



# V&A

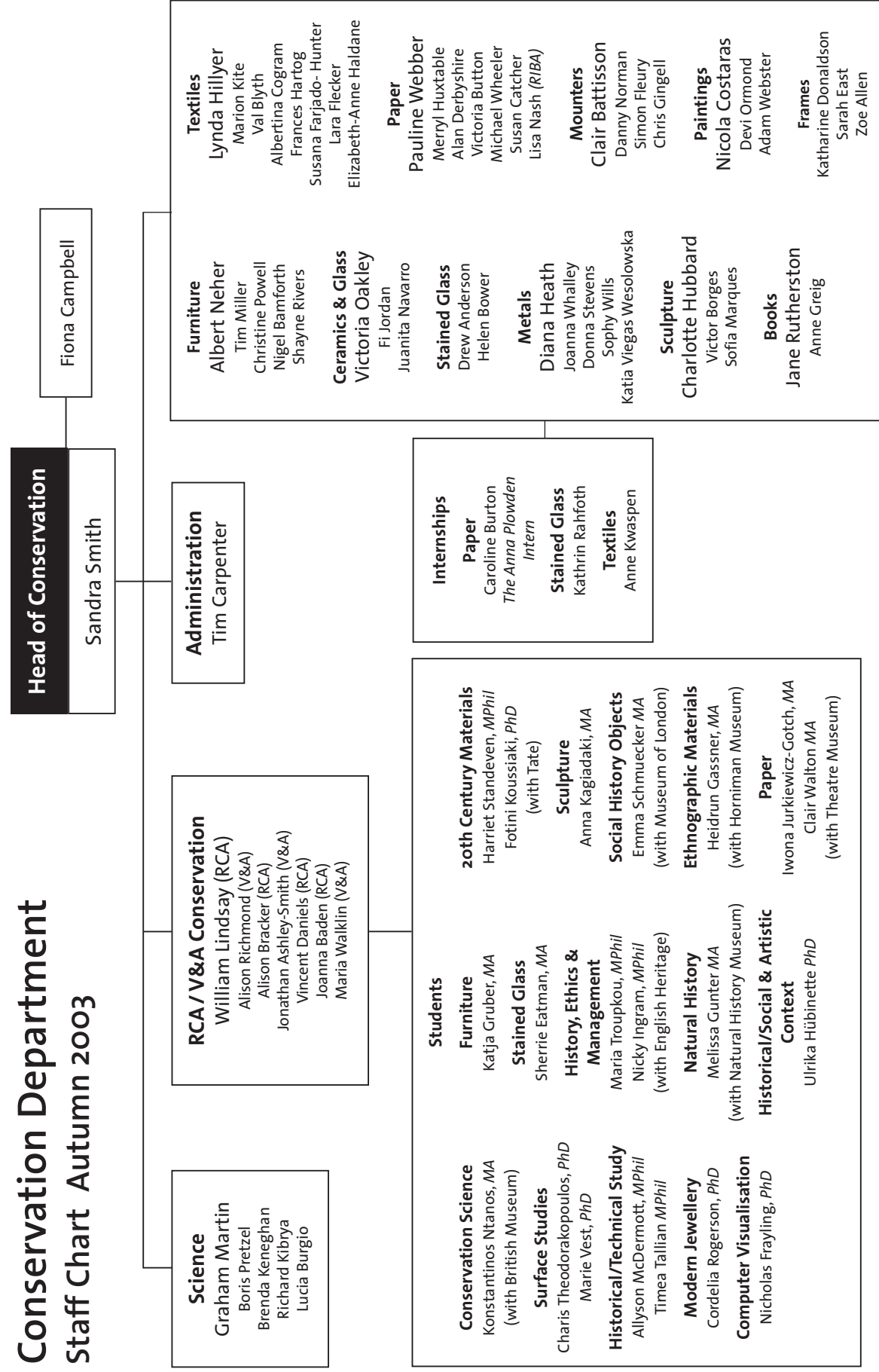
## Conservation Journal

Autumn 2003 Number 45 £2.50 @ point of sale

# Elizabeth Martin 1947 – 2003

To Liz, our dear friend and colleague.  
The UK's first photographic conservator.

## Conservation Department Staff Chart Autumn 2003



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Front cover image: St Thomas Becket panel, Beauchamp Chapel, St Mary's Warwick, on loan to the V&A for the exhibition *Gothic: Art for England 1400-1547*

# Editorial

Sandra Smith

Head of Conservation

It is with the deepest regret and sadness that I begin this editorial with the announcement of the death of Elizabeth Martin, Senior Photographic Conservator. Liz had been with the Museum for many years and was greatly respected for her professional skills and knowledge of the collections. She shared her skills freely and willingly with conservators and students and was a popular member of the Department. She will be deeply missed by her friends and colleagues.

'Regions' are on the government agenda for museums. The first round of money is available for the creation of regional hubs, and national museums are being encouraged to share skills and expertise to help create centres of regional excellence. Raising awareness of the nationally important items and collections spread throughout the country, in local or regional museums, within churches and other heritage properties, through exhibitions such as *Gothic: Art for England 1400-1547* is just one of the ways that Nationals can contribute. Several of the papers in this Journal focus on the development of the Gothic exhibition and the associated preparatory conservation work. They highlight the skills and expertise that conservators and scientists bring to an exhibition team. Preparation of any exhibition takes many years, but when it includes the removal of stained glass windows and tomb effigies from their original church settings it takes significantly more planning and organisation. Conservators have travelled the length and breadth of the country assessing the condition of items, advising on their transportation and subsequent display mountings. As part of the Gothic team, they have contributed their

professional skills, not only to ensure the objects are cared for but also to build the trust and confidence of local communities. Whilst the curators highlighted the national or cultural importance of the pieces, the conservators provided reassurance that they would be cared for to the highest standard throughout the loan to the V&A. We hope that the new relationships formed during the preparation of the Gothic exhibition will be maintained and developed in the future.

The V&A Conservation Summer School in Derby is a more conscious and direct way in which the Department is involved in the Regions. As the article by Professor Trevor Brown highlights, there is a need for skills and expertise from Nationals to be made locally available to regional groups. As a contributor, I was struck by the commitment of the participants to make a positive difference to the care of their collections. Providing access to our specialist knowledge of materials is invaluable for a local museum without a conservator and a limited budget. Acknowledging the regional need for conservation articles to be published in general heritage journals, rather than exclusively in specialist conservation journals, will influence our approach to publications in the future.

