



# The International Trust for Croatian Monuments

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## PROGRESS REPORT

August 2014

Visits to Zagreb in October 2013 and in May 2014,  
including Sibenik, Trogir, Split, Makarska and Zadar

In **Zagreb**, in October 2013, my visit coincided with a conference, *An Ethical Approach to Textile Artefacts*, organised by the Textile Department of the Croatian Conservation Institute and held in the Mimara Museum. The conference was well attended, including representatives from Great Britain and Switzerland. Some papers had relevance to the projects of our Trust, in particular, the collection of historic church vestments in the Franciscan friary in Zaostrog. The main conclusion of the conference was that the ethic of minimal intervention was the best way forward, with data recorded and the object safely stored. I met conservators from the Ethnological and Museum of Arts and Crafts, and the Institute's representatives from Dubrovnik, who all had a share of the textile dyes which we had bought for the Institute earlier in the year. They are grateful and said that the dyes, made in England, will significantly improve the quality of their work.

The Croatian Conservation Institute was host to His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester for a few hours when His Royal Highness visited Zagreb in September 2013 on an official visit. As an architect by profession, His Royal Highness, who has very kindly supported the Trust since its beginnings in 1991, had expressed the desire to see some of our work. The Zagreb visit was short, but the director of the Institute, Mario Braun, showed His Royal Highness and HE The British Ambassador Mr David Slinn some aspects of conservation under his care and also the splendid Hellenic statue of an athlete on show in the Mimara Museum. Two textile conservators from the Institute had spent time in England as interns in the V&A and the British Museum under the Trust's auspices and they were happy to show some of their work in progress, too.

Palma Klun Posavec, the long term director of the Open University in **Ivanic Grad** retired in December 2013 after over 30 years at its helm, organised a meeting of Business Women, which included our Flax and Linen Workshop. Sadly, the new director of the University does not wish to continue the project. However, we are continuing, one of the weavers speaks English and uses e-mail and we shall do the best we can. It would be very sad to abandon the project which we started in 1997. Our beautiful classic towels are still available at Livingstone Studio, Postcard Teas and now at Howe in Pimlico, for which I thank them.

During my stay in Zagreb in October, I visited a most intriguing exhibition at the Croatian History Museum, *The Treasures of a 16<sup>th</sup> Century Sunken Ship*, which was first discovered in the 1960s. After turbulent history of the site, a tiny island of Gnalic near Biograd na Moru, research resumed in 2012. A ship loaded in Venice and on its way to Constantinople sank there in 1583 and the ship's cargo, including the ship's inventory, cannons, anchors, etc, consisted of candelabra, glass objects, mirrors, razors, eyeglasses, semi-products, raw materials and textiles. This last, an impressive bale of several tens of meters of damask, was packed in a treasure type chest, which gave the specialists who first opened it, much excitement. Although the chest did not contain "treasures", the quality and condition of this find, after almost 400 years under water, is breathtaking.

This year we have supported several scholars to attend conferences and present papers, a post-graduate student at Camberwell College of Arts and a textile conservator. Katija Hrepic, a conservator with many years of experience at the Croatian Conservation Institute, who had been an intern at the BM, needed to acquire further qualifications and enrolled at the University of Dubrovnik with help from an individual donation to our Trust. With a contribution from the Glen Charity, Lana Fiskovic is doing a two-year conservation course at Camberwell and during her first year she had already been on placements in Kew and Stanley Kubrick Archives. We had three scholars attending the Attingham Trust courses with our help. Barbara Vujanovic, the curator of the Mestrovic Atelier in Zagreb, at their Summer School in July and Ana

### Trustees:

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Sverko, from the Cvito Fiskovic Art History Centre in Split, and Dusko Cikara, from the Croatian Conservation Institute, their Belgian course in June. The first Croatian scholar who attended the Attingham Summer School with our help was Helena Puharo, from the Vlaho Bukovac Museum in Cavtat, in 2004.

Early in the spring, Ivana Peskan and Vesna Pascuttini-Juraga from the Conservation Department of the Ministry of Culture in Varazdin, a historic town north of Zagreb, attended a convention in Ravenna entitled "*Economia e territorio nell'Adriatico centrale tra tarda Antichita e Alto Medioevo*" and presented a paper on medieval sites in continental Croatia, much less known to the audience than their counterparts along the Adriatic coast. With help from our remaining funding, they subsequently attended a conference in Porec, organised by the Medieval Art Research Centre, where they presented a paper on their research on the connection between the town of Varazdin and the family of King Matthias Corvinus.

