



THE ZIBBY GARNETT TRAVEL FELLOWSHIP

Practical skills and a world view for the next generation of conservators

NEWS

SEVENTH EDITION

Letter from the New Chairman

I am delighted to have accepted the request by the Trustees of the Zibby Garnett Travel Fellowship to take on the role of Chairman, following in the footsteps of Martin Williams who has stepped down after four great years in the role.

Firstly, I wish to record a vote of thanks on behalf of the Trust to Martin for all the hard work he has undertaken during his tenure as chairman. We are delighted that he is not, however, leaving us completely as he has agreed to continue as a Trustee.

During my career I have worked with many conservation students, and I have witnessed time after time how much a student's exposure to new environments in a foreign context stimulates their learning. I am thrilled that I can continue to support our next generation of conservators in this way through the excellent work of the Fellowship.

Trust News later in this newsletter records a few changes to the Trust since our last communique. There is sad news of the deaths of three important supporters of the Trust, but there have also been very positive developments with the appointment new Trustees and alumni successes.

The Trust continues its excellent work, and since our last newsletter, the Trust has awarded scholarships to 23 more students whose fields have ranged from timber architecture to glass conservation, and who have travelled as far as Russia and Africa to hone their skills and expand their outlook. The extraordinary set of skills which our scholars are developing, combining the eye, hand and brain, is a theme explored in this newsletter. The Trust is helping to produce skilled, practical, thinking future conservators of our heritage.

Paul Tear MBE, Chairman of the Trustees



Becky Doonan, 2017 Scholar, studied textile conservation at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

The Next Generation of Conservators ~ who are they?

David Wheeler, ZGTF Trustee and Senior Conservator at the Royal Collection, mulls the future of conservation.

It was a great honour to be asked to join the Trustees of the Zibby Garnett Travel fellowship. I am inspired by its mission statement 'practical skills and a world view for the next generation of conservators'. I was prompted also to join the Trust by what I see as a looming crisis in conservation – a struggle for funding in education and a dwindling resource of skilled conservators. The struggle is ironic given that our heritage sector is being enjoyed by more and more visitors each year as a leisure activity.

My own entry into furniture and decorative arts restoration world began back in the early 80s when I secured a place after A levels at the London College of Furniture.

(continued inside)

The Next Generation of Conservators ~ who are they?

This was at a time when the inner London Education Authority (led then by Ken Livingstone!) ran technical colleges with full time courses covering all aspects of the practical trades including furniture, fashion, printing and building trades.

Today, sadly, our technical education and skills learning is in crisis, starting at school level with cutbacks in technical subjects such as Design and Technology. The decline has also been hastened by – in my view – the folly of turning practical vocational education into an academic subject. Technical colleges and polytechnics gave non-academic students (like myself) a chance to flourish and find a niche in life, and to develop their careers through a different route. The blanket re-branding of colleges as ‘universities’ may have been presented as an ‘equaliser’, but it demotes practical vocational work. Given this attitude, it is hardly surprising that so few young people nowadays are opting to study practical crafts and skills as a career option.

As the late Tony Carter noted in our last newsletter, conservation training and supervised workshop time is expensive to run and fund. As a result it is in serious decline. Many conservation courses have recently been closed, whilst others have had to raise their fees thereby limiting their availability to those with access to significant independent funds.

As a result, conservation has increasingly become a ‘second career’ choice, made by professionals wanting a change in focus in their lives to something more meaningful in the fast-paced world we live in. I was witness to this in my final year as external examiner at Bucks University. Even 10 years ago, almost all the graduates were aged over 40.

At public events at the Royal Collection, we so often people say “You are so lucky to do what you do...I wish I had taken up a career like yours”. Hats off to the late blossomers who have had made that break! The conservation world needs a new generation of creative people, young and older, to bring new blood to this profession and to care for our heritage with traditional and modern practical skill sets.

This is where the ZGTF must – and can – help. Our awards go to those keen students committing to conservation in a changing sector faced with cutbacks and closures. We also pitch the awards to craftspeople and designers exploring traditional skills. Placements, internships and apprenticeships are going to be increasingly important in education and career development in this specialist field. The ZGTF is there to provide much-needed assistance and to help young and emerging conservation professionals on their path to a career.

Conservation, body and mind

2018 Scholar, Sean Henderson, believes that, to flourish, today's conservators need both practical skills and theoretical training.

With the support of the Zibby Garnett Trust and the good will of the Ulmer Münsterbauhütte (Ulm Minster workshop) I had the opportunity and honour to work alongside those charged with conserving the tallest church in the world.

This enormous task had been left in the hands of approximately 14 stonemasons, 2 cleaners, 1 joiner and a labourer – a well-equipped team but one which lacked support of a dedicated conservator. After many years of outsourcing this role, the last 3 years have seen the minster's conservation team built from the ground up. The in-house structure gives greater control and consistency in the conservation approach, and a more cohesive team to tackle the job.

It was the conservation team that I joined for two weeks, conserving the east end gallery of the main spire.



2018 Scholar, Sean Henderson, at work on Ulm Minster during his ZGTF scholarship trip.

I was involved in the production and application of their meticulously measured lime washes and mortars, replacing eroded stone with stone indents, repairing cracks, and doweling unstable pinnacles which had been removed from the building.

