



THE INTERNATIONAL TRUST FOR CROATIAN MONUMENTS

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PROGRESS REPORT 2017

Visits to Croatia in September/October 2016 and in May/June 2017

In the autumn of 2016, Robin and Dominique Holland-Martin and I visited the small island of **LOPUD** near Dubrovnik, where we have been supporting for over ten years now the International Conservation Workshop founded in the late 1980s. Our support has been made possible through The Sandy and Zorica Glen Charitable Settlement, of which Robin Holland-Martin is a trustee. The work of the workshop was disrupted by the war in the 1990s and resumed again in 1997. Started by two German professors/conservators, the workshop is truly international with the participation of Universiteit Antwerpen, Cologne Institute of Conservation Sciences, Arts Academy at the University in Split and La Cambre Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Visuels.

A full report on the project can be found on our website, www.croatianmonuments.org, which shows two articles. The first was published in the annual journal of the Croatian Catholic Mission in London, THE BRIDGE, in December 2016 and the second in NEWS IN CONSERVATION, published by the International Institute of Conservation in February this year. I would just like to repeat here how delighted we were to see that the whole community of the island gave their full support to the conservation of their artistic treasures. For years now students and their teachers arrive at their own steam, bringing with them all the necessary conservation materials and the Society for the Preservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage of Lopud provides them, for the duration of two weeks, with food and lodgings. This the Society is able to do at much reduced cost owing to the generosity of hotels, local people who rent rooms, and restaurants, who provide their meals. Our contributions go to this purpose.

At the beginning of June this year, I went to the island of **VIS** to see the development of another conservation workshop, founded on the same principles. It was held this year for the second time in the church of St. Nicholas in **KOMIŽA**. Two teachers and seven students from the Arts Academy in Split were working there with great devotion and patience, doing their best to preserve and conserve works of art in the collections of churches on Vis. They arrived from Split in two cars, bringing all the necessary conservation materials, the local authorities secured their board and lodgings, they received some support from the Ministry of Culture and they have the full support of the parish priest, Don Ivica Huljev. Some while ago, with the generosity of the Headley Trust, our Trust bought two conservation chests for their collection of historic church vestments, which include pieces from the 15th and 16th centuries. We all hope that this workshop will also develop into an international project and I am grateful to Fra Ljubo Šimunović and the International Institute of Conservation for giving these projects some publicity.

I am also grateful to THE ART NEWSPAPER for publishing in their October issue in 2016 an article marking the 25th anniversary of our Trust. This article can also be found on our website. I would like to thank here David Wylie, of Wylie Associates, for doing so kindly our Trust's website at no cost.

While in **DUBROVNIK** last year, we visited the Franciscan and Dominican friaries and Villa Stay, the regional seat of the Croatian Conservation Institute. The Franciscans and the Dominicans in Dubrovnik have important libraries and art collections and we recalled our Trust's previous engagements, more particularly, the visits of Professor Nicholas Pickwoad of many years ago which resulted in a full report on the holdings of their libraries and consequent visits of students from Spoleto where Professor Pickwoad was teaching. Staying at the friaries and with financial assistance from the shipping agency Atlantska Plovidba, headed by our late trustee Capt. Ante Jerković, the City of Dubrovnik and from our Trust, groups of students came to

Dubrovnik on several occasions and worked in these two libraries according to Dr Pickwood's instructions. In the Franciscan friary, which was badly damaged in the war, we also recalled that our Trust had enabled them to restore one of the stone rosettes in the cloister, again with help of Capt. Ante Jerković. A number of paintings were conserved by the Conservation Department of the Arts Academy in Split, also with our help.

Visiting Villa Stay and meeting conservators there is always a pleasure. We have a long connection with this branch of the Croatian Conservation Institute. I am always reminded and they point to me the low-pressure table which we bought for them in 2005 with a kind donation from the Headley Trust. We saw conservation work undertaken on an altarpieces from the church of Our Lady of Šunj from Lopud and another big project, the conservation of the hand-painted ceiling of the Bishop's Palace in Dubrovnik. They were working on other altarpieces from Dubrovnik and churches further afield. The paper conservators, Sanja and Samir Serhatlić showed us their ongoing projects and Sanja and Samir make particular use of the low-pressure table. We hope that a conservator from Villa Stay, Katarina Kusijanović, will come to London to present her research on two mid-15th century polyptychs, one from the island of Koločep, attributed to Ivan Ugrinović and the other from Lopud, attributed to Matko Junčić, until now considered as the late echo of the Venetian Quattrocento. However, working on these two paintings, Katarina puts forward a theses that they may prove the existence of a so far unknown workshop in Dubrovnik.

We continued to **CAVTAT**, south of Dubrovnik, to KUĆA BUKOVAC, the Museum of the painter Vlaho Bukovac, 1855 – 1924, where he was born. We went there because it was through the Sandy and Zorica Glen Charitable Settlement that in 2006 Kuća Bukovac acquired ten paintings by Vlaho Bukovac, one by his daughter Jelica, and a portrait bust of the artist and a medal by Oscar Nemon. They were gifted to the Museum by Zorica Glen, who was the painter's adopted granddaughter. In 2010 an exhibition was held in the Museum marking this Glen donation. We saw these paintings, dating from various periods of the painter's life. As a young boy of 17, Vlaho Bukovac painted his parents house all over, walls, cupboards, doors. Now these paintings are being carefully brought back to life, layers of paint patiently removed, revealing the artist's astonishing drawings of animals, flowers, mythological beings, all bursting with colour. There was a team of conservators working at the Museum, on the walls and on easel paintings, and I am glad to report that the curators, Helena Puharo and Lucija Vuković, are preparing an article about this work, which will be published in *NEWS IN CONSERVATION*.

