On Board

News and Reports from the Directory Board, Volume 15, July 2018

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**Contributors to On Board 15, 7-2018**

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- Tannar Ruuben and Miguel Mertens
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Update from the Chair
Kristiane Strætkvern

Several months have passed since the last report from the ICOM-CC Directory Board. We may have been silent, but this does not reflect inactivity on our part. One major event was the meeting between the ICOM-CC Directory Board and the Working Group Coordinators that took place in Paris from 21-23 March 2018.

The Centre for Research and Restoration of the Museums of France (C2RMF) kindly hosted the 30+ colleagues who found their way to Paris. It is highly valued and very useful to have this joint meeting in the city where the organisation has its headquarters. At our Paris meeting, the ICOM President, Suay Aksoy, and staff from the ICOM Secretariat attended and contributed in specific management discussions. We visited the ICOM main offices, saw the facilities, and met with staff working there. France Desmarais, Head of ICOM Programmes and Partnerships, presented the ICOM Red Lists, how they are developed, are used, and discussed their effectiveness. This provided insight into ICOM’s international role for stopping illicit trade and trafficking of endangered objects.

Several major issues were raised in Paris and some of them are reported separately in this issue of the newsletter. The dialogue with the new team of Working Group coordinators included discussions about the revised ICOM-CC Strategic Plan 2017-2020, the ICOM CC Publications Online Project; and ICOM-CC initiatives linked to the ICOM General Conference in Kyoto in 2019. The Directory Board feels strongly that ICOM-CC’s presence needs to be emphasised in the large ICOM General Conference to increase recognition and awareness. The planned initiatives are described on page 14.

During the meeting days in Paris we also shared plans and ideas related to the next ICOM-CC Triennial Conference in Beijing in 2020. We are all very excited about the next Conference and you can read more about the planning on page 16. As this will be our first meeting in China, we have taken some extraordinary steps: we have appointed a Chinese member, Dr. Pan Lu, to be a special consultant to the Board. He is presented on page 5. A new Working Group on Archaeological Materials and Sites has come into being. The request to form such a group was received in the previous triennium, and the Board is very pleased that all the formalities are in place and that this new, provisional Working Group will be up and running before taking our Triennial Conference to China. The new Working Group is presented on pages 8-9. Several other issues were covered with the new team of Working Group Coordinators and the most important issues are shared in this issue of On Board.

One topic also raised during the meeting was the suggestion to form an ICOM-CC Sustainability Task Force. The proposal was forwarded by Joel Taylor and Caitlin Southwick from the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) Sustainability Committee, who also suggested collaboration between the two organisations on this issue. Addressing sustainability of materials, of processes, and how to improve our work life in conservation in a more sustainable direction is both relevant and urgent and we welcome the initiative. The approach taken by the Directory Board, rather than creating a cross-working group forum to our already complex structure, is to encourage all the Working Groups to consider this issue in their Working Group Programme for the triennium. Working Groups also are encouraged to include the issue of emerging professionals as a general topic. We trust that the Working Groups recognise the importance of the matter and that they will incorporate environmental and sustainability considerations when discussing the methods and materials applied within their specific field of conservation. We are looking forward to seeing the outcomes of the initiatives, and to evaluate the success of this approach.

The ICOM-CC Strategic Plan for the 2017-2020 triennium is based upon previous Strategic Plans and recommendations from the outgoing 2014-2017 Directory Board. The final version is available for anyone interested and can be found at the ICOM-CC website. The plan is ambitious, and to reach our goals we need to work hard, we need good collaboration within our network, and we will rely on contributions from the membership. It is a general concern that while we want to reach out and continue to be an organisation with global impact, the institutional resources for doing so are – to an excessive extent – being reduced. The challenges many our members face with budget reductions in museums, collections, and in the cultural heritage sector take a lot of energy, so all the contributions given to our community by our active officers and supporting institutions are highly appreciated and not taken for granted. Being the largest international organisation in the field, ICOM-CC has a responsibility to share knowledge on conservation of cultural heritage. Organising workshops, training, meetings and producing publications are among the most esteemed strengths of our network and the Coordinators and Assistant Coordinators manage these activities to excellence. One additional, major effort to focus on for this triennium is to continue the work with making all
ICOM-CC publications available online. This is where the contributions from the membership are crucial, as we need to acquire permissions from every single author. The status of the project is further described on pages 9-10. I urge you all to see what you can do on an individual basis in your network to help us collect the outstanding author permissions.

In order to share general information about ICOM and ICOM-CC more frequently and informally, ICOM-CC launched an individual, general ICOM-CC Facebook Page in the beginning of November. Here, we are a step behind many of our Working Groups that have already been active on social media for several years. We can see that the number of ‘likes’ is increasing and I hope that our members will appreciate the initiative.