I worked under Rouven Lambert (Head of Conservation) who actually trained the foreman who trains me today at York Minster. I have met very few people with the same commitment to high standards and attention to detail. Rouven's knowledge of the various stone types on the minster and their reactions to the elements is seemingly endless.

Rouven's background of 20 years as a stonemason was also particularly interesting for me to better understand the transition from stonemason to conservator. My short time in the craft of stonemasonry has shown that whilst masons and conservators both share the common goal of preserving our built heritage, they usually do not hold one another in high esteem. This trip served as an important opportunity for me to learn from someone who had evidently excelled in both practices.



Jan Cutajar 2015 ZGTF Scholar, at work in the Knole Conservation Studio.

Invaluable skills developed 'in the field'

2015 Scholar, Jan Cutajar, reports on his career since winning a ZGTF scholarship

The Zibby Garnett Travel Fellowship took me to the Oldupai Gorge, Tanzania, in the summer of 2015 where I worked with my co-scholar Abigail Duckor under the supervision of Dr Renata Peters, conserving archaeological finds. Living in tents and working on site with very limited resources, the skills I developed there served as a founding template for the professional roles I later took on. The work demanded a high degree of resourcefulness and dexterity. Working often with lay volunteers, I also developed an ability to communicate

complex conservation principles in an accessible and meaningful way.

After graduating from the MSc in Conservation for Archaeology & Museums at UCL in 2016, I began to freelance as a postgraduate teaching assistant. Concurrently, I also began working as research assistant for Dr Dean Sully, National Trust Advisor for Archaeological Conservation. This role took me to an internship at Knole House where I developed my skills within the newly opened Knole House Conservation Studio. Whilst leading works on the conservation of Knole's 350-year-old ebony kussenkast, my interest in the conservation of woodwork and furniture was further boosted through my collaboration with Dr Gersande Eschenbrenner-Diemer, Marie Curie Fellow at UCL, working on the conservation of Ancient Egyptian collections at the Institut Français de l'Archéologie Orientale in Cairo and Deir el-Medina, Luxor.

Fast forward to 2018, and I continue to gain further experience in private practice and am thinking ahead to next professional steps. I can clearly see that my ZGTF experience helped forge that special skill set combining research, the use of one's senses, and an ability to work with actual physical material that has directly impacted my career in conservation.



Adelheid Hansen, 2017 ZGTF Scholar, conserved glass at the Corning Museum.

Trust News

It is with regret that the ZGTF trustees record the death of three staunch supporters: Professor Vincent Shacklock, Jane Fawcett and Tony Carter. The Trust owes a great deal to its patrons, Fawcett and Shacklock, whose unobtrusive support and encouragement were invaluable. Tony Carter had an artist's and educator's wider vision about the purpose of the Trust. He is missed by all of us.

Since our last newsletter, the Trust has appointed three new Trustees, Jessica Pollard, David Wheeler and Paul Tear MBE who all joined us 2016. Jessica was a ZGTF scholar in 2010 and is now working with the British Library. David Wheeler and Paul Tear bring their considerable expertise as both practitioners and educators to the Trust.

The Trust wishes to thank Mandy Gosling who has moved on to pastures new from her role as ZGTF administrator. As Paul Tear describes, Mandy has been a rock for all those in the Trust. We wish her every happiness in her future endeavours. Our new administrator, Julia Foster, has a background in conservation, charitable trusts and events organisation. We welcome her very warmly.

Funding

The ZGTF is the only UK charity giving grants directly to individuals to support their study trips overseas in the conservation of historic buildings, gardens and artefacts.

The ZGTF receives no Government funding. Full information on the Fellowship's finances is provided on the website, including the need for funding support and details of how to donate.

Financial Overview

Every year the Trustees award grants to between 5 and 10 applicants, usually totalling between £8000-£10,000. In 2017 the Trust's running costs amounted to £7,905. A significant part of these costs goes towards supporting students during and after their secondments. In all, including the £2,000 printing and mailing cost of this newsletter, the Fellowship's costs this year will be similar.

The figures are modest, but the benefits to conservation students and their education are very high.

When necessary, the Trust draws on limited capital to cover its costs, but critically relies on contributions from our loyal supporters. To all of you, our very deep gratitude.

We call on all of those who have seen the benefits of the Trust's work to donate and to help us continue it.

Origins of ZGTF

The Zibby Garnett Travel Fellowship was set up in 2000 in memory of Zibby Garnett who was admired by those who knew her in the field of conserving decorative arts. The purpose of the ZGTF is to help students make short visits abroad to widen their conservation experience - a project initiated by Zibby before her early death in 1999. The study subjects sponsored by the ZGTF reflect Zibby's own interest and work:

- Historic buildings
- Historic designed landscapes and historic gardens
- Decorative arts and artefacts
- Allied trades, techniques, skills and crafts

To be eligible for an award, candidates should be studying in the United Kingdom or be craftspeople or apprentices here. They do not have to be British, but applicants are invited to show how the knowledge they will gain on their trips will benefit British cultural heritage. There is no age limit.

For more information, contact:

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 The Zibby Garnett Travel Fellowship

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