Finally, I would like to end on some good news. I am delighted to announce the promotion of Shayne Rivers of Furniture Conservation to Merit Band 3 and Joanne Whalley, Metals Conservator to Band 4. Both thoroughly deserve this recognition of their professionalism, quality of work and contribution to the Museum.

# Planning *Gothic: Art for England 1400-1547*

Paul Williamson

Keeper of Sculpture, Metalwork, Ceramics & Glass

Ten years ago, Linda Lloyd-Jones, Head of Exhibitions, V&A, asked me to think about organising an exhibition on Late Medieval art in England. I had been involved in the planning of the two great English medieval exhibitions of the 1980s – *English Romanesque Art 1066-1200*, held at the Hayward Gallery in 1984, and *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200-1400*, shown in 1987-88 at the Royal Academy – and it seemed obvious that this last piece of the ‘English medieval jigsaw’ should be put in place. After all, there could be no doubt that this would have broad popular appeal – including as it does such historical luminaries as Henry V, Richard III, Henry VII and Henry VIII – and its artistic treasures more than merited being highlighted.

Because of pressure of other work, in 1993 I was able to do no more than sketch the outlines of a possible exhibition, but the Museum’s exhibitions committee received the proposal with enthusiasm and expressed the hope that we would be able to carry the project forward. Unbeknownst to us, Professor Richard Marks of the University of York was working along similar lines with the Royal Academy, and it was not until the following year that Richard and I started to discuss the possibility of joining forces. When Alan Borg became Director of the V&A in Autumn 1995, we judged that the time was right to take the initiative, and were delighted when he agreed that we should start serious work on the exhibition, with Richard as the Guest Curator.

One of the first things we did, in 1996, was to form a small advisory committee of leading scholars drawn from across the university and museum sectors, and shortly afterwards we were in a position to apply for a substantial research and development grant from the Getty Grant Program. The application was successful, the \$175,000 being used to fund the appointment of Eleanor Townsend as Exhibition Assistant (subsequently up-graded to Assistant Curator of the exhibition), to allow Richard to be seconded to the Research Department in 1998-99, to pay for travel, research seminars, photographs and to meet other associated costs. Richard and Eleanor travelled the country, identifying and photographing numerous objects which we knew of in cathedrals, parish churches, Oxbridge colleges, town halls and

private collections and discovering several others along the way; members of the advisory committee did the same. By 2000 we had the intellectual framework and themes of the exhibition worked out, and through a painful process of pruning managed to whittle down the object lists to just over 300 pieces. Richard and Eleanor and the other catalogue authors had of course recorded the basic condition of every object being considered for inclusion on their travels around the country – and abroad – but it was only when the list had been finally agreed that we were able to carry out detailed conservation checks on many of the key objects.

Clearly, only those objects which we thought would be fit for travel reached the short list. Nevertheless, the extraordinary range of materials to be included, ranging from stained glass panels in church windows, paintings, woodwork, through to stone and gilt-copper sculptures, required detailed examination and method statements needed to be prepared. Very few museums would have the necessary conservation expertise to do this, nor have the staff with the skills required to install these precious works of art. The end result is therefore very much a joint effort between the exhibition organisers and our conservators, co-ordinated for this project by Charlotte Hubbard, Simon Metcalf and Jane Rutherston.

# Climate Monitoring of Objects for the *Gothic: Art for England* Exhibition

Richard Kibrya

Climate Scientist, Science Section

The *Gothic: Art for England 1400-1547* Exhibition presented some interesting challenges concerning the environment. The objects being borrowed for the exhibition have come from many diverse institutions, including churches and cathedrals. They were spread widely over the country and in some cases from quite remote locations. It was likely that the range of climates experienced by these objects differed accordingly, but very little in the way of records of previous monitoring existed, except for anecdotal evidence of localised events.

As part of the Museum’s duty of care it was essential to obtain historical climate information on these objects. This information, coupled with condition checks, would be used to formulate an environmental strategy for the display of the objects in the exhibition that would greatly reduce any risk of further damage to environmentally-sensitive material once they were in the care of the Museum.

A monitoring programme was initiated, in conjunction with the Exhibitions Department, whereby all churches and cathedrals lending objects would have their climate monitored to ascertain the extent of seasonal climate variations. Dataloggers were purchased for this purpose and began to be deployed in early 2001. Where resources allowed, it was planned to obtain one complete year’s worth of data, therefore determining longer-term seasonal effects as well as short-term fluctuations.

As results began to be collated, it became apparent that many objects were experiencing climates markedly different from the V&A’s environment. For example the doors of St Alban’s Cathedral (Figure 1) showed extreme fluctuations in relative humidity (RH) (Figure 2). In conjunction with Nigel Bamforth, Senior Furniture Conservator, and external bodies such as the Cathedrals Fabric Commission, environmental strategies were formulated for these objects to take into account their present environmental conditions and those which could be achieved during the exhibition. Although the exhibition space is air-conditioned, special provision has been made for objects coming from more

consistently damp conditions, with the objective of preventing excessive environmentally-induced dimensional realignment. These objects were gradually acclimatised to museum conditions over a number of weeks and kept at a slightly higher RH during the exhibition by using Artsorb, a custom-conditioned buffering media.