Our high level of activity has attracted new members. The latest figures from the ICOM headquarters tell us that we are now 3000 individual members with almost 200 institutional members. Therefore, I will take the opportunity to welcome the new members to the largest International Committee in ICOM. I will also take the opportunity to thank our secretary, Joan Reifsnyder, who guides everyone who needs it, through the membership labyrinth. We are aware that the ICOM/ICOM-CC membership path can be complicated. The good news is, that with the full implementation of the new membership database in the ICOM headquarters it should be easier to become an ICOM-CC member in the future.

The next issue of On Board will come out by the end of the year. In the meantime I wish you all a fruitful period in the service of cultural heritage conservation, protection and management. Connect to your ICOM-CC network; become a member of all your favourite Working Groups, visit our website, our Publications Online and our Facebook page.
Welcome to Prof. Pan Lu, the ICOM-CC Chinese expert and link to the Chinese conservation community providing his expertise to the ICOM-CC Directory Board during the 2017-2020 triennium.

Upon invitation from the ICOM-CC Directory Board in March this year, Professor Pan Lu kindly agreed to assist the ICOM-CC Directory Board on questions regarding the Chinese conservation landscape and provide the Board with useful information in the planning of the ICOM-CC Triennial Conference in Beijing in 2020. Pan Lu is Head of the Conservation Center of the National Museum of China and shares with us with the following introduction to the Center:

The Conservation Center was established in 1952 with the Objects Restoration Section. After 60 years, the Center has developed into five independent sections with advanced scientific conservation technology. These include: Objects Conservation Laboratory, Analysis and Environment Monitoring Laboratory (Office of Key Scientific Research Base of Metal Artifacts of State Administrator of Culture Heritage), Objects Restoration and Replication Section, Calligraphy and Paintings Restoration Section, and Archives and Documents Replication Section.

The Center houses a variety of advanced instruments and equipment used for scientific analysis and conservation. In the past several decades, the Center has been dedicated to exploring new analytical and treatment methods. The staff undertakes research projects in conservation supported by the Ministry of Science and Technology of the People’s Republic of China, State Administration of Cultural Heritage, National Museum of China, and some provincial museums. The Center has also developed cooperations with other domestic and foreign institutions in conservation and other related fields. The more than 10,000 objects treated by the conservators in the Center come mainly from the National Museum and other provincial museums. In terms of technological developments, the Center works with traditional methods and also develops new techniques and materials. A large number of senior conservators and restaurers have been trained in the Center. In 2010, the Center became the Key Scientific Research Base for Metal Objects approved by State Administration of Cultural Heritage. This Base provided a nationwide platform for research and communication with the support of the advanced analytical facilities in laboratories. Dr. Pan also is involved with the conservation network in China which is has four different main bodies: The China Conservation Technology Association. This first class association on conservation and restoration was formed in 1980 and with more than 2000 members it is considered the most important. The association holds annual meetings, every second year in China, and every other year in East Asia (Japan, Korea, and so on). Pan Lu was deputy chairman of the association from 2005 to 2017.

The Association on Restoration of Cultural Relics, This was formed in 1993, and focuses on traditional techniques and restoration. They organise annual meetings. The Conservation and Archaeology Chemists Group. This group was formed in 1989 by the Chemistry Association.
The Care of Museum Collections Group. The youngest of all the associations was formed in 2007. Dr. Pan is the chair of the group, which will have their annual meeting in Fuzhou in November 2018 where the next Directory Board meeting will be taking place.

We all welcome Pan Lu to our team. The Board looks forward to our collaboration and to learning more about Chinese approaches, methodologies, theory, history, and future goals in conservation.

**Update from the Directory Board - Coordinator Liaison**

Kate Seymour

In this edition of On Board, we welcome the launch of a new provisional Working Group, which will focus on Archaeological Materials and Sites (see pages 8-9). It will be steered by Emma Hocker, Senior Conservator, Gustavianum, Uppsala University Museum, Sweden. Emma is not new to the ICOM-CC family and brings years of experience as an Assistant Coordinator in the Wet Organic Archeological Materials Working Group. Emma has worked with archaeological collections around the globe and is a prominent figure within this community. The Directory Board are sure she will apply her knowledge and experience to form this nascent Working Group into a vibrant community of those with an interest in issues concerning the care of archaeological objects and artworks. The Working Group’s first activity will be to host a session at the upcoming ICOM-CC Triennial Conference in September 2020. China, with its rich and abundant history and archaeological collections, will be an apt venue for this inaugural session.

