

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE WET ORGANIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIALS WORKING GROUP'S LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD 2016-2020

The Wet Organic Archaeological Materials (WOAM) Working Group's Lifetime Achievement Award was established in 2016, with the blessing of the then ICOM-CC Directory Board, as a way of recognizing members who had given:

- 1) Distinguished service to the field of wet organic archaeological materials over the course of the nominee's professional career
- 2) Exceptional contributions with significant impact to the functioning or advancement of the study, treatment and preservation of wet organic materials
- 3) Dedicated and sustained service to wet organic archaeological materials. This may include: service as a coordinator, assistant coordinator or as chair of one of the local arrangements committees; sustained service as a peer-reviewer for the conference proceedings; service as an editor for one or more conference proceedings.

Recipients can be proposed by any member of the group and the nomination must be supported by two additional letters of support. The awards are given at the triennial WOAM Interim meeting. Typically, the award is accompanied by a speech detailing the individual's contribution and this speech is then published in the Wet Organic Archaeological Materials Working Group newsletter. Three awards can be given each triennium; however, in 2019 we had four exceptional nominations and so, unusually, four awards were given. The recipients to-date are:

JIM SPRIGGS (2016)

Jim headed the lab at the York Archaeological Trust for nearly 35 years, working on waterlogged organics from a wide variety of sites, including the Coppergate excavations and the Jorvik Viking Center, and laying the foundations for the York Archaeological Wood Center. Jim's early publications in the WOAM Proceedings and in the *Conservator* and the book *Retrieval of Objects from Archaeological sites*, helped to make the case for conserving and displaying large (non-ship) timber structures. While at YAT he organized the conference entitled a *Celebration of Wood* and edited the conference proceedings, which dealt with a range of topics from novel approaches to the conservation of wet wood to managing a wetland site. Although he is best known for his involvement with waterlogged wood, Jim has advanced the conservation of non-wood organics too, contributing a chapter to the *Conservation of Leather and Related Materials* on the conservation of archaeological leather. Since retiring from YAT, Jim has continued to be active in the conservation of waterlogged organics, aiding with the Newport ship and helping to establish European standards for the treatment of waterlogged wood.

Jim's contributions to WOAM have been equally impressive. He organized the 1996 conference in York and served as an assistant coordinator for many years. He helped in the editing of the York (1996), Stockholm (2001), and Copenhagen (2004) post prints; and he has been a very willing and insightful peer-reviewer on many papers since those conferences.

CLIFF COOK (2016)

Cliff has worked in the field of wet organics for over 30 years both at the Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) and at Parks Canada. He has written several papers, a CCI Note as well as taught courses to many students on this subject. Most recently he was asked to teach a course and produce a manual on operating a freeze-dryer for the Library of Congress. Cliff was invited to develop and deliver a course for a post degree diploma in Marine Archaeological Conservation in partnership with the EVTEK University in Vantaa Finland. He developed and taught “Archaeological Conservation: Specialized Techniques and Research for Wet Objects” a week-long professional development workshop offered at CCI three-times. He has surveyed and made recommendations for the display of several shipwrecks, written procedures for in-situ protection of shipwrecks in the Great Lakes and measured the deterioration rates of totem poles.

Cliff was involved with the WOAM group from its beginning, attending and presenting at the first conference held in Ottawa in 1981, and he has maintained a presence in the group since that time. Cliff was the Assistant Coordinator for WOAM for three terms. During this nine-year period, he supported the group as editor of the WOAM Newsletter and maintained the mailing list. Cliff helped edit the Stockholm Proceedings and co-edited the Istanbul Proceedings. He has reviewed many papers for WOAM throughout his career. He has also presented and published many papers at the various triennial WOAM conferences as well as in other venues and publications.

PER HOFFMANN (2016)

Per Hoffmann was the first person to head the Department and Research laboratory for Wet Organic Archaeological Wood Conservation at the Deutsches Shiffhartsmuseum in Bremerhaven. During his career, he has been responsible for the conservation of a dozen ships and boats, including most famously the Bremen Cogge, and he has developed treatment schemes for several more. He has shared his vast knowledge of wood chemistry and conservation through over 120 publications and taught the wood anatomy section of ICCROM’s International Course on Wood Conservation Technology for nearly a decade. In 2013 he published “*Conservation of Archaeological Ships and Boats-personal experiences*” an eminently readable and useful book. He was on the ICOM-CC directory board for 12 years and served for 17 years as coordinator and/or assistant coordinator of WOAM. He edited six of the WOAM proceedings—a task alone for which he deserves a medal!

IAN GODFREY (2019)

Ian Godfrey received a PhD in Organic Chemistry from the University of Western Australia in 1981. In 1987, Ian joined the Department of Materials Conservation, Western Australian Museum. His main area of interest and active research was the analysis and treatment of wet organic materials. He initiated research into the problem areas within the museum’s maritime archaeological collection, especially leather, bone, and ivory.

He was a member of the Antarctic Science Advisory Committee from 1990 to 2016 and made more than ten trips to Antarctica where he focused on the *in-situ* preservation of Mawson’s huts and associated artefacts. He treated key buildings using a Venturi system which sublimates ice build-up in the huts using the natural climate. The treatment was effective, inexpensive and had low maintenance in an area

where visiting is both expensive and limited. This original thinking has been instrumental in preserving these at-risk buildings in the harsh environment of Antarctica.