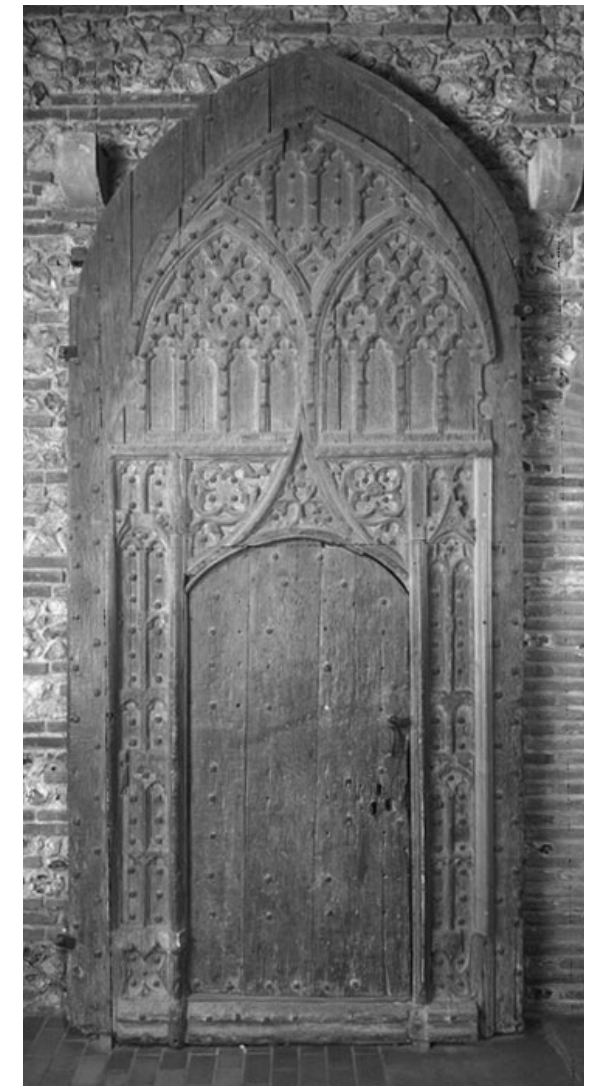


Figure 1. Door at St Alban’s Cathedral

# The October Labour

Sherrie Eatman

RCA/V&A Conservation, MA Student Stained Glass

Climate at St Albans

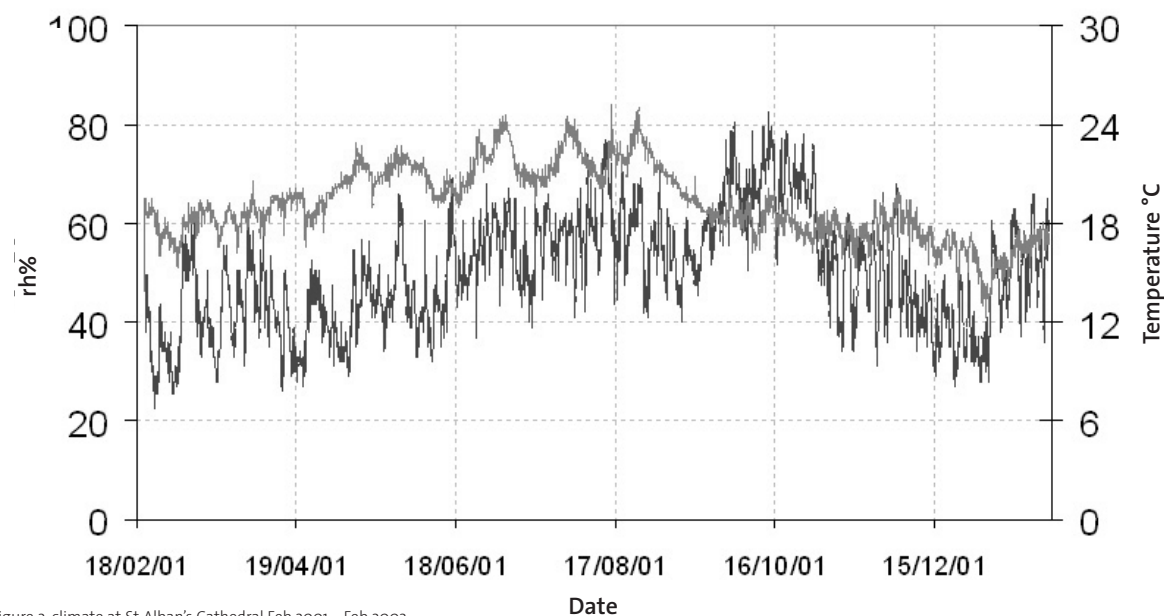


Figure 2. climate at St Alban's Cathedral Feb 2001 – Feb 2002

This exercise has required the communication and co-operation of a diverse group of people such as vicars and other church custodians, the Cathedrals Fabric Commission and the Exhibitions and Conservation Departments at the V&A. Although some objects are coming from quite extreme climates and may have been affected by these in the past, this work has ensured that the measures being taken during their period at the V&A will greatly reduce the risk of further damage.

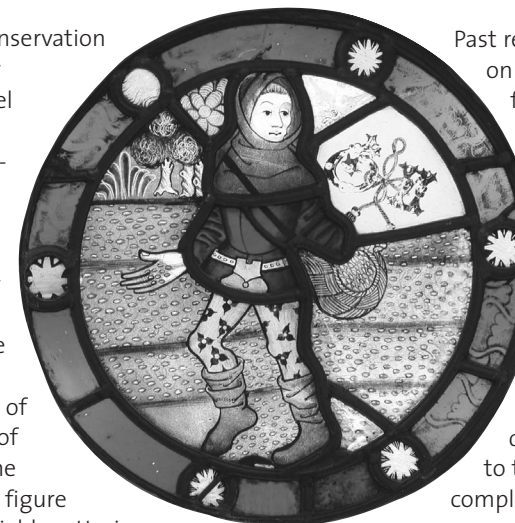
Looking ahead, the implementation of OCEAN (object centred environmental analysis network) within the Museum means the possibility will exist for monitoring remote sites such as the churches and cathedrals mentioned above and viewing data in near real time. This will greatly assist in the planning of environmental management strategies for future exhibitions.

This article discusses the conservation of an early fifteenth century English stained glass roundel prior to its display in the *Gothic: Art for England 1400-1547* exhibition (Figure 1). It is one of only two stained glass objects from the V&A's collection selected for the exhibition. Formerly located in the old parsonage at St Michael-at-Coslany, Norwich, this roundel is one of three from a set of Labours of the Months purchased by the Museum in 1931. It depicts a figure walking across a ploughed field scattering seeds taken from a wicker basket he is carrying by his side. Stylised trees and plants are in the background. The Labours of the Months was a common theme found in both manuscript illumination and roundel designs in England and on the Continent in the fifteenth century. Sowing seed was an agricultural labour of the peasantry representing the month of October.

This leaded roundel measures 31.5cm in diameter and is made of painted and stained glass. The details of the imagery were painted and fired onto both sides of the glass using traditional oxide paint. The various shades of yellow were obtained by painting and firing silver stain onto the back of the glass. While the glass is in good condition, there is paint loss throughout the roundel, with the worst affected areas being the red glass making up the border.

Upon visual examination, it was noted that the roundel had been re-leaded relatively recently (within the past 50 years or so) with a wider lead than it would have had originally. The roundel also contained several narrow leads that were added to repair broken glass. Of the four pieces of 'foreign' glass detected, the two pieces to the right of the figure's head were considered particularly obtrusive. The painted and stained surface decoration on these later additions displays part of a quatrefoil and the letters 'G' and 'N' connected by a cord.

Figure 1. October Labour before treatment (Museum No. C.134-1931)  
All photography by Sherrie Eatman



Past restoration treatments, which focused on repairing visible damage, may detract from an object's appearance by obscuring the artist's intended design. This is because original glass that was damaged or lost was often replaced with an arbitrary piece of glass taken from another window. Some of these restorations are not visually successful, particularly when the foreign glass is a different colour or has surface decoration that is a different colour or bears no similarity to the surrounding imagery that it is completing.