This brings our total number of Working Groups to twenty-two. Some of our Working Groups are specific to the object or material, others are more general and thematic in interest. Together they cover a broad range of subjects and provide the conservation community with a network of those with similar concerns. Many of the Working Group members belong to more than one Working Group. In fact this is encouraged and there is no restriction as to how many Working Groups an ICOM-CC member can join! Cross-pollination and interdisciplinary collaboration is evident in the activities organised by the Working Groups and the extensive products that are generated by these activities such as newsletters, social media sites, and interim meeting publications. The common denominator here is the membership. Membership participation is essential and core to our aims and mission to promote the conservation of cultural heritage and further the goals of the conservation profession while providing a framework of interdisciplinary collaboration. We urge members to be as active as they can and reach out to the community through our/their Working Group Coordinators. Please join the social media sites, discuss issues and send contributions for Newsletters. Develop themes and research and when possible come to our meetings and conferences. We appreciate all contributions no matter how big or small!
The current batch (2017-2020) of Coordinators is hard at work implementing the Triennial Programmes for their specific Working Group. These programmes have been presented to and approved by the Directory Board and can be found online on each Working Group’s home page on the ICOM-CC website. Already this year in June, we have seen a round table for emerging conservators and business meeting organised by the Scientific Research Working Group. This session was hosted at the 4th International Conference on Science and Engineering in Arts, Heritage and Archaeology (SEHA) in London. An ICOM Young Member Travel Grant for 2018 was awarded to Marisol Zúñiga Lau, a conservator and coordinator of historic archives at the Carlos F. Novella Museum in Guatamala City (see page 15). And next year, plans afoot include further meetings in Malta, London, New York, and Kyoto. These interim meetings are intended as smaller gatherings than our Triennial Conference with participants in the 100s, and function as a feeding ground for interested parties to develop research themes, present findings and conservation treatments, as well as discuss other issues relating to the preservation and conservation of museum collections (see Figure 2). We hope that those presenting or reporting in interim events submit proposals that can be selected for inclusion in sessions at the Triennial Conference. Many of the procedures of these smaller events have been published over the years and form a core body of literature for those working in, and entering the field. We are pleased to announce that Interim Meeting past publications will be uploaded on the new ICOM-CC Publications Platform when this opens, hopefully next year. These interim activities could not take place without support from our partners, the institutions providing the host venues. ICOM-CC’s financial capacities mean that all meetings have to be self-sustaining and we are eternally grateful and appreciative of the efforts and aid provided by these institutions.

These activities, while often instigated by requests from the Working Group members, are brought to fruition by our team of Working Group Coordinators and their Assistants. The team of 22 Coordinators are aided by up to six assistant Coordinators (the tally for this Triennium is 86 - and yes, the math is correct – and there is room still for more volunteers!). We truly are a global network - the Coordinator group comes from Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa and Australia/Oceania (see Figure 1). But yes, we can improve. ICOM-CC’s strategic plan includes ideas on how to expand New York, and Kyoto. These interim meetings are intended as smaller gatherings than our Triennial Conference with participants in the 100s, and function as a feeding ground for interested parties to develop research themes, present findings and conservation treatments, as well as discuss other issues relating to the preservation and conservation of museum collections (see Figure 2). We hope that those presenting or reporting in interim events submit proposals that can be selected for inclusion in sessions at the Triennial Conference. Many of the procedures of these smaller events have been published over the years and form a core body of literature for those working in, and entering the field. We are pleased to announce that Interim Meeting past publications will be uploaded on the new ICOM-CC Publications Platform when this opens, hopefully next year. These interim activities could not take place without support from our membership in under-represented parts of the world. All Coordinator positions are voluntary, and this in-kind contribution should be recognised. The hours committed by the Working Group team are considerable and unsupported financially. Thus the efforts, small or large, of each volunteer are crucial to the activities we provide for our global network. The Directory Board thanks each and every one of you and encourages participation by all Working Group members - spread the load! Contact your Working Group Coordinator if you think you can contribute. We also are looking to the future and hope that some of the Coordinators’ willing Assistants will step into their roles as their terms of office are complete.

While the Coordinator is an elected position, Assistants are nominated, and then approved by the Directory Board. Elections are held at the end of each triennial period and

Figure 2: Planned and proposed Working Group activities
results are announced at our Triennial Conference. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, the 2017 elected Coordinator for Education and Training in Conservation Working Group, Elizabeth Peacock, had to step down at the start of 2018. In cases such as this, the Directory Board can appoint an alternative. Dr. Satish Pandey (Associate Professor of Art Conservation, National Museum Institute, New Delhi) was invited to fill this role in early January 2018. Dr Pandey is an active member of the conservation community in India and stood as a candidate for election to this post at the end of the previous triennial period. The Directory Board considered it logical to request his involvement when the Coordinator position fell vacant. He is currently developing a programme for this Working Group for the remainder of the triennium. Two other vacant Coordinator positions remained after the Copenhagen Triennial Conference. These have now been filled: Marianna di Giacomo Caporale, Conservation Fellow at the University of Delaware, has been appointed as Coordinator for the Natural History Collections, and more recently Doris Oltrogge, Cologne Institute of Conservation Sciences (CICS) has taken up office for the Art Technological Source Research Working Group. Our Coordinator positions are now complete. They are a mixture of re-elected and new faces. This provides a dynamic group of experience and innovative ideas that input and deliver guidance and coordination to our vibrant community of members. The comradely atmosphere was clearly seen during our recent gathering in Paris. Each mid-triennium the Coordinators meet with the Directory Board to discuss and formulate the programme for the triennial period. This time we were hosted in Paris at Centre for Research and Restoration of Museums of France (C2RMF). Many thanks to Elisabeth Ravaud (Coordinator Paintings Working Group) for organising this event. The Paris venue for this meeting allows the Conservation Committee to visit and meet with ICOM head office representatives. This fruitful session allows our team to ‘show off’ our activities and develop strategies together with our parent organisation. ICOM is a global entity and has broad outreach that will last far beyond our generation

(continued on page 17).

