paper. The artwork is attached on to the window of the inlay paper overlapping by a couple of millimetres. The inlaid artwork keeps the verso visible from the back, for researchers to access whilst allowing safer handling.

The engravings were printed on soft wove paper and kept in a window folio of the same paper thereby comprising one item. They were strapped on museum boards of 1650 microns, of exactly the same size, for more rigidity at the back, which also gave support for safer transfer and display. The polyester book-strips were attached to the back board but they were invisible to the viewer.

The herbarium sheet was mounted on cotton museum board with bevelled edges. The board allowed easier handling and an extra buffering whilst the bevelled edges concealed it from the viewer. Slots were

made around the edges of the board and strips of Japanese paper were folded in half and then slotted in. The ends of the strips, at the top, were left wide open. The herbarium sheet was attached to the Japanese strip-ends with wheat starch using the micro-dotted technique. The reason for this option was to enable the quick and easy detachment with the minimal vibration.

A Framer's Involvement: Mal Reynolds, GCF Adv Harlequin Frames

My involvement was twofold - to print and frame a number of digital files from amongst others, the British Museum and the British Library; and to prepare 13 frames for original items from the NHM. After consulting with Dawn Heywood at The Collection, we decided to use the following materials:

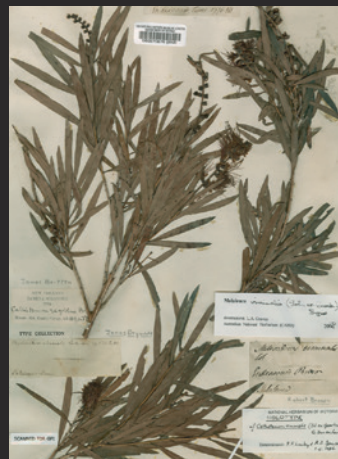
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JOSEPH BANKS



© The Collection: Art and Archaeology in Lincolnshire (Usher Gallery)

Banks was accompanied on the voyage by the Swedish botanist Daniel Solander who, prior to 1768 was working at the British Museum as an Under-librarian. For the journey, Solander designed special boxes to store botanical specimens collected during the voyage. Solander boxes were produced in a selection of sizes to accommodate a choice of standard mounts e.g. a Solander box takes two half-Royal mounts. Boxes based on Solander's design are still produced today by Conservation by Design and other companies.



© the Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London

- Printing paper: Hahnemuhle German heavyweight etching board, weight 310 g/m² - a white 100% alpha-cellulose board with a fine surface texture.
- Moulding: Arqadia's 155900000 barefaced Tulip moulding.
- Mountboard: Windowmount - Arqadia's Timecare Heritage BDTHMD 3303 (2200micron). Undermount - Arqadia's SSS008953 Conservation backing board (1650 micron)
- Glazing: Artscreen Clear 2.0mm 999.000134.
- Backboard: Arqadia Kraft Board 2.3mm 999119000.

The exhibits were to be displayed in a controlled environment which included the control of temperature, relative humidity/ fluctuations in RH and light levels. The original items were to be framed for the period of the exhibition only; once the

exhibition closed the frames would be re-used for other projects.

Before starting work, I visited a display at The Collection of the printed work of four of the 20th century's greatest artists: Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí and Andy Warhol. It became clear that I would need to modify how the border widths were allocated. The modern method of allocating border widths (top and sides equal and bottom slightly deeper) would not be appropriate with the age of the prints and, more importantly, not match the existing mounts from the other museums.

This required some research to determine mount sizes and proportion of the borders. The mount size used for the prints was based on the British Museum half-Royal, dimension 406mm x 280mm (16" x 11"). Border sizes were calculated as follows: the sides equal, top and bottom borders in the proportion 45% top; 55% bottom. In general, the thickness of the window-mount is important to ensure the artwork

is not damaged by rubbing or touching the glazing. The British Museum standard is either 1650 micron or 2200 micron museum board, as I wished to get the mounts as close to those used by the British Museum; I chose to use Timecare Heritage Museum Board - Off White (2200 micron).

All prints were hinged using the standard 'T- Hinge' using Arqadia's cotton museum gummed tape 999000031.