The principal objective of the conservation treatment was to restore the artist's original intentions, which had become obscured by past interventions. Making the imagery more understandable would aid interpretation of the roundel while its overall appearance would benefit from the removal of repair leads and being re-leaded with a smaller width of came more suitable for the size of the roundel and delicacy of design.

Dealing with the distracting foreign glass required careful consideration of both ethical and aesthetic issues. After consultation with my supervisor and our departmental curator, it was agreed that in this instance there was a case for the removal of the most obtrusive stopgap because it comprised almost one quarter of the roundel yet its imagery was completely unrelated to the rest of the object. Research was undertaken in an attempt to determine the details of the missing imagery. The first step was to consult the acquisition file. It showed that the foreign glass had been added to the roundel before it was acquired by the Museum; therefore, there was no photographic evidence available on which to base the new replacement. However, a notation in the file did state that the roundel was "closely similar in design" to one reproduced by C.J.W. Winter in 1849 as being in the north window of the north aisle of the church of St Martin's-at-Palace, Norwich (Figure 2). This drawing, which measures 10.2cm in diameter, is in the Design Collection, Word and Image Department.

# Conservation of an English Cadaver Tomb

Victor Borges

Sculpture Conservator

## Introduction

The effigy, dating from the 1450s, forms part of a tomb for John Baret and is on loan to the Museum for the exhibition *Gothic: Art for England 1400-1547* from St Mary's Church in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk.

The tomb effigy is carved in limestone. It depicts an emaciated cadaver in a shroud and is surrounded by a scroll with incised gothic lettering in Latin. The cadaver tomb was a continental form of funeral monument and was adopted in England in the 1420s.

This effigy was originally fully polychromed but now there are just small traces remaining in various areas: the inlaid paint of the lettering, which is black and red with green for the capitals; the very faded traces of flesh tones; traces of red pigment on the base of the tomb. It is interesting to note the traces of green and red veins carefully painted onto the flesh tones which are found in several areas but are particularly evident on the neck. These remains of paint give us an idea of the dramatic and crude visual effect of this effigy on its original state.'

## Condition

The limestone is generally in good condition although it has suffered erosion and abrasion through the centuries, which has affected mainly the most exposed areas of the carving such as the head, legs and the folds of the shroud. There are numerous old small chips and dents on the whole surface of the stone and a larger loss corresponding to the left hand and forearm.

The whole tomb stone was completely covered with a thick layer of dirt and dust with heavy build-up in deep areas of the carving. A few localised small drips of paint, cement and plaster were found on the base, traces of wax on the scroll and small pencil marks and scratched graffiti on the feet area. The polychromy is stable although in some areas of the flesh tones, there are signs of flaking paint and powdery pigment.

## Conservation Treatment

It is unusual for conservators in the Museum to treat objects coming in on loan; the nature of this exhibition, however, with a large number of objects from parish churches, meant that in some cases, such as with this effigy, we were requested to carry out preparatory conservation treatment.

The main aims of this conservation treatment were to clean the tomb in order to recover the warm colour of the limestone enhancing the main features of the carving and lettering as well as consolidating the few traces of paint when necessary. Sadly the timescale did not allow for in depth analysis of the paint layer, which would surely be of interest.

The first step was a mechanical dry cleaning with a soft brush and vacuum cleaner in order to remove the bulk of the dirt layer. This was followed by an application of powdered rubber with brushes of different sizes and shapes to remove as much dirt as possible, completing the process with a Wishab acid-free sponge of soft grain. Then the whole effigy was vacuum cleaned again to remove the remains of rubber and dirt. The small deposits of plaster and paint were removed with a scalpel and a small chisel was used to remove the cement.



Figure 1. Effigy of John Baret during conservation  
Photography by Victor Borges



Figure 2. Drawing by C.J.W. Winter illustrating an October Labour from the church of St Martin's-at-Palace, Norwich, dated 1849 (Museum No. 3440-8). The church was later destroyed.

Winter's drawing, combined with the painted trace lines on the broken piece of original glass, provided enough evidence to allow for the completion of the figure's hand, the basket handle and the seeded ground. Without this evidence, conservation options would have been limited to leaving the stopgap in place or inserting a toned blank which, while less distracting than the previous restoration, would not have extended the visual information that the object presented. Since the available evidence did not warrant the completion of the remainder of the missing background scenery, it was decided that the rest of the background would be toned to match the upper portion of the left side. Repeating the imagery from the left side of the roundel would have been too speculative, as would basing the new restoration solely on the drawing.

The two small pieces of foreign glass on either side of the figure's head were not replaced since they were not as distracting as the larger stopgap. While the decision to leave this glass in place may seem inconsistent, in both cases the lack of evidence as to the original imagery meant that new replacements would have been too interpretative.

After the glass was removed from the leads it was cleaned using de-ionised water on cotton wool swabs. This was regarded as a safe method of cleaning since the paint appeared stable upon examination and spot cleaning under a microscope. The broken pieces of glass previously joined by repair leads were edge bonded with Hxtal NYL-1 epoxy resin. Small areas of missing glass were replaced by epoxy resin fills which were colour-matched to the original glass by adding Ciba-Geigy dyes to the resin.

The stopgap that was removed was replaced with a pale tinted antique glass that was cut to the correct shape. Next, traditional glass paint and

silver stain were painted and fired onto the new piece of glass after samples of each were produced to ensure that the closest colour match with the original decoration was achieved in both transmitted and reflected light. The painting technique and stages of firing used by the original artist were studied closely so that they could be replicated faithfully. Finally, the new replacement was initialled, dated and recorded in the object's treatment report. The foreign glass was preserved in the object's studio file.

The new glass was attached to the original glass using the copper foil technique, which is easily reversed. Copper foil was used to join the glass instead of lead because it produces a strong joint and is less obtrusive visually. Furthermore, using a detectable method to join the pieces of glass gives viewers the opportunity to recognise that the restoration is not part of the original object, although non-specialists are unlikely to understand its significance.

A rubbing of the leads which was made before the roundel was dismantled served as the working drawing while reglazing the roundel using a more narrow lead. When an object requires new leads they should be of the same profile and follow the same contours as the original when this can be established. In this instance, clues were taken from the size of the piece, the style of painting and how the glass was cut. Finally, a butyl mastic was inserted by hand between the lead and the glass to give the roundel strength.

A controversial yet justified decision was taken during the treatment of this object based on careful research and consultation with peers. The new piece of painted and stained glass and the more delicate leadwork has increased the legibility of the imagery without detracting from the appreciation of the whole object (Figure 3).