Join and contribute to the new Archaeological Materials and Sites Working Group

Emma Hocker, Senior Conservator
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In March 2018, the Board of ICOM-CC provisionally approved the creation of a new working group, the Archaeological Materials and Sites Working Group. For a number of years, members of the current working groups of Metals, Wet Organic Archaeological Materials and the Mural, Stone and Rock Art have expressed a need for a forum to discuss a broader spectrum of archaeological conservation and site management issues, which do not fall neatly into the current materials-based working groups.

The new working group has the following aims: The ICOM-CC Archaeological Materials and Sites Working Group is an international forum for the discussion of technical, ethical and legal issues relating to the preservation and conservation of archaeological objects and remains, the collections that they comprise, and the sites from which they come. The group provides an interdisciplinary venue for discussing the conservation of archaeological materials and the management of sites. Its aim is to engage with and disseminate information to archaeologists, site managers, conservators, conservation scientists, collections managers and curators. The group is interested in in-situ conservation of archaeological sites, characterisation of materials in-situ and in the laboratory, reburial studies, site management, and the on-going care and study of all archaeological materials after excavation.

Keen to include a session at the next Triennial Conference in Beijing, the Board has fast-tracked the creation of this group and asked me if I would consider coordinating. For those of you who do not know me, I have been an Assistant Coordinator with the Wet Organics Archaeological Materials group for 9 years and have worked closely with its current Coordinator, Emily Williams, most recently to publish the latest proceedings from our interim meeting in Florence 2016.

 Originally from the UK, I studied Archaeological Conservation at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London in the late 1980s. Upon graduating, I moved to Bermuda where I worked on a number of shipwreck excavations, both as a diver and conservator, as well as on land sites. While there, I met my marine archaeologist husband and joined him at Texas A&M University, where I earned a masters degree in Historic Buildings preservation, but spent my summers on shipwreck projects in Turkey and South Carolina. In 1999, with two small boys in tow, we moved back to Europe, initially to Denmark, where I worked on church wall paintings with the National Museum of Denmark, and then to Sweden in 2003. For the last 14 years, I have worked at the Vasa Museum in Stockholm, during three major research projects to investigate the long-term effects of iron contamination in the ship’s timbers. In September last
year, however, I became the Senior Conservator at Uppsala University Museum (Gustavianum), where I am responsible for a broad range of collections, including material recovered from archaeological excavations within Sweden and abroad.

Although my background is heavily biased towards shipwrecks, the aim is to balance this with Assistant Coordinators from complementary fields and expertise. As soon as those names are confirmed, we will let you know. In the meantime, I welcome your comments and ideas towards a triennial program in time for Beijing. I can be contacted at emma.hocker@gustavianum.uu.se. A new webpage for this group will shortly be available on the ICOM-CC website. Just press the blue button, Join this Working Group! I know there is a lot of experience, talent and enthusiasm within the ICOM conservation family. Please join this new group and make it the success that it clearly deserves to be. I look forward to working with you!

Latest Developments: the ICOM-CC Publication Online Project

Tannar Ruuben and Miguel Mertens

Hopefully, most of the readers have had the opportunity to go to the ICOM-CC Publications Online platform site.

The goal of this initiative is to have all conference preprints accessible online commencing with the first ICOM-CC meeting in 1967. Currently, the platform contains all Triennial Conference Preprints contributions from the three most recent Triennial Conferences: Lisbon 2011, Melbourne 2014, and Copenhagen 2017. The site was launched at the beginning of September 2017 and by now has been visited by 5,674 users, from more than 100 countries. About 20% of users visited the site from mobile devices including smartphones and tablets. The name “Triennial Conference” was instituted despite the fact that there were only two years in between the first conference in 1967 and the second conference in 1969. Since 1969, the meeting have lived up the the “triennial” designation.

Since 2015 we have been negotiating with the publishing house, Taylor & Francis, regarding permission to publish online four additional ICOM-CC Triennial Conference Preprints (Edinburgh 1996, Lyon 1999, Rio de Janeiro 2002, The Hague 2005). Taylor & Francis hold the publication copyright for these preprints. In the last week of January 2018, ICOM-CC received an e-mail from the publishing house, giving ICOM-CC permission to post in open access the conference preprints in question.

With the generous support and assistance of The Getty Research Institute, all but the first two Preprints (Brussels 1967, Amsterdam 1969) have been scanned into PDF format. These two early publications are next in line for manual scanning. The need for further formatting will be evaluated after scanning.

This is a great step forward. ICOM-CC Directory Board can now focus on separating the scanned volumes, raising the needed funds, and collecting of author permissions.