The second half of my work centred on the preparation of frames and framing of the original artwork from the voyage. This had to be undertaken in the presence of a conservator from the Natural History Museum. The artwork was sealed in a box until the arrival of the conservator and could not be opened under any circumstances until her arrival. Each item was accompanied by an extensive condition report which was examined by the conservator, curator and myself prior to framing the pieces. ■



'Joseph Banks: A Great Endeavour - A Lincolnshire Gentleman and his Legacy', at The Collection: Art and Archaeology in Lincolnshire, 15th February – 11th May 2014

The exhibition was funded with contributions from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Lincolnshire County Council, the Sir Joseph Banks Society, the Usher Gallery Trust, the Friends of Lincoln Museums and Art Gallery and Arqadia Ltd.

Exhibition curated by Dr Neil Chambers, Sir Joseph Banks Archive Project, Nottingham Trent University and The Collection, Lincoln.

The Collection: Art and Archaeology in Lincolnshire brings together the Usher Art Gallery and the county's archaeology museum as one cultural venue. It is managed by Lincolnshire County Council.

OPENING PANDORA'S BOX



Visitors to a new exhibition at The Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery in Waterloo, Canada, are greeted by a rather unusual sight – row after row of identical grey boxes. But it's when you open those boxes that the magic begins.

Curator, Krista Blake explains: "Human beings have always possessed information and, in turn, have been possessed by the storage of information. Archives speak to us of the shared space of experience— they can connect us to other human beings from any time or any place on the planet. The ephemera we leave behind are an invitation to find meaning and identity; the bits of pottery, bones, jewellery, paintings, gum wrappers, trinkets, and photographs are the small details that tell us a bigger story. Sometimes this detritus that lies slumbering, waiting for us to uncover and bring back to life, unlocks an almost imperceptible truth that may awaken and enlighten us."

The result is 'Archive Fever', an evolving archive of over 70 time capsules contributed by some of today's most innovative and creative thinkers. Contemporary scientists (Lee Smolin, Carlo Rovelli, Renalte Loll, Jennifer Jacquet), writers (Ian Rankin, A.C. Grayling, George Dyson, Douglas Coupland), artists (Douglas Gordon, Martin Boyce, David Shrigley, Ciara Phillips, Katie Paterson) and musicians (Jarvis Cocker, Owen Pallett, Martin Rev) have each curated a box, to surprise, mystify, illuminate and delight us. Each box is both an intimate record, and a pathway to a collective experience just waiting to be opened and brought to life.

Krista continues; "When I was approached to put on an exhibition, my first thought was 'What can I do that's different?'. As primarily a clay and glass museum, most of the exhibits are locked away and visitors aren't allowed to touch anything. I wanted to make my exhibition interactive and give the audience a very different experience to what they might expect.

"Visitors sign out a box from the exhibition which they then take to the main gallery space to open. None of the boxes has names so they don't know whose box they have got. All the names are listed

on a panel so people can try and work out who it belongs to.

"Watching people open the boxes is theatre in itself. Each one is fastened with a ring-end tie closure and there is a wonderful feeling of anticipation as they carefully follow the ritual of untying the string and opening the box. It's like opening a beautifully wrapped gift at Christmas; everyone is always so quiet and almost reverent. They first peer into the box and then carefully take out the objects one by one.

"Each box is completely different and contains really personal objects from the contributor. One person put in a red tube that he used to syphon petrol when travelling around Europe as a student. Another box contains a taxidermy wolf head – it always makes people jump!

"The exhibition has received a fantastic response from people of all ages and walks of life. Everyone is collecting something so I think the idea of archiving is one we can all relate to. One little girl asked me 'Is this art?' I replied 'Yes', and she said 'Wow, that's amazing.'"

Archive Fever! will be running at The Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery until January 2015, and is currently securing funding through the Canada Arts Council to tour in the USA and UK. ■

Conservation by Design was chosen specifically to supply the custom boxes for this project; the boxes not only had to be robust and able to withstand much handling by the public, but also had to be beautiful. Krista commented: "As they are such a prominent feature of this exhibition, the boxes (really being works of art in their own right), have perhaps for the first time made it out of their usual subterranean location, and onto the main floor. Thanks to Conservation by Design, our habitual methods of organizing and gathering will continue to allow us to retain and remember who we are; for these histories, built on more histories, open out to the future from the right now."



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