Figure 3. October Labour after treatment

The second stage included wet cleaning in order to remove traces of wax, particularly on the scroll area, and any ingrained dirt which had proved difficult to remove during the dry cleaning. For this purpose a non-ionic detergent, Triton X-100 2% in de-ionised water/white spirit (1:1) was applied with soft brushes, rinsing it with a mixture of de-ionised water/white spirit (1:1) and a moist natural sponge. Special care was taken in the areas with paint traces. These were cleaned with cotton wool swabs dampened with white spirit. After this cleaning, the stone has remained discoloured. This is because the level to which cleaning was taken was chosen because of the porosity of the stone and the absorption of the dirt into the pores. The decision was based on both an aesthetic judgement and the time limit imposed by the exhibition timetable.

Some of the remains of the original polychromy, particularly the flesh tones, were slightly powdery and flaky on small areas. A solution of the acrylic dispersion Plextol 5% was applied as a consolidant through acid-free Japanese tissue with a soft brush after pre-wetting with ethanol/de-ionised water 1:1. The excess was removed with a moist cotton wool swab before removing the tissue.



Figure 2. Detail of the effigy of John Baret during conservation

The chromatic reintegration was carried out with Rowney acrylic colours using the technique of flat washes of colour to tone down chips and dents on the stone as well as the light patches left behind after the removal of surface deposits.

#### Reference

1 Marks, R. and Williamson, P., eds., *Gothic: Art for England 1400-1547*, London: V&A Publications, 2003.

## Decision Making: Technical Information Revealed

Susan Catcher

Senior Paper Conservator

Whilst many of us would associate Augustus W N Pugin with the Gothic architecture of the Houses of Parliament we should not forget that he was also a prolific designer. His attention to detail was underlined by an obsession that ornament should “embellish rather than disguise”<sup>1</sup> and his scholastic reinterpretation of the theories of geometric plant forms was largely due to the sixteenth century botanical volume, *Eicores Plantarum* (1590) by Jacobus Theodorus. Examples of his *Floriated Ornamentation* (1849, 1875) are largely portrayed in the stained glass, tiles, ecclesiastical furnishings and domestic interior designs depicted in working drawings found in the Design Section of the V&A's Word and Image Department.<sup>2</sup> Twenty-four of these designs for wallpaper and textile prints required immediate conservation to allow for public access and to render previous hidden information visible for future study.

#### Types of Damage

Each design was originally pasted onto mount board with a flour paste, an adhesive traditionally used in archival mounting.<sup>3</sup> The cream board demonstrated signs of acid degradation shown by the brown discolouration of the internal laminate causing brittleness and tearing into the object. Many had been adhered with little regard to repairing any initial damage and some designs had been applied whilst damp, causing the shrinkage of the paper support to create a drum effect, bending the board up in the process. Consequently, much of the later damage can be seen as a direct result of the previous mounting technique where any dimensional changes in the paper due to temperature and/or humidity fluctuations caused fractures and punctures because of the restriction in paper movement. The eclectic mix of support for the designs ranged between heavy water-colour paper, thin machine-made paper, tracing paper and indigo dyed bank paper. This meant that a method of conservation had to be thought out whereby the integrity of the designs would be maintained and a cohesive format for safe storage provided.



Figure 2. Recto after removal of mount board to one paper layer

## Conservation

The conservator's role is to preserve information and this is reflected in the choice of conservation methods. Removal of the board was carried out with a scalpel paring down to the last paper layer. Where pigments allowed, that is those not fugitive in water, the object was washed and the final paper layer removed with a bamboo spatula. It was discovered that many of the designs had been previously pricked out for transference and that some also retained evidence of carbon deposits from pouncing. This information needed to be visible, but encapsulation in Melinex would be inappropriate for the powdery pigments sitting on the surface, as the static inherent in the polyester film can pull areas of colour away from the support. Therefore, the introduction of a Melinex window on the verso of the new mount was considered a suitable option as the carbon deposits were held within the paper fibre interstices and less prone to static movement. This method was an adaptation from a previous project by a recent RCA/V&A MA student, Shiho Sasaki.<sup>4</sup>

## Technical Information Revealed

Each object was float mounted onto John Purcell Inlay paper, which is unsized but heavy enough to support the paper. Where a window was required the cutting of the measured space and the welding of the Melinex (125 mic) was carried out first (Figure 1):

- The window was cut into the inlay paper to expose the object's verso, perforations and pouncing.
- The inlay paper edge was bevelled where it made contact with the object.
- The Melinex was cut with a 15mm overlap, corners rounded and welded to the recto of the inlay paper using an ultra sonic welding machine close to the previously bevelled edge.
- Hinges of water cut Sekishu, a Japanese mulberry paper with good fibre strength, were attached to the object with wheatstarch paste applied on the feathered fibres only. These were pulled through to the back of the inlay paper via incisions and were held down with wheatstarch paste applied on feathered fibres and adhered folded underneath the object.



Figure 1.

A specific example of this technique can be shown with *Textile Design* D.788-1908 (Figure 2). This design is hand drawn and painted using gouache on a cream machine made paper. The object was adhered around the edges and had split across the overlapping line of the two sheets of paper. The iron-gall ink outline had fractured due to the acidic nature of the ink eating away the paper substrate, (Figure 3). The mount board was removed in the manner described above and the object was dried between weighted felts in order to keep the tears and fractures in place for later repairs. These repairs were carried out using a wheatstarch paste and a lightweight Sekishu. The fibre direction was utilized to hold together the ink fractures and the colour of the repair toned down with pastels and watercolours. The Melinex window was prepared and the object floated to reveal all the technical information (Figure 4). This object had an additional design (D.788A-1908), which was replaced using hinges along the outside edge allowing a complete reading of the pattern and an insight into the design intentions of the artist (Figure 5).<sup>5</sup>



Figure 3. Recto detail of iron-gall ink outline over painted design

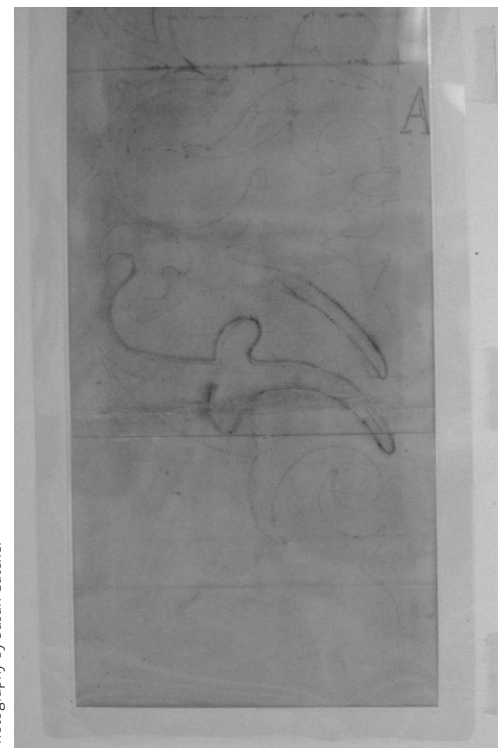


Figure 4. Verso showing Melinex window highlighting iron-gall ink strike through and pounced carbon deposits