In March, we helped Sagita Mirjam Sunara, from the Arts Academy of the University of Split, Conservation Department, to attend an international conference *Teaching Conservation-Restoration* in Liege, Belgium, and present a paper. In May, Lara Aranza and Tea Joska Katunaric, also from Split Academy, travelled to Krakow to present a paper entitled *Computer Tomography as a non-destructive Diagnostic Method in the Field of Conservation-Restoration* at the *Fifth X-Ray and other Techniques Congress* in investigations of objects of cultural heritage. They all appreciated greatly our help which enabled them to take part at these conferences.

In **Zagreb**, in May this year, my visit coincided again with the international conference, *The Protection of Cultural Heritage from Natural and Man-made Disasters*, organised by the National and University Library. The Trust had in the past helped some of the participants who were giving papers. Recently, the Trust had agreed to pay the participation costs, from a donation from the Glen Charity, for two young book conservators, Martina Pavec from the National and Scientific Library and Iva Gobic from the State Archives in Rijeka, to attend a course to be given by Professor Nicholas Pickwoad in the Book and Paper Conservation Centre in Ljubljana this September. Under the name *Ligatus Summer School*, the course offers the latest and best methods of preserving books. We now hope that soon in the future, Professor Pickwoad will hold the same course in Croatia under the auspices of the National and University Library and other institutions. It is obvious that many book conservators in Croatia would like to attend such a course and to have it in Croatia would make it much more accessible to many more.

The conference took two days in Zagreb, followed by a coach ride to **Sibenik** on the third. One of the workshops in Sibenik was dedicated to Milivoj Zenic, the librarian of the Town Library for many years and an author, who died suddenly. The other workshop concerned the restoration of the dome of Sibenik Cathedral, shelled from the sea by the Yugoslav Navy in September 1991. In 1994, our Trust had organised an auction in aid of this restoration work, greatly helped by a generous donation from the Headley Trust. I took the opportunity of travelling with them to Sibenik and then continued tracing some of the projects we have in Dalmatia.

In **Trogir**, in the company of architect Vanja Kovacic from the Conservation Department of the Ministry of Culture in Split and textile historian Silvija Banic, we met Don Pavao Piplica, the parish priest of the Cathedral, for whom we had recently bought, with funding from the Headley Trust, two large conservation chests for their historic church vestments. They are now safely stored, although another chest may still be needed, space permitting. We also visited the Benedictine Sisters, who had appealed for help. This year, they are celebrating 950<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their convent in Trogir and the venerable buildings are showing signs of age. Due to a very wet winter, they had to put up scaffolding up the Vitturi tower three times this year to do some first-aid repairs. Their convent of St Nicholas is the oldest Benedictine convent in Dalmatia founded in 1064. The convent has a rich art collection displayed in a lovely and welcoming museum and its spiritual, historic and cultural heritage is beyond dispute. We are expecting details of works needed to be done to secure its future and hope that with generosity of kind people we shall be able to make a contribution.

In **Split**, I met stone conservators from the Croatian Conservation Institute who, having finished their work on Diocletian's peristyle, are now working on other projects, including Sibenik Cathedral. With Jurica Matijevic, head of conservation at the Arts Academy, I went to see the premises that they had been offered at very favourable terms to expand their laboratory facilities, including X-Ray, CT, and Digital Radiography. They have been donated the necessary equipment, still unused, because of the lack of space. They have collected the majority of funding needed to bring the premises offered to them to a working condition and I

am glad that the Trust, through kindness of our supporters, is able to bridge the gap. In Split, I was especially glad to see the exhibition celebrating the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the monumental gates to the Split cathedral carved by the master Andrija Buvina in 1214 which in 28 scenes represent the life of Christ.

In **Makarska**, with Ivana Svedruzic Separovic and Anita Gamulin, Conservation Department, Ministry of Culture in Split, I visited the Franciscan friary. With a new donation from the Headley Trust, we are able to buy two conservation chests for their historic church vestments. With financial support of the Ministry of Culture, they are restoring the friary and opening a museum, which will show the wealth of their varied holdings. We have also bought two conservation chests for the church of St Nicholas in **Komiza**, the island of Vis, and hope to do so for **Hermitage Blaca** on Brac. On behalf of these churches, including the church of St Anthony the Abbot on the island of Veli Losinj, and the Franciscan friaries in Zaoztrog and Makarska, I would like to express our deep gratitude to the Headley Trust for their continuing support of this particular project, which is preserving many important examples of fragile textiles for the future.

In the Franciscan friary in **Zaoztrog**, the recipient last year of conservation chests for their collection of vestments, Sandra Vujcic and her team of conservators from Zagreb have now completed the task of preserving their ethnographic collection. We also hope, funds permitting, to supply the friary with conservation material for their archive and book collection under the guidance of Ivana Svedruzic Separovic.