Legal advice on how to manage this correctly was given by ICOM officers in the previous triennium.

The Triennial Conference Preprints can be divided into two categories: the printed volumes 1967-1999, digitally-born preprints 2002-2014, including hybrids 2002-2008 which had accompanying CDs. Among the printed formats, those from 1967-1972 are early photocopies; 1975-1981 are photocopies in ring binders; and 1984-2008 are all bound books. Miguel Mertens, the General Manager of the Portugese company Use.it, that created and is hosting the platform, explains the requirements for the publications: “Regarding best format/naming, the materials Use.it has imported so far are PDF files of individual articles, named as per the convention on the submission platform, used since Lisbon 2011. Usually this is some combination of contribution ID, author ID, author last name, year of venue. More important than this, is to have a parallel excel or database that contains metadata for each contribution/article:
There are costs connected with the project for the preparation of the files and the yearly running and maintenance of the platform. These costs will be included in future budgets for ICOM-CC. Donations to the project are more than welcome and a dedicated donation button will soon be ready on the ICOM-CC website.

Other publications from ICOM-CC
Over the decades, the ICOM-CC Working Groups have published several specialist conservation publications related to their interim meetings and activities. The Working Groups have been asked to make inventories of their publications to enable ICOM-CC to get an overview of the numbers, volumes and formats of these publications. This will allow cost estimates to be made and funding applications to be prepared for eventual upload for online access as well. The Working Groups will be in charge of collecting permissions, formatting and preparing their publications. This will take place after the ICOM-CC Triennial Conference Preprints have all been uploaded.

Author Permissions
Collecting author permissions to post contributions in digital format was started in 2016. The Permission form can be downloaded from the ICOM-CC website from the Downloads section. This permission form grants open access use of digitised versions of past ICOM-CC contributions, including Preprints and Working Group publications, on the new portal for ICOM-CC Publications.

All authors have been and are encouraged to fill in and return the form to the ICOM-CC secretariat (secretariat@icom-cc.org).

The efforts will be followed by direct contact to all traceable authors. The campaign will continue until the end of September 2018. Thereafter, authors will still be able to send in permission forms, however, the focus will be on posting all the contributions to the Publications Online platform.

Reminder on Author Permission: In conclusion, if you are an author or a co-author, your article has been published in one of the ICOM-CC Conference Preprints or Working Group publications, and you have not yet given your permission for free online access of this work and are willing to do so, then please go to the ICOM-CC website, download the Author Permission for posting digitalised ICOM-CC contributions, complete the form, and send to the ICOM-CC secretary. For any questions on the permissions or the process, please contact the ICOM-CC secretary: secretariat@icom-cc.org

Views on Education, Training, and Professional Recognition
Kathleen Dardes, as interviewed by Yacy-Ara Froner

Kathleen Dardes is the Head of the Collections Department of the Getty Conservation Institute in Los Angeles, California, in the United States, and has been a member of ICOM since 1990. At the 18th ICOM-CC Triennial Conference in September 2017, Copenhagen, she delivered the Triennial Lecture The Definition of the Profession Reimagined: How ICOM-CC’s history can inspire its future, celebrating the 50th anniversary of ICOM-CC (1967-2017). Her vast experience as a manager of the Institute’s educational projects for movable cultural heritage, including courses and in-field training activities at the national and international levels, enabled her lecture to be enriched both by her personal experience and by her massive knowledge in the field of training history of the conservation of the cultural properties.
Teaching, training, and research comprised the identity of Kathleen Dardes, and as she said during her speech: “In 1967, the leaders of our profession were dealing with many issues that were very specific to the time and circumstances in which they found themselves. Our field was still going through the long process of transforming—from a largely practical occupation based upon a tradition of restoration to a scientifically-based profession with a defined body of knowledge, informed by theory and an ethical code. Our founders had very clear ideas of what needed to be done to complete that transformation, and much of what they accomplished through organizations like ICOM-CC was done in pursuit of the goal of making conservation into a true profession. Five decades later, in 2017, I think we can say that we have made enormous strides, even as our profession is still evolving and its horizons expanding in ways that will demand fresh thinking and bold leadership on the part of our field’s emerging leaders. Perhaps the best way to chart a path for the future of our profession is to become reacquainted with our roots. While history doesn’t always provide us with a ready-made template for dealing with present day challenges, it can at the very least provide some ideas and inspiration.”

This interview with Kathy intends to share with our community the main points of her view and experiences about the issue of training and professional recognition in the area, considering her immeasurable contribution in the field of conservation. However, only after the founding of ICOM in 1946, ICCROM in 1956, and ICOMOS in 1965, the first training courses in conservation and conservation-restoration were established. What changes have you observed related to conservation training and education since you entered the field?