## Conclusion

The window method finally adopted was as a result of: firstly, the need of the object; secondly, the requirement of the curator and lastly, to enable public access previously denied due to the poor condition of the collection. The necessary conservation to preserve valuable technical evidence was provided by releasing the designs from their restrictive mounts, repairing any damage and remounting in a format that made visible the information, whilst still supporting the paper object on the verso. Storage and movement to and from the Print Room was discussed and the eventual solution was to place the finished designs into individual primary folders of Archival text and then in groups of five into a stronger boxboard folder (1300 mic) secured with tapes. These took up the least amount of storage space and were of a size to allow easy carriage. The Print Room is in public use for four days

a week, accommodating a daily average of forty-five people, many of whom are scholars interested in Pugin's work. Others include children who find the decorative aspect of Pugin's designs, especially the plant and animal forms, easy to understand. The mount margin of 30mm and the 'window' exposing the verso provides safe handling and reveals important technical information previously obscured by an old mounting technique.



Figure 5. Position of hinged additional pattern to give an alternative reading

## Acknowledgements

Pauline Webber, Head of Paper Conservation and to Fiona Leslie, Curator in the Design Section of Word and Image Department.

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- 5 Wedgwood, A. *AWN Pugin and his family*, V&A Publications, 1985



# The V&A in the Regions: Conservation Summer Schools at the University of Derby

Professor Trevor Brown

Principal Lecturer in Chemistry, University of Derby

The University of Derby and the V&A Conservation Department have collaborated in organising one-day Conservation Summer Schools at Derby in 2002 and 2003. Together, these events have attracted nearly 70 museum and heritage professionals from the East Midlands and beyond. Evaluation questionnaires indicate that these events are seen as valuable staff development opportunities for a wide range of reasons.

The initial link between the two institutions was formed in 1995 when Graham Martin (Head of Science Section, V&A) agreed to act as an advising practitioner for the development of an undergraduate conservation science programme entitled Heritage Conservation. This programme was validated in 1996 and Graham accepted the role of external examiner. At the end of his term of office in 2001 it was felt that the link between the V&A and Derby should continue, subsequently Graham was appointed Visiting Professor in Conservation Science to the University and collaboration has continued.

One of the most significant developments that has emerged from this relationship has been the Summer School. Increasingly, smaller museums in the regions are finding it difficult to identify affordable development opportunities for their staff. Central

government initiatives to establish networks and hubs are in their early stages. The cost of travelling to London alone can significantly impact on meagre budgets. Our proposal was to site the event nearer to potential attendees, offer free parking, and obtain sponsorship so that the fee for the day would be of the order of £50 including lunch and refreshments. An application to the Royal Society of Chemistry (East Midlands Section) to make available up to £500 to underwrite the event for 2002 and 2003 was successful. The aim was to attract about 30 delegates and this has been achieved in both years. Delegates have come from a wide variety of heritage organisations including the National Trust, local museums and archives. In fact some attendees have been drawn from further afield than first anticipated, including Cardiff and London.

In terms of content of the day, one of objectives was to increase the awareness of developments in National Museums both in terms of policy developments and research. The latter to include a range of relevant areas such as environmental management and control, pest management, materials identification and materials testing. Risk assessment in museums was also recognised as an essential topic that reflects current thinking. Over the

two meetings the V&A have enabled conservation staff to present on these topics, notably Sandra Smith, Jonathan Ashley-Smith, Graham Martin, Brenda Keneghan and Boris Pretzel. Through links with the V&A David Pinniger accepted an invitation to provide a presentation on pest management. Staff from the University of Derby have also given talks on areas including the nature and application of plant-based dyes (Alan Dronsfield), chemical detective work in solving conservation problems, e.g. cadmium corrosion and doll's disease (Trevor Brown)

and the use of scanning electron microscopy coupled with energy dispersive spectroscopy to investigate textiles with metal threads (Graham Souch) and the use Mossbauer spectroscopy to examine the iron pyrite content of PEG conserved – waterlogged wood, a key factor in the generation of destructive sulphuric acid (Jacob Adetunji). At our 2002 meeting Netty Cook (then East Midlands Regional Conservator for the National Trust) gave an overview of the Trust's priorities for conservation in their properties.

In the 2003 event a number of the regional practitioners were able to present case studies based on their own experiences. Jonathan Wallis (Principal Curator at Derby Museums, who also spoke in 2002) and Roger Sellick (until recently a Heritage Conservation student at the University of Derby and now Keeper of Collections at the Bass Museum of Brewing, Burton on Trent) spoke on the 'Discovery, Conservation and Display of a Waterlogged Bronze Age Boat'. This presentation illustrated the challenges generated for a regional museum by the discovery of a large object, of national importance with lengthy and highly specialised conservation requirements, within its normal catchment area. A number of generic matters were raised in this presentation that included fund raising, particularly for the conservation work at the York Archaeological Trust and matters relating to the acceptance sponsorship from a commercial company. Also the practical necessity, despite ethical unease, of cutting the boat into metre sections so that it could be transported and treated with PEG in the tanks available at York. Derby Museums were also proactive in arranging iron pyrite analysis at the University on small samples of treated wood, in light of recently published concerns regarding high level of sulphuric acid in the timbers of the warship *Wasa*. The speakers also outlined the issues of display and environmental sensitivities in the gallery, which is attracting large numbers of visitors.

Louise Hampson (Collections Manager, York Minster) presented a paper on the care of archive collections that focused on her experiences at York Minster. In particular the use of passive environments for the storage of paper and parchment documents. The case study described viable alternatives, in an existing building, to the installation of expensive and space consuming air conditioning plant with the associated risk of breakdown. This included carefully considered insulation to produce a stable environment that only required minimal manual adjustments at exceptional times. The outcome was a less stressful environment for the documents. This study proved to be an elegant example of what can be achieved through careful research and the confidence not to accept the general inertia towards air conditioning.