There were also archaeological digs going on in Cavtat, which, as the ancient Epidaurus, holds many secrets, still to be discovered.

Going forward in time and on the same subject, KUĆA BUKOVAC and the Gallery KLOVIĆEVI DVORI in **ZAGREB**, are preparing a major *BUKOVAC IN EUROPE* exhibition, which will run through three consecutive years, covering three major periods of the artist's life. The first exhibition, opening in Zagreb in December this year, will cover his life in France from 1878 to 1892 where he trained under Alexandre Cabanel and regularly showed at the *Salon*, and then his life in England, his dealings with art dealers Vicars Brothers and his happy times and friendships with his two major English patrons, Samson Fox from Harrogate and Richard Le Doux from Liverpool. This happy episode of his life Bukovac describes so delightfully in his autobiography, "My Life". In 2005/6 Alex Kidson curated our three exhibitions, "*SEARCHING FOR BLAISE: VLAHO BUKOVAC AND HIS NORTHERN PATRONS*", which were held in the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool, the Mercer Art Gallery in Harrogate and at Bonhams in London. The organisers of the exhibition have asked Alex to write a chapter for the catalogue and to give a talk in Zagreb during the exhibition. Many of these "English" paintings, listed by Alex in *THE BRITISH ART JOURNAL*, Vol VI No 3, Winter 2005, still remain untraced.

In the Ethnographical Museum in **ČILIP**, a small village which was so badly damaged and occupied during the war and the Museum collection saved only through quick thinking and action of the then curator, Marina Desin, a sad reminder of the times past. One of the Museum employees, with two small children then, was recalling the six years the family spent in different hotels in Dubrovnik. "Never to happen again, God willing", the lady was saying, and never again they would wish to spend one night in any hotel!

In **ZAGREB**, in October 2016, I met several conservators from the Croatian Conservation Institute, among them Mihael Golubić, from the marine archaeological department, who showed me several finds from the wreck of a ship dating towards the end of the 16th century and found near the island of Mljet. The ship was carrying a load of Iznik pottery, a collection of great significance, which was exhibited at the Mimara Museum in Zagreb in 2015 and at the Ethnographical Museum in Dubrovnik in 2016. The work on this project is still going on. Mihael is one of our ex-students, who spent several months working on the interior

cleaning of St Paul's Cathedral in London as part of his training. This year, the long standing director of the Croatian Conservation Institute and now retired, Professor Ferdinand Meder, received from EUROPA NOSTRA one of the highest recognitions for his devoted work for the preservation of Croatian cultural heritage.

We continue to support scholars and students in their pursuit of excellence and several are coming this autumn to London to attend GELS IN CONSERVATION Conference to be held at the Tate Gallery. We have a special scholar this year attending an Attingham course, Joško Belamarić, who has been a great help to me every step of the way in my work for the Trust. Joško is going on the Attingham Trust's special tour of Palaces and Villas of Rome and Naples, just as he is writing a book on the same subject in Croatia, so his attendance at this course could not have been better timed.

We also continue to subscribe scholars in Croatia to important publications and I am glad to report that this year we have given financial support towards publication of two books. The first ever Croatian translation of Cennino Cennini's 15th century BOLOGNA MANUSCRIPT, which reveals the secrets of paints, by Jurica Matijević and Jelica Zelić. Also, a handy manual about the management of libraries and archival collections by Goran Pavelin. Talking of books, it has been suggested to me that our book, CROATIA: ASPECTS OF ART, ARCHITECTURE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE, completely sold out, should be reprinted.

In Zagreb this year, I attended an evening of FRIENDS OF MILKA TRNINA when a monograph about this famous "nightingale" of the Croatian opera was introduced. As will be recalled, in 2006/7 an exhibition devoted to Trnina's life and work was held in the Royal Opera House. Two artists, the Zagreb Prima Donna, Dubravka Šeparović Musović, who so kindly took part in our concert in memory of Henry, my husband, and Ljerka Njerš, my sister, gave their views of pressures of work in their respective fields.

I am glad to be able to report that the Trust bought a de-humidifier for the library of St Lawrence friary in Šibenik which helps them to keep their holdings under better preventive conditions. We have also been able to pay for the finishing works, Phase 2, in the library of the Franciscan friary in Zaostrog by supplying conservation material and covering the costs of four conservators who worked there to complete this task. This we have been able to do with a generous donation from THE COCKAYNE – GRANTS FOR THE ARTS, through THE LONDON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION, for which we thank them most sincerely. More about this can also be seen on our website.

Our hand-woven linen towels are still available for sale at LIVINGSTONE STUDIO and POSTCARD TEAS and I thank Inge Corsden and Tim D'Offay for their help.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Croatian State Archives in Zagreb for kindly receiving my 25 year old archives for safe keeping.

In March this year the Trust lost one of our oldest supporters and a dear personal friend, Dr Anthea Brook. Anthea died suddenly, after a short illness. A Courtauld student, specialising in 17th century Florentine sculpture, who worked for many years in the Witt Library, Anthea was an inspiring companion and an unrecognised consultant to the Trust, whose help and opinion I always sought and trusted. Anthea will be greatly missed by her family and her many friends in England and Croatia. The Trust has already received some donations to do something in Croatia in memory of Anthea and in time we shall do so. We also await to see what may be the most appropriate project to do in Croatia in memory of my late husband, Henry.

An obituary of Anthea Brook by Joško Belamarić in VIJENAC and another from THE TIMES can also be found on our website, www.croatianmonuments.org.



Restoration of fresco paintings by
Vlaho Bukovac in Cavