

## Report from the Secretary-General 2015

Welcome to the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining and the 2015 IIC Annual General Meeting. The Institute of Materials is also at present the London home of Maney, the publishers of *Studies in Conservation*, and I would like to thank them, in the persons of Laura Bradford and Gaynor Redvers-Mutton and the Institute of Materials, our hosts this evening. Last year, following the formal business of the AGM, we had the pleasure of a talk by Dr Tom Learner of the Getty Conservation Institute on 'The polyester sculptures of De Wain Valentine: process, intent and conservation issues'; this year, as you know, we have a round table discussion in the *Dialogues for the New Century* series on *The Future of Heritage Science* and you are invited to stay for that and the reception that will follow.

The full review of IIC's last financial year, which, to remind you, runs from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014, appears in the annual report which you should have received before Christmas. This evening I will summarise some of the events that have taken place; Joyce Townsend will discuss the publications and Julian Bickersteth will say something about electronic communications and the website, also, I hope, the World Membership scheme and Opportunities Fund, both of which he has had responsibility for until very recently, although he has just handed over the latter responsibility to Barbara Reeve. As I say this, you may realise for the first time that IIC Council members play an active role not only in advising and guiding IIC, but also in its day-to-day activities and, as several of them have travelled quite a long way – Australia, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Germany, Denmark, Finland – to be with us this evening, I would like to take this opportunity to thank them and all Council members, past and present, for their generous help and involvement.

At the AGM last year, four new members of Council: Lorenzo Appolonia, Stavroula Golfomitsou, Barbara Reeve and Tiina Sonninen were elected and we welcome them very sincerely. Very sadly, we said goodbye to Diane Gwilt. This year we must say farewell to Rick Kerschner, whose period on Council has come to an end. Rick's support of IIC and its activities, his advice and willing participation – often by telephone or by skype at very strange hours of the night – have been invaluable and we are extremely grateful.

As befits an international organisation, we try to hold one of the three annual Council meetings outside the United Kingdom and in September 2013, the Council meeting was held in Copenhagen. This enabled a very pleasant lunchtime meeting with the Danish Section of the IIC Nordic Group (NKF) and also meant that Council members were able to attend the second IIC Student and Emerging Conservator Conference, entitled *Conservation: Obstacles or Opportunities?*. This was held in partnership with KADK, the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts Copenhagen, Schools of Architecture, Design and Conservation and, as with the first of these meetings, held in London in 2011, this extremely enjoyable and successful event was organised by the students themselves and consisted of panel discussions and visits to conservation studios. The topics for discussion included the advantages and disadvantages of training and working abroad, with the linguistic and cultural adaptation this may entail; how to present oneself professionally, including preparing a portfolio of work; and how to build up a network of contacts within the field. The students chose these topics as being of particular relevance for them at this stage of their training and

future careers. The lecture hall was completely full and the sessions were streamed live on the internet. This enabled some of the panellists to contribute remotely and a worldwide audience could – and did – observe the discussion and put questions to the international panel of conservation professionals, both well established and recently qualified. IIC is most grateful to KADK, who provided financial support for the conference as part of the 40th anniversary celebrations of the School of Conservation. We would also like to congratulate the student organisers, under the chairmanship of Mikkel Scharff and with the invaluable help of Adam Klupś, the originator of these conferences, for having produced such a wonderful event: Heidi Hejberg Børsting, , Marie Christiansen, Mette Fald Paarup, Charlotte Graminius, Tora Hederus, Lea Esther Jensen, Tine Louise Slotsgaard and Louise Maria Tiedemann. A third conference, to be held in 2015 in Warsaw, is in the planning stages.

As the 25th biennial Congress, held at the City Hall, Hong Kong in September 2014, falls outside the reporting year 2103–14, I will not discuss it in detail, but it would be very strange indeed not to mention such a splendid and successful event, which is still strong in the memories of all those who attended, particularly as its chief organiser in Hong Kong, Shing-wai Chan, is with us today. The congress, on the theme of *An Unbroken History: Conserving East Asian Works of Art and Heritage*, was organised with the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) of the Hong Kong Government in the person of Shing-wai Chan, with Evita Yeung, Maggie Pang, Alice Tsang and his superb team of staff, who also put together a splendid social programme of receptions and visits, both during and after the conference. Maybe it was a lucky coincidence, but the typhoon that threatened the region that week headed north, missing Hong Kong, and the student demonstration that filled our news programmes for weeks did not begin until a day or two after the congress had finished. The lecture theatre was completely full throughout the week and I must thank Austin Nevin, Chair of the Technical Committee, and all its members, Bertrand Lavédrine, Sarah Foskett, Shing-wai Chan, Wing-fai Lai, Nanke Schellmann and Paul Jett, together with myself, for their patient work on choosing and working on the papers and posters; and also Amber Kerr and her colleagues on the student poster committee, who selected the student posters. IIC is extremely grateful to Dr Louis Ng of LCSD, to Shing-wai Chan and to all his staff, to the translators who provided simultaneous translation into and from Putonghua (modern Standard Chinese) throughout the proceedings. I should also thank Sharon Cather and David Park, of the Courtauld Institute, and the Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation Centre for Buddhist Art and Conservation at the Courtauld Institute for their generous sponsorship of the closing reception at the Asia Society, and, indeed, all our sponsors at the congress. The handsome preprints volume, in English and Putonghua, was printed in Hong Kong but published by Maney as a supplement to *Studies in Conservation* in exactly the same way as the Vienna congress preprints. I will not say more about this except to express our sincere thanks to Joyce Townsend, the Editor-in-Chief, and her team, Barry Knight, Shayne Rivers and Austin Nevin, and to the local organising committee in Hong Kong who, on top of everything else, were responsible for overseeing the translation to and from Chinese and also communicating with the Chinese authors.

While I should not say more about an event taking place outside the 2013–14 financial year, it is worth commenting on the point that the 2014 Congress was the first IIC has held in a sub-tropical region of the world, which has its own, very particular conservation problems. It is also well known that the choice of appropriate

conditions of temperature and relative humidity within museums has been a matter of considerable debate in recent years. It was thus appropriate that one session was devoted to the environmental conditions appropriate for the care of heritage artefacts within a museum or storage environment. This was informed by an issue of *Studies in Conservation* distributed to all the delegates, which contained the results of a survey carried out by a joint IIC-ICOM-CC working group (Jerry Podany and Julian Bickersteth of IIC, Lisa Pilosi and Vinod Daniel of ICOM-CC) to assess the current positions taken by museums and galleries on environmental conditions, together with articles giving the historical background to the debate and discussing future progress. The difference between this copy and the copy you received in the post last spring is that this copy contained abstracts of the articles in Putonghua so that all delegates had some background material for the discussion and links to this will shortly be put on the IIC website, where you will also find mention of all further developments.

During the Vienna Congress in 2012, a memorandum of understanding between IIC and ICOMCC was signed by Jerry Podany, then President of IIC, and Lisa Pilosi, then Chair of the Directory Board of ICOM-CC. We are delighted to say that a new, 12-month memorandum between the two bodies was signed in December 2013, with the aim of cooperating in jointly organised ventures and possibly combining the two main conferences in 2020, the next time the two coincide and you may expect further developments along these lines. IIC's friendly relations with ICCROM are also being renewed and it is intended that papers from the ICCROM Forum on Conservation Science held in Rome in October 2013 will be published as an online-only supplement to *Studies in Conservation*.

During the year, IIC has been represented at several events organised by other bodies, having been invited to send a delegate and, wherever possible, IIC is both interested and pleased to do this. These have included the Icon (Institute of Conservation) AGM; the Church Care 2013 Symposium, *Conservation Strategies for Church Buildings*, held at Westminster Abbey; *Sustaining the Impact of UK Science and Heritage Research*, the conference of the five-year AHRC/EPSRC Science and Heritage Programme, held at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, Westminster; *Asiatic Traditional Painting, Its History and Conservation: The 4th Heritage Conference*, organised by China Culture Connect with the National Maritime Museum. IIC has observer status at the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) Technical Committee TC 346, Conservation of Cultural Heritage, and was represented at the steering committee meeting held in April 2014. IIC has also recently become a partner of ENCoRE, the European Network for Conservation-Restoration Education.

The award of IIC Fellowship is an internationally acknowledged recognition of professional achievement in the field of conservation. Fellows are elected by their peers internationally; there can be no more significant professional award. It is, therefore, a great pleasure to congratulate Deborah Cane and Amber Kerr, elected as Fellows of IIC during the year.

IIC is dependent on its office for its efficient running and this year the office benefitted very much from the presence and ideas of an additional part-time employee, Teresa Dewane. Sadly she was only able to remain with IIC for a short time, but we would like to thank Teresa most wholeheartedly; with quiet efficiency, she helped the office achieve a great deal. I am happy to say that we now have a new,

part-time staff member, Patricia Gameiro, who is with us this evening. Finally, as always, we would like to thank the Executive Secretary, Graham Voce, and the Membership Secretary, Valerie Compton Taylor, for their indefatigable work on our behalf.

*Jo Kirby Atkinson, Secretary-General*