

Icon NEWS

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A blitz on bugs in the bedding

Also in this issue

PACR news and the
new Conservation
Register

Showcasing intern
work in Ireland

A 16th century clock

development of upholstery techniques and materials.

This is followed on 10/11 November with the first of the 'Taking Patterns from Historic Costume' workshops. Janet Wood, who has in-depth experience of pattern cutting and mounting historic costume, will deliver the course at the Costume and Textile Study Centre, Norwich. The course will comprise both theory and practice, to include: developing an understanding of basic modern pattern cutting techniques and relating this to historical methods; looking at methods for measuring costume and recording the information to make a pattern and hands-on sessions where a pattern and toile will be produced using a piece of handling costume. The course will not include mounting. For provisional bookings and queries please contact rosamund.weatherall@nationaltrust.org.uk.

Further details of both workshops are available on the Icon website.

Maria Jordan, Textile Group Chair

Graduate Voice

UNCOVERING THE PAST Conservation of a Time Capsule Found in Derry, Northern Ireland

by **Kristi Westberg**, Icon Intern, Derry & Raphoe
Diocesan Library Project.

In September 2010, I began a one-year Icon internship with the Derry & Raphoe Diocesan Library Project in Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland. The project's mentor, Nicholas Pickwood, described the library as *'something of a Cinderella in the rare book world, in that many otherwise well-informed people in the library world know little or nothing of it'*. During the last nine months I have found the collection of some 5,600

View of manuscript on arrival at the studio



Kristi Westberg unrolling the manuscript scroll on arrival at the studio

printed books and manuscripts to be filled with interesting and exciting information about binding structures, conservation issues as well as some very fascinating and entertaining texts.

Like my own internship the three-year Derry & Raphoe Project

Close-up of mould and dirt damage





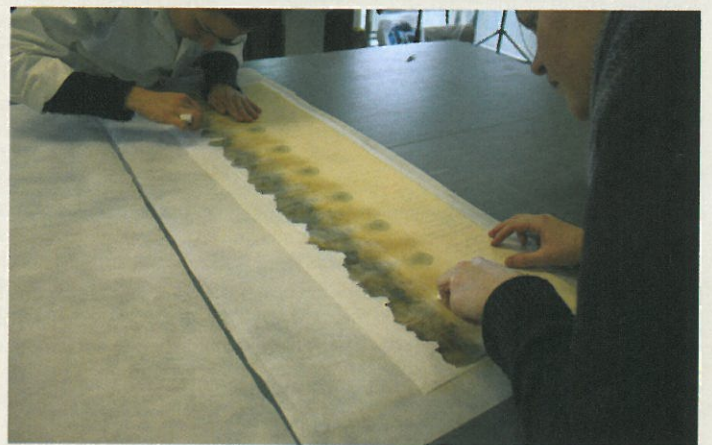
Tony Upton carefully unfolding one of the newspapers from the time capsule



Hellen Pittino and Kristi Westberg preparing the Japanese repair paper



Close-up of Japanese paper infill repair



Hellen Pittino and Kristi Westberg applying Japanese tissue to the back of the manuscript

is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund in the hope of training and building a conservation facility in Northern Ireland. While the primary objective of the project has been to conserve the Diocesan's collection, one of the secondary aims has been to bring conservation skills and the potential for a commercial conservation studio to the area.

The need for these services was made clear in September 2010 when a time capsule was found in the foundations of The Guildhall as the building received extensive restoration works. Inside the glass capsule jar were copies of local papers dated 22 August 1877 (the date the foundation stone was laid by The Irish Society), a manuscript statement concerning the hall as well as a set of coins from Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee.

Unfortunately at some point the jar cracked allowing water to seep inside creating ideal conditions for mould growth. As a result the paper items in the capsule were very fragile and in need of conservation treatment in order to be safely handled or exhibited. The team at the project was contacted and we were happy to donate our skills to conserve the manuscript document outlining the cost of the building of the Guildhall and the names of the Irish Society.

The conservation process was collaborative with each member of the team discussing the problems with the documents and potential repair techniques. Once a course of action was agreed on, we all worked together to unroll, relax and repair the manuscript scroll in preparation for a future exhibition of

the group of items. Having been damaged along the entire length of the left side it was necessary to clean, line and infill the missing areas in order to allow the document to be mounted and later framed.

Fellow intern Hellen Pittino and myself worked together to back the document to support the fragile paper in preparation for infilling. Once infilled the document was put in a conservation mount using archival board and Japanese tissue strips. Having been conserved and mounted the manuscript has now been returned to Derry City Council Museum Service and will be put on exhibit in the coming months.

My time with the Derry & Raphoe Project so far has provided me the opportunity to work with a variety of items, develop my conservation skills and use those skills to enrich the local community. I was very excited to play a small role in the conservation of the Guildhall time capsule and look forward to seeing the manuscript on exhibition for the rest of the community to see. It is my hope that the community will take pleasure in seeing this piece of history as much as I enjoyed having the privilege to work on it. As the city moves forward as the City of Culture in 2013 I am hopeful that the conservation community will continue to play a valuable role in the celebration of their cultural heritage.

For more information about the Derry & Raphoe Diocesan Library Project please visit our blog at <http://derryandraphoe.wordpress.com>.