No two events will be the same. The programmes will be timely and reflect perceived need. This changing content has already seen several repeat attendees.

In addition to the provision of stimulating speakers, a further aim of the Summer School is to enable professionals from the region simply to come together and talk to each other in a spontaneous and relaxed fashion. Refreshment breaks and lunch periods have been characterised by introductions, intense conversation and opportunities taken to share experiences and plan collaborations. In fact responses to questionnaires indicate that this activity is considered a very important aspect of the day.

In conclusion we feel that the Conservation Summer Schools at Derby have proved very successful in meeting their aims. Our intention is to repeat the event again next year if sponsorship can be found. The participants in the region have formed a group whose members are at ease with each other and with an interest to be involved in the future planning. In 2004 we are considering group-working situations and practical demonstrations as possible ways of broadening participation.



The Summer School participants and presenters.

## Elizabeth Martin 1947–2003



Elizabeth Martin, Senior Conservator of Photographs, known to everyone as Liz, passed away suddenly at home on the 13th September.

Liz studied Graphic Design in Bath and went on to take a Teacher's Diploma before teaching art and design for several years. In 1976 Liz joined the V&A's Conservation Department as a paper conservator. She appreciated quickly that a new field was opening up and in the late 1970s and early 1980s she applied herself to the study of photographic materials. In 1982 Liz became the first specialist photographic conservator in any of the UK's national museums. The following year she contributed an essay on photographic conservation to the V&A's book, *A Guide to Early Photographic Processes*. Liz soon built up an international reputation as a leading expert in the field of photographic conservation and in 1988 her immensely readable book *Collecting and Preserving Old Photographs* was published. For several years Liz actively participated in the co-ordination of the ICOM-CC Photographic Records Working Group, helping to organise a number of the group's meetings. In the early 1990s Liz's important research work on nineteenth century albumen prints by Clementina, Lady Hawarden was published in several journals. This work showed that the albumen prints were getting darker even whilst off display, highlighting the need for cold-storage systems.

Liz put her teaching skills to good effect, passing on her knowledge to numerous students – she was in constant demand to take on fresh interns. Liz also taught conservation at the Academy of Fine Art in Stuttgart and at Camberwell School of Art and was due to go to Stuttgart again this December to give a series of lectures.

Liz had an enviable selection of shoes and an equally colourful dismissal of jargon. She was erudite and witty with an uncanny ability to see to the heart of the problem be it personal or professional. Liz had a wonderfully quirky collection of objects – little gifts that undoubtedly reminded her of people and places she had encountered along the way. She also shared her love of worn and musty paperback crime novels with friends around the Museum.

We all know her son, Rupert, very well – an indication of how incredibly proud she was of him. Our thoughts and condolences go out to Rupert. Liz was a dear colleague and friend and will be sadly missed. Liz was Liz – irreplaceable.

## News from RCA/V&A Conservation

Alison Richmond

Deputy Head, RCA/V&A Conservation

For RCA/V&A Conservation, the academic year 2002/2003 began on a high note. Having had two MA students short-listed for the UK's 2002 Student Conservator of the Year Award, we were delighted that the award was given to Kathryn Hallett. Kathryn studied Conservation Science with The British Museum and she received the prize of £5000 for her work on the effects of light on ethnographic collections. The £5000 awarded to the teaching institution was shared by The British Museum, in recognition of the quality of supervision and training delivered by Dr Susan Bradley and her team, and the Royal College of Art. Collaborations with national museums are one of the ways RCA/V&A Conservation provides tailor-made studentships.

RCA/V&A Conservation offers postgraduate training, education and research opportunities through partnership with the Victoria and Albert Museum and collaboration with several other museums, heritage and research organisations. This is illustrated well by the four graduates of 2003:

- Camilla Schaper, MA Sculpture Conservation, based in the Sculpture Section of the Conservation Department, and supervised by Charlotte Hubbard.
- Nanke Schellmann, MA Furniture Conservation, based in the Furniture Section and supervised by Albert Neher.
- Vicky Doran, MPhil Composition Frames, researched the collections of the V&A.
- Pedro Gaspar, PhD Cleaning of Stone and Terracotta, based in Sculpture Conservation and in Imperial College, also assisted in the supervision of Camilla Schaper's Research Project on laser cleaning of plaster.

The last year has been marked by a number of changes in staff. Helen Jones, who had been with the Course almost from its inception, left to become the V&A's Planning Manager. Helen's contribution to the development of the Programme is impossible to measure. Her vitality and imagination, as well as her enviable problem solving skills will be missed. Alison Richmond moved into Helen's post of Deputy Head, and at the time of writing the Tutor post is yet to be filled. Dr Alison Bracker has been appointed Research Fellow in Conservation Contexts, and Dr Vincent Daniels has taken up the post of Research Fellow in Conservation Science.

RCA/V&A Conservation aims to offer MA studentships in specialist areas in which there is little or no provision elsewhere. In 2003/2004 our first ever MA student in the Conservation of Natural History Collections begins her studies in the Conservation Unit of the Natural History Museum. We believe that this is the first such MA anywhere.

We also have the pleasure of announcing another first: a Friends of the V&A Bursary for Conservation. This award has been given to Anna Kagiadaki, who begins her MA in Sculpture Conservation at the V&A. The Friends have supported students for many years, but this gift is the first fully-funded studentship. We couldn't be more delighted with this development.

Visit: [www.rca.ac.uk](http://www.rca.ac.uk)

Contact: [Joanna.Baden@rca.ac.uk](mailto:Joanna.Baden@rca.ac.uk)

## New Students

### RCA/V&A CONSERVATION



**Melissa Gunter**

Natural History Conservation

2 year MA

BA Geological Sciences, University of Texas at Austin, USA

Whilst obtaining a BA in geological sciences from the University of Texas (UT) at Austin, Melissa worked for the Texas Memorial Museum (TMM) in the Nonvertebrate Paleontology Laboratory from May 1999 to June 2002. One of her main objectives was to help develop and standardise the laboratory conservation protocols and procedures. Her most recent project for the TMM included the design and production of an interactive educational CD-ROM created for the Texas school system as a supplement to teaching.

Beginning in 1997, Melissa worked on a variety of other projects for the UT Geology Department. She analysed rubidium in various materials, including basaltic pots from Jordan and Israel as well as 500 year old human teeth from grave sites in southern Texas, to provide aid in researching trade routes and provenances of the study groups. She also spent three days on a research vessel in the Gulf of Mexico with the Institute for Geophysics to test a prototype broadband ocean-bottom seismograph.