In **Zadar**, I visited the State Archives who are this year again the recipients of conservation materials thanks to the Glen Charity. They continue to work on their collection of Old and Rare documents, including about 30 with seals attached, which need protective "pockets". Work continues in their Prints and Drawings collection of different shapes and sizes, techniques and origins, representing places in Dalmatia and far afield, which reflect the importance of their holdings.

Although I did not visit the Hanibal Lucic garden on the island of **Hvar** this time, I know that six pillars and their bases have been taken there and the rest will follow during the summer or in the autumn. Once all the works for the archives are completed and the walls on which the pillars will stand are reinforced, they will be put into permanent position. I would like to thank here the Leche Trust for their support of this project.

In Zagreb, I was happy to be taken around the archives of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts and see their collection of incunabula safely preserved in acid-free conservation material which we had sent to them ten years ago.

I am very glad that a scholar from the British Museum, Dr Lloyd De Beer, will be going to Croatia in September to investigate the "Nottingham Alabasters" found on the island of Lopud by the participants of the annual International Workshop, supported this year again by the Glen Foundation.

I am sad to have to report the death of our Trustee, Captain Ante Jerkovic, in January 2014. Ante was from Dubrovnik and a trustee since the inception of the Trust, when Dubrovnik was under vicious attack from the Yugoslav Army. His help in 1992 was instrumental, when he enabled the Trust to organise a piano recital by Maestro Ivo Pogorelich in the Royal Festival Hall in aid of Dubrovnik. The funds raised by Ivo's recital built a new roof on the Dubrovnik Summer Festival building and it is only very recently that the whole building was finally completely restored. The Trust now has a "*A Certificate of Appreciation*" from the Festival authorities in recognition of our help. I will greatly miss Ante's kindness, sound advice and encouragement.

In February this year, with help of family and friends, we organised a concert in memory of my late husband, Henry Grant de la Poor Beresford-Peirse, in Bedale, my husband's family home in North Yorkshire. The concert was held in St Gregory's and in aid of this proud Gothic church, with the church choir under the baton of the music master, Richard Boyton. The highlight of the concert were the Four Last Songs by Richard Strauss which Henry particularly loved. They were sung by a soprano from Bedale, Rachel Mosley, who sings with Opera North. St Gregory's was full, Henry's memory was honoured, a considerable sum was raised towards impending works of repairs and I am exceedingly grateful to all who made it possible.

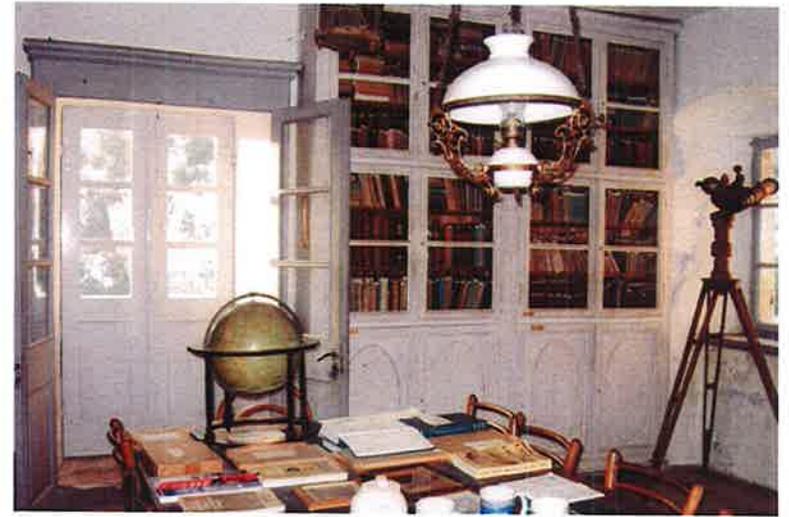
I am planning a concert also in London, in memory of Henry but in aid of our Trust, with the pianist Piers Lane and Ivana Lazar and Dubravka Separovic Musovic, with the Four Last Songs again in the programme. Details of this concert are not yet defined, but I do hope that many of you will be able to join us that evening.



Top: Dubrovnik Summer Festival Palace after destruction and with the new roof.  
Photo: Damir Fabijanic.



Right: Hermitage Blaca, The Observatory and Library of the last priest of Blaca, Don Nikola Milicevic, Jr



Zadar, Renaissance sculpture of a satyr in the Park of Queen Jelena Madio, cleaned of its rash of graffiti.

St Gregory's, Bedale, North Yorkshire

Trogir, Vitturi Tower. Convent of St Nicholas

Zagreb, from a facsimile copy of the Farnese Book of Hours by Giulio Clovio in the library of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

Split, Lion fighting the Basilisk. Cathedral pulpit, 13<sup>th</sup> century. Photo: Zivko Bacic

