Oxford Conservation Associates

Spring cleaning

Ivona Escrittova

Sylvia Vetta meets Oxford Conservation Associates for some tips on how to spring clean antiques...

In recent months, I have been seeking expert advice for Oxfordshire Limited Edition readers with an eye to collecting. April is here and rejuvenation is in the air. If you cast a fresh eye over your most cherished possessions and decide they are looking past their best; what can you do?

The expertise needed to overhaul a clock, clean a painting or repair damaged pottery is rather different from advice on buying them in the first place. You drop a vase or delicate clock or leave a piece of furniture too near the radiator and the inlay begins to lift.

Like the young party organiser in the Yellow Pages advertisement you thumb through the lists seeking help. What if your job is complicated and involves multiple skills?

An enterprising group of qualified restorers and conservators have come together under one umbrella.
They call themselves **Oxford Conservation Associates** (OCA).

A few years ago I interviewed Jeremy Barrow for this magazine. He had been part of a long term project to create the Millennium Clock to be presented to the Queen. I talked to him in his workshop near Banbury to find out more about his new organisation.

Jeremy said that he, Peter Linstead-Smith and Jamie Chatfield first met at West Dean College in Sussex. The college is renowned for its post graduate conservation and restoration courses. They realised that sometimes various skills are needed for a particular task.

Clocks are a good example. Repairing the mechanism, restoring a lacquered case, gilding, refitting marquetry and mother of pearl inlay usually means travelling from one expert to another.

They began liaising with each other to make life easier for their clients. In 2001, they came up with the idea of a one-stop shop for conservation and restoration work, which led to the creation of the **OCA**. It also elimated the lottery of using the Yellow Pages.

Jeremy Barrow ~ clocks

Jeremy has been interested in clocks and anything remotely mechanical from the age of five. His mother acquired a few grey hairs as he grew up, experimenting with electricity at five and having his first car accident finding out how his grandfather's car worked at the age of six. But Jeremy hasn't always been a professional conservator.

After selling his specialised engineering business he spent two years training at West Dean College, which included time working at the British Museum, which has over 7,000 clocks in its collection.

After qualifying, he set up his own business near Banbury and mostly restores clocks made between 1650 and 1900, using original tools and materials. His clients include banks, historic houses, Oxford colleges, museums and private clients.

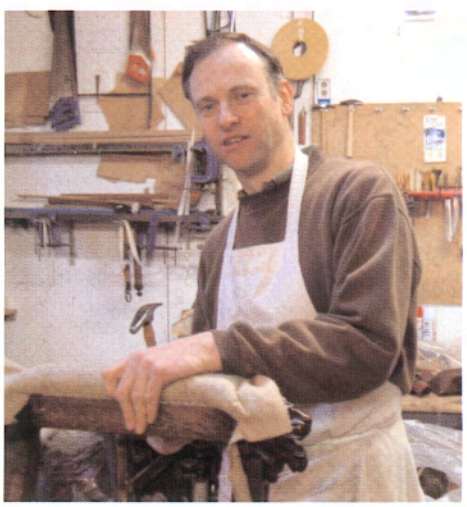
Richard Ricardo ~ upholsterer

After completing an eight-year intensive apprenticeship for a major London firm, Richard set up his own company. The firm rapidly established a solid reputation as one of the highest quality upholsterers in Britain.

He works using only traditional methods, utilising skills handed down by generations of craftsmen. He has particular experience upholstering early soft furnishings from 1600 to the mid-Georgian era.

His client list includes major international dealers, interior decorators, private collectors and stately homes.

Richard also lectures on the style and techniques of antique upholstery at West Dean College. If you have something special that needs recovering then he is your man.



Richard Ricardo

Over the last 20 years, Hannah has worked for many prestigious clients including Blenheim Palace and local and national museums

Hannah West ~ Croft House Ceramic Restorer

Readers may have met Hannah at and seen her in action at Waterperry during Art in Action. She has also appeared on BBC2's *Antiques Show*.

Over the past twenty years, Hannah has worked for many prestigious clients including Blenheim Palace and local and national museums. She also restores sentimental family pieces that may have no particular monetary or artistic value. She is happy to discuss with you, all types of mend no matter how small. I don't know who has been commissioned to repair the smashed Chinese vases smashed at the Fitzwilliam Museum but if Hannah was chosen, the repair would be hard to find.

Jamie Chatfield ~ Furniture Conservation and Restoration

Jamie trained on our doorstep, at Rycotewood College. That was over 18 years ago. The respect he gained as an acknowledged master of his craft, ensured his appointment as tutor on the post graduate Diploma Course in Conservation and Restoration at West Dean College. He also worked for Colin Piper Conservation before setting up his own workshop near Banbury. His clients include Oxford colleges, historic houses, museums, ecclesiastical institutions, dealers and private collectors.

Intricate marquetry, delicate clock cases and bespoke furniture commissions are all safe in his capable hands. Close liaison with clients begins with an on site inspection a detailed proposal and estimate for the work involved.

Ivona Escrittova ~ Gilder and Picture Conservator

Ivona's workshop is situated in Grove. Tulwick Workshop was established 20 years ago. The restoration of oil paintings, watercolours, pastels and prints form a large part of their business. Ivona designs and makes her own picture frame mouldings using indigenous woods including, English oak, poplar, cherry, sycamore and walnut. As well as restoration, the workshop can make mirrors and frames to order using traditional gilding, veneering and polishing techniques.

Jeremy Barrow ~ Clock restorer

Jonathan Wendon ~ Metalwork

Jonathan spent 20 years as an antique dealer specialising in silver and jewellery. He developed an interest in the techniques used to create the beautiful objects he handled. This interest led him to West Dean College and a course in the restoration and conservation of fine metalwork where he graduated with merit in 2000. Since then he has successfully established his own business. His clients include the National Trust, museums and private client. He can undertake all kinds of commissions including work in silver and bronze to cast iron garden furniture. He also creates new pieces to his own designs.

Melanie Camu and Kasia Kolendarska - Textile Conservation and Restoration

Melanie followed up a BA Hons in the History of Art with a postgraduate diploma in textile conservation at the Courtauld Institute and then went on to work at the Textile Conservation Centre. Kasia started her training as an apprentice in 1982 in the restoration of canvas work and tapestries in top London workrooms and has worked as a restorer since. Melanie and Kasia joined forces in 1995 and their company, TEXTERITY, specialises in the preservation of antique, historic, modern and archaeological textiles.

The treatments include cleaning, stabilising, restoring, extending canvas work and tapestry panels to fit antique furniture and walls. Dyeing

Texterity Before

Texterity After

to colour match repair threads and support fabrics; mounting in preparation for display. Disaster management, consultative visits and on site work. No job is too big or too small for them!

Past commissions have included the conservation of large tapestries, notably the Soho Tapestries at Grimsthorpe Castle, the Brussels Tapestry at the Bank of England and fine 17th century raised work caskets.

They also offer an advisory service on the maintenance of historic textiles. They were involved in the re-location design and building of the permanent exhibition of legal costume at the Royal Courts of Justice and the on going management of the exhibition.

Ivona at work on a mirrow frame

Ref. Oxford Ltd Edition and Silvia Vetta
email - vettasylvia@aol.com

OCA also has Specialists in Wood carving, Paper conservation, Upholstery, Paper, Books and Decorative surfaces

Oxford Conservation Associates.
PO box 182 Oxford OX1 4FL
Email. jbarrow@globalnet.co.uk

Jeremy Barrow Tel. 01295 758 600

Jamie Chatfield Tel. 01295 750 940