KD: When I entered the field—back in the 1980’s—there were still limited educational opportunities for people hoping to specialize in certain type of materials or collections. Although academic programs in conservation had started to form in the sixties in North America, initial focus was on paintings, certain forms of three-dimensional objects, books and paper. Some objects—like textiles or furniture, for example—did not receive the same degree of attention. There was an early generation of textile conservators (myself included) who chose to enroll in programs in the UK because comprehensive training in this area was simply unavailable in the US. The absence of some specialties within academic programs meant that apprentice-style training continued for quite a while, simply out of necessity. This situation has changed considerably over the years as academic programs expanded to encompass more types of material and objects. This is certainly one of the more positive developments in the evolution of the field.

However, what we do sometimes hear now is that this emphasis on graduate and post-graduate level education, with a curriculum heavy with conservation theory and science, has contributed to an erosion of craft skills that are critical to the field. This in turn has led to a de-emphasis on treatment and, with it, a growing trend of non-intervention. Now I personally think this criticism—which is heard more frequently in recent years—is often over-stated. Yet at the same time, I...
think there is some element of truth to this, which probably deserves further scrutiny. Craft skills are fundamental to the job. So if academic training does not provide sufficient opportunities for honing those skills, then internships or other forms of in-situ practical training need to happen.

I’m generally pretty optimistic when it comes to the topic of conservation education. I have found that faculty associated with academic programs are pretty adept at both anticipating and responding to emerging developments within the profession. They are forming the next generation of conservators and so their role as educators is to look down the road a bit, imagine where the field is heading, and then develop the intellectual and practical tools their students will need for the future.

YAF: Could you speak about your own experience in the field of conservation training, inside and outside of your institution, including other partnerships and cooperation?

KD: When I joined the GCI, most of our training activities took the form of short courses or workshops—anywhere from one to four weeks in duration. As is still the case today, we address a fairly wide range of topics for audiences in a range of different contexts. I would have to say that an early and enduring ‘lesson’ that I learned about training and professional development—especially for people already working in the field—is that it’s really essential to design training that reflects the working realities faced by learners. People tend to want different learning experiences at various stages of their careers. They also form new knowledge and skills through both formal and informal experiences—in classrooms but also in their own work places. Sometimes a short workshop is sufficient. Other times, people need greater breadth and depth of learning, which might involve a number of modalities: classroom teaching, mentoring, web-based learning. These have become features of a number of recent training activities the GCI has been involved in. On other occasions, people are happy to get learning in smaller doses—perhaps through a webinar or distance course.

Because there are now so many new modalities for teaching and learning, it has opened up huge opportunities for tailoring training to specific groups of learners and to the contexts in which they work.

YAF: How do partnerships and other forms of cooperation contribute to your work?

KD: I can’t think of an instance when our work—no matter what form it took—didn’t involve at least one partner. In fact, it’s not unusual for us to work with several institutional partners. Over my career, I’ve worked with colleagues from intergovernmental bodies, government agencies, museums, foundations, universities, and a myriad assortment of NGOs. These relationships have value beyond the sharing of a workload. They actually have a great ‘multiplier’ effect, allowing each partner to contribute something but also to tap into a pool of collective wisdom and experience. I really can’t say that we’ve ever had a partnership that didn’t work. What seems to be really critical to these relationships are shared values and a unified vision for addressing a challenge. It’s a bit of a cliché, I suppose, but it’s true that people and institutions are stronger and go further when they work together.

YAF: Currently, several research centers and universities offer courses at various levels: training, undergraduate and postgraduate. What is the role of training courses, considering the certification provided by university degrees?

KD: The word ‘certification’ is always a tricky one and I think it may signify different things to different people. Certification, as it is commonly understood in many professions, is the process by which a professional is able to demonstrate competent and ethical practice as defined by his/her field. Often times, the certifying body is a professional association that, in a sense, functions as a gate-keeper to the profession. A university degree alone does not do that. It functions as an indicator that a person has attained enough competence to enter the field...but what then? Most conservators will have a long career during which there are likely to be many new developments within the field, new information or techniques to master. Certification (which also involves re-certification at various intervals) is a profession’s way of assuring that its members maintain at least a minimum level of competence. I think academic programs do have a role to play in life-long learning but so do professional bodies and other entities.
YAF: Despite the strengthening and scientific improvement in the field of Heritage Science, there are significant differences in the context of each country or region in relation to the preservation of its cultural assets. How can we build capacity for action in these contexts?

KD: I think there are likely to be a variety of ways to strengthen heritage science within countries or regions. At present there are institutions on every continent undertaking technical research related to conservation. National labs that address a broader set of technical issues relevant to the nation’s heritage will operate differently than analytical labs in a museum, which may focus primarily on understanding the objects in their collections. So the differences are not simply geographical; they also relate to a lab’s mission. I think one of the best ways to enhance heritage science is to find more opportunities for professional exchanges. At the GCI, our Science Department quite frequently hosts visiting scientists from all over the globe; our scientists may spend time in other labs as well. We’ve found that this is one of the more effective ways of sharing information about new research and analytical techniques and to support the international community of conservation scientists. Post-doctoral fellowships have also been an effective means of preparing young scientists for conservation careers.

YAF: What are your views on professional recognition?