In 2001, Ian became the Head of the Materials Conservation Department at the Western Australian Museum and despite an exponentially increasing administrative role managed to keep intimately involved in the research being carried out in the Department. One of the many highlights of his career was being invited to be a member of the 'Cure the *Vasa*' project team. He coordinated the wood degradation analyses using FT-IR and NMR spectroscopic techniques and aspects of environmental impacts on acid development of PEG impregnated *Vasa* timbers.

In 2013, Ian retired from the museum, however he is still actively involved in the research program of the Department, primarily in the areas of iron removal from waterlogged organics, acid degradation of PEG treated timbers and the treatment of ivory recovered from marine environments.

Ian's research has always been practically focused on improving the treatment and preventing post-treatment problems for maritime archaeological materials. He has published more than 35 scientific papers and has been an active member of the ICOM-CC WOAM Working Group since attending his first WOAM conference in Grenoble in 1998. Ian has presented the results of his research at all triennial WOAM conferences since that time and published in the WOAM proceedings. In addition, he has been a peer-reviewer for the last three WOAM Conference Proceedings.

KHOI TRAN (2019)

In 1979, Khôi Tran received a PhD degree in Polymer Science from Strasbourg University (France) and he began working for ARC-Nucléart in 1981, where he has spent almost 40 years. A chemical engineer by training, it was his role to develop a facility for the use of atomic energy for conservation purposes. Wood, both dry and wet, seemed the perfect subject and he was soon treating everything from polychrome sculptures and parquet flooring to archaeological materials, using the gamma ray polymerisation of resin monomers, principally styrene. Khoi became interested in the challenges surrounding waterlogged organics and much of his subsequent career has been spent researching other materials and techniques to apply to a range of archaeological materials, including the characterisation of decay patterns. He and his colleagues at ARC-Nucléart in Grenoble developed a national wood treatment facility of international standing. The amazing scale and variety of the projects undertaken under Khoi's direction have often been reported to WOAM conferences and his research into wood conservation, both within his department and as part of broader national and international research programmes, have resulted in an impressive list of technical publications.

In 2007 he was promoted to senior expert scientist. He is Technical Expert for the IAEA and participates in the IAEA European Technical Project entitled 'Using Nuclear Techniques for the Characterisation and Preservation of Cultural Heritage in the European Region.' In the field of archaeological wood conservation, he has been in charge of numerous research projects in cooperating with national or international conservation laboratories/centres, focusing on topics such as material characterization, ageing studies of cultural artefacts and development of new conservation processes.

POUL JENSEN (2019)

In 1989, Poul Jensen became head of the section for waterlogged organics at the National Museum of Denmark and from 2001-2011 he was a Senior Scientist in the same section. In 2011 he retired and founded AKUT, a private company that makes technical solutions for both museums and private corporations.

Poul is a generous teacher and mentor. One of his former interns describes her internship as follows: "A couple of times a week, work would stop half an hour before lunch time and Poul would have us enthralled by his enthusiasm as drawings of vessels and cells along with mathematical equations would fill up the Blackboard. Poul is an exceedingly clever man so following his equations to the very end could be somewhat challenging." Poul has modelled the diffusion of impregnation agents, added to our understanding of the process of freeze drying and created new tools for the assessing the state of wood preservation. To this end, Poul's complex equations have always ended up producing practical often quite low-tech solutions that are easy for practicing conservators to use. He has published extensively on the conservation of waterlogged wood. He is recognized internationally and has participated in many international projects including the award winning SASMAP Project.

TARA GRANT (2019)

In 1987, Tara began working with Parks Canada, Prairie and Northern Region (Winnipeg), and a year later joined the Canadian Conservation Institute's Archaeology Laboratory. In this role she has conserved hundreds of artefacts and routinely given workshops in Canada to archaeologist, conservators and first nation groups on the treatment and care for wet archaeological artefacts including basketry. Her commitment to training included the organization of CCI's Conservation of Waterlogged Organics workshop and has encompassed the supervision of dozens of young conservators from Canadian schools as well as from conservation programs around the world.

Tara has advanced our understanding of non-wooden waterlogged organics in important ways. She has done extensive work on baleen, cedar bark basketry, cordage, leather and skins and authored or co-authored over 25 articles in a variety of publications, including the Journal of Wetland Archaeology, Studies in Conservation, Journal of the International Institute for Conservation - Canadian Group, the Native and Inuit Yearbook. Perhaps Tara's most important contribution is to the conservation of materials found at sites in the Canadian Arctic. Her active participation at sites in Nunavut allowed her to develop and refine many innovative methods that ensured that the preservation of wet and fragile artifacts began as soon as they were excavated. She co-authored the latest version of the "Conservation Manual for Northern Archaeologists" and has disseminated the methods through many workshops focused on field conservation.

She has been involved in WOAM since 1989 and has maintained a presence at all the conferences since then. She co-edited the WOAM Proceedings from the York (1996), Portland (1993) and Stockholm conferences (2001). She served as an Assistant Coordinator and was the Coordinator from 2011-2014 and edited the Istanbul proceedings.