Melissa's most recent experience with the TMM has increased her interest in conservation of natural history collections and she is very much looking forward to working and studying at the RCA/V&A and Natural History Museum.



**Anna Kagiadaki**

Sculpture Conservation

2 Year MA

BA Conservation of Antiquities and Works of Art, Technological Educational Institution of Athens, 2000.

After graduating from the Technological Education Institution of Athens, Anna was employed by the Conservation Service in the Ministry of Culture where she has been working for the last three years. She specialised in the conservation of archaeological findings (mostly ceramics, stone and metals).

In 2002 she was awarded a scholarship from the State Scholarships Foundation in Greece to continue her academic activities abroad. She is very pleased to have the opportunity to continue her studies in Conservation at the RCA/V&A for the next two years.

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## New Students

### RCA/V&A CONSERVATION



**Ulrika Hübinette**

3 Year PhD

Ulrika Hübinette has studied conservation in Italy, Sweden and USA. She holds a BSc in Conservation of Cultural Property (with the focus on paintings on canvas and wood) from the Institute of Conservation, Department of Environmental Science and Conservation, Göteborg University, Sweden, 1999. Between 1999 and 2001, Ulrika was a Visiting Scholar at The Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Columbia University, New York where she studied Historic Preservation with the focus on architectural conservation.

Ulrika has worked on a wide range of conservation projects involving paintings, artefacts and architectural paint, and she has been an editor for the Swedish Conservation Section, IIC Nordic Group's newsletter. In 2000, she was invited to present a paper at the international seminar "Modern Colour Technology: Ideals and Conservation", organised by the Do.co.mo.mo International Specialist Committee on Technology, in Belgium. Her paper, "Polychrome or Monochrome – Ethics of Authenticity and Reconstruction", was later published in Dutch and English.

Throughout her life, Ulrika has been fascinated by modern art, architecture and design. Ulrika looks forward with great enthusiasm to beginning her PhD with RCA/V&A Conservation, where she hopes to pursue her ideas and goals, and meet new people in an exciting department and institution. Her future PhD is concerned with the colours and preservation of 20th century architecture and design.



**Timea Tallian**

Historical/Technical Study

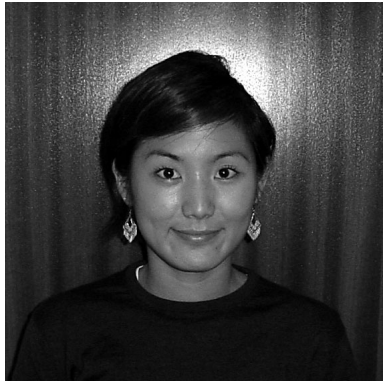
2 Year MPhil

MA Conservation, Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, 2003

After initially training in art history and painting Timea studied conservation in Vienna. The decision to specialise in Portrait Miniatures arose after working on the Hapsburg family collection in the Austrian National Library. Further training in this field followed under the supervision of Alan Derbyshire in the V&A in 2001. Timea's final year project was dealing with Indian miniatures on ivory and included a survey of such objects in the V&A Collection.

The title of Timea's research is: Science and Secrets of Early Portrait Miniature Painting – A modern day conservator's research and practical exploration into 16th and 17th century alchemical and other writings. She would like to explore early English miniature painting by analyzing the text of Hilliard's treatise *The Art of Limning*. This will involve the practical application of mentioned recipes and painting techniques. The research aims to highlight and identify possible problematic areas, encourage new conservation approaches and more informed choices regarding the use of conservation materials.

## New Staff



### Satoko Tanimoto

LiDo project, Science Section

My first encounter with conservation was during the summer of 1994. I was an undergraduate pharmaceutical student without any real knowledge of the field, but had joined the Second International Mission for The Preservation of The Great Sphinx, administered by the International Society for Rock Mechanics. For two months in Egypt, I was a research assistant organizing meetings, managing administrative details and assisting in Japanese to English translations. As soon as I started to learn about the conservation however, I was fascinated that so many beautiful large stone sculptures, thousands of years old, still existed and because of their age, demanded careful conservation treatment. I began to appreciate how the ingenuity developed in diverse fields of sciences was integrated to preserve one of the greatest works of structural design conceived and executed by humankind. Moreover, having always been very passionate about both art and science I was so excited to find a field in which the two could collaborate.

After I acquired my Masters degree in Environmental Management from the University of San Francisco I moved to Los Angeles for a one-year internship at the Getty Conservation Institute. During my internship at the Getty, I was lucky to be given great opportunities to see and conduct research on various arts (combined with a great opportunity to spend time after work and weekends in sunny weather on the beach). Overall, it was a great experience and really made me want to learn more about conservation. As a result I am now undertaking an MPhil/PhD in ancient glass-making technologies (Archaeological Materials and Technologies) at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London.

Whilst at the V&A I worked on the LiDo Project, part of an EU funded collaborative project to develop and market a light dosimeter for use in museums and similar establishments.



### Katia Viegas Wesolowska

Metalwork Conservator

I was trained in jewellery and silversmithing at Antonio Arroio Art School in Lisbon, Portugal and gained a BSc(Hons) degree in Conservation and Restoration of Decorative Surfaces on Wood and Metal at London Guildhall University.

After working in a private metal conservation studio in London for two years, I had the wonderful opportunity of going to Argentina to work voluntarily as a conservator in the Museum of Decorative Arts and on group projects in Buenos Aires. These included the conservation of the gilded pulpits of the Cathedral of Buenos Aires, the gilded altarpieces for the Church of St. Ignacio de Loyola and mural paintings in La Prensa Building. I also had the opportunity to study and completed a course given by Gianluigi Colalucci, one of the conservators of the Sistine Chapel.

In 2001 I completed a postgraduate diploma in the Conservation and Restoration of Fine Metalwork at West Dean College. My particular field of interest is the conservation of ecclesiastical (and particularly enamelled) objects and I hope to have the opportunity to continue to work in this specialism at the V&A. My first experience at the Museum was a six and a half week student placement in the Metalwork Conservation studio in 2001. I am now very pleased to return and excited about forthcoming projects.

## New Intern



### Kathrin Rahforth

Stained Glass Conservator

At the beginning of my working life I was apprenticed for three years in a small wall painting conservation workshop. After that I spent three years in a private conservation workshop where I mainly worked on wall paintings and wooden sculpture.

In 1999 I took part in a three month conservation course at the European Centre for Conservation in San Servolo, Venice. After that I started to study the conservation of stained glass and mosaic in a four year course at the University of Applied Sciences in Erfurt, Germany.

During the last year I have had two placements at the V&A Museum. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to do this six month internship at the Museum, which is part of my final year of studies.