KD: In my ICOM-CC lecture, I offered the opinion that professional recognition remains one of the great unfinished tasks within our profession. When doing the research for this lecture, I was really struck by how visionary ICOM-CC’s founding generation had been in setting the course for the profession’s development. They had identified the need for education, research, published literature, and professional bodies to represent conservators. Over time, the field put together these building blocks of the profession, but somehow stopped short of an important element: a mechanism for certifying competent practice. Although the UK is a notable exception, in most countries the field does not require that certain standards of education, ethics and performance be adhered to. The risks to the profession of not having such a mechanism is apparent to me every time I have a conversation with someone from a country where the profession is still growing. It’s disheartening how often people cite the fact that, in their country, anyone can call himself a conservator. There is always great deal of frustration around this situation. Even though there may now be academic programs in conservation that are producing conservators, the graduates of these programs are not viewed much differently than people with more limited or no formal training. This is what some of the founders of ICOM-CC were worried about a more than a generation ago and it’s a situation we are still dealing with. In most countries of the world, any one, no matter their training or experience, can still label themselves a conservator. Is this a situation we should allow to continue? I find it encouraging that the profession in some countries is addressing this. And I do think that every country is likely to deal with professional recognition differently according to their customs or legal structures, where these apply. In the US, as has been the case in the UK, professional recognition is likely to be handled by the national organization representing the field— AIC (the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works). In continental Europe, it seems as though professional status will be determined and protected within a legal framework.
YAF: What are the major challenges for access to training, professional recognition, and the role of conservator-restorer in contemporary society?

KD: This is a hard question to answer; it’s actually a series of questions on different facets of our professional life and development.

Let me just take one of them: What is our role in contemporary society? It sometimes seems that conservators are in a constant struggle to prove their relevance to the world in ways that other professionals don’t have to. Lawyers, architects and doctors are clearly useful people and no one ever questions their relevance to modern life. We know what they do and value the services they provide.

Conservators have become much better at making themselves more visible in recent years. There have been some really fantastic exhibitions and public awareness campaigns that have highlighted our work. The public has responded well to these. But I’m not sure that we are seen to be as integral to modern life in the way that other professionals are. That may have a lot to do with what society at large values and is willing to support. I think the only thing we can do is to remain open to the world, and to expand that visibility.

The ICOM-CC Fund

Nora Kennedy

The ICOM-CC Fund was established in 2003 with the goal to support “charitable purposes aimed at promoting ICOM-CC and its activities and publicizing it within the international ‘conservation and restoration community’ and museums in general, as well as to the public at large throughout the world.” The Fund is intended to raise resources and to disperse them in support of projects and activities important to the ICOM-CC. The current Directory Board is strategizing various fundraising approaches as well as a prioritization of initiatives for the ICOM-CC Fund. The current Fund Board has stepped down, and will be replaced soon. We will provide updates in future issues of On Board.

ICOM Kyoto 2019: Museums as Cultural Hubs: the Future of Tradition

Renata F. Peters

ICOM’s 25th General Conference will take place in Kyoto from 1 to 7 September 2019 under the theme ‘Museums as Cultural Hubs: the Future of Tradition’. The conference is likely to attract around 3,000 participants from a broad range of museum disciplines. ICOM-CC is collaborating with other ICOM international committees to organize joint sessions as well as a post-conference tour. We believe that cross-disciplinary discussions provide more enlightening perspectives on challenges all museum professionals need to tackle. This also will be a unique opportunity for conservators to share their message. To date, we are discussing the possibility of joint sessions with the following ICOM committees: International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM), International Committee for Museum Management (INTERCOM), International Museum for Architecture and Museum Techniques (ICAMT) and ICOM International Committee for Collecting (COMCOL).

Watch this space and the official conference website for the provisional programme, available early in autumn.
ICOM Young Member Travel Grant 2018

Joan Marie Reifsnyder

The ICOM-CC 2018 Travel Grant to a Young Member was awarded to Marisol Zuñiga Lau from Guatemala. Marisol attended the ICOM-CC Scientific Research Working Group Roundtable on Emerging Professionals in collaboration with the Science and Engineering in Arts Heritage and Archaeology (SEAHA) at University College London (UCL) in London, UK. The roundtable was moderated by Lynn Lee, Scientific Research Working Group Coordinator and scientist at the Getty Conservation Institute. Panelists on the roundtable were: Alejandra Albuern, Robin Higgs, Phillipa Mcdonnell, Caroline Peach, David Saunders, Jo Townshend.

The Young Member Travel Grant is an ICOM initiative open to full individual ICOM members who are 35 years old or younger during the application year and full-time museum employees. Each International Committee is provided with a small contribution to assist younger ICOM members with attendance at their International Committee meetings. Marisol was chosen for the ICOM-CC funding by the Selection Committee made up of members from the ICOM-CC Directory Board.

Marisol is currently the Historic Archive Coordinator at the Carlos F. Novella Museum in Guatemala City. For a number of years she was special collections conservator at the Ludwig von Mises Library, Universidad Francisco Marroquín in Guatemala, where she was in charge of the preservation laboratory and digitalization of books and documents. Marisol has participated in various international conferences, including the Getty International Program at the ICOM-CC Triennial Conference in Melbourne 2014.

Congratulations to Marisol!

The International Committees Working Group (ICWG) was created earlier this year by the President of ICOM to analyse the roles, purposes and operating strategies of ICOM’s International Committees (ICs). To achieve this goal, the ICWG will collect data and facilitate face-to-face and virtual discussions focused on the way ICs operates, including areas of activity, best practices & challenges, and membership engagement among others. These open dialogues are also intended to identify areas for improvements and to contribute to create a shared vision for the future of ICs, priorities and needs.

As part of the efforts, the ICWG is preparing an online survey to collect feedback from members of International Committees as well as representatives of other ICOM groups including members of National Committees (NCs), Regional Alliances, Affiliated Organisations, and Standing Committees. The participation of all ICOM groups will allow the voices of ICs, NCs, and the ICOM membership to be heard. The survey will be executed in October and November 2018.

To obtain representative survey results, we need your participation. For this purpose, all ICOM members will be asked to sign up for the Survey Monkey through a link leading to a form where your information can be added to the list of ICOM colleagues participating in the survey. Your information will be kept confidential and personal information will not be shared outside this survey. Please take a few minutes to complete the form when you receive the link, your participation in the survey will be vital to better understand the present and build the future of ICOM’s International Committees. Thank you for joining.
Transcending Boundaries: Integrated approaches to conservation

The ICOM-CC Triennial Conference, Beijing, 14-18 September 2020
Achal Pandya

The ICOM-CC Directory Board is involved in regular and on-going consultations with the Chinese National Organising Committee (NOC) to make the first-ever ICOM-CC Triennial Conference in China a memorable one. The major museums in Beijing, the Chinese Museum Association, ICOM China, and the four conservation organisations of China are participating in the ICOM-CC Triennial Conference in 2020, and we expect a great exchange of ideas and expertise between the ICOM-CC community, Chinese conservators, and students and professionals in the field of cultural heritage conservation. It also is hoped that this important event will instigate more members from the region to actively participate in ICOM-CC.

Even though the venues for the different sessions are still in the planning stages, it is assured that these will be held at the important cultural landmarks in Beijing. Receptions, social events, plenary sessions are being planned in the National Museum, the National Centre for the Performing Arts, and other top-level sites in the city.

The theme for the conference is designed to focus on bringing together the knowledge, tradition, skills of the East and the West in the same forum. This will help professionals in the field from all around the world learn from each other’s practices, philosophies and materials.

In recent years, there has been a boom in the building of museums in China. Every year, about 100 new museums are added to the community of Chinese museums. The number of conservation and museum professionals in China is very high and they collaborate with all the major professional institutions and organisations. Every year China contributes by hosting international conferences, seminars, capacity building training workshops in the field of museology, conservation and conservation science. The timing of the ICOM-CC Triennial Conference is an ideal moment to celebrate the efforts of China in preserving and showcasing its rich and ancient culture for posterity.

We will certainly receive the usual excellent contributions for the Triennial Conference in 2020 and sincerely hope there will be numerous contributions touching on the conference theme “Transcending boundaries: Integrated approaches to conservation.”

The Chinese NOC is working to make the Conference a successful one. Stay tuned for the conference website and further announcements related to the Conference.

Plan to be in the beautiful city of Beijing with ICOM-CC in 2020!
One final piece of news; we would like to use this edition of On Board to announce a change in name of one of our Working Groups. Ethics are essential to our role as a conservator caring for cultural heritage, and ICOM members work within the Code of Ethics defined by our organisation. Ethical issues are thus integral to many of our Working Group themes. However, none of the Working Groups provided a specific focus to this important aspect of our work. With this in mind, the Directory Board approached the Theory and History of Conservation Working Group to ask if they could incorporate Ethics within their area of interest. The current Coordinator, Hélia Marçal, welcomed this initiative. From this point on, the Working Group will be called: Theory, History and Ethics of Conservation. Already, this broadening of focus has been implemented with the Working Group’s triennial programme including a theme concerning the ethical issues of intervening in contemporary artworks. We look forward to developments along these lines helping to shape emerging conservation practices.

Working Groups & Social Media: Facebook and LinkedIn
Nine of the ICOM-CC Working Groups have a Facebook presence and four have a LinkedIn page. Many of the other Working Groups are planning to create Social Media pages. These pages and groups are open to members and non members alike. We encourage participation via Social Media to explore subjects of common interest and broaden horizons of our respective areas of research. We hope that this way of promoting the activities of our International Committee will stimulate new members to join and allow existing members to discover new regions of interest. Content presented via these forums are reflections of that published on the home page of each Working Group on the ICOM-CC website. This is the main tool of communicating with our membership. Furthermore, each Working Group will compile at least one Newsletter per year. Members are encouraged to contact the Working Group Coordinator if they have content that is of interest to the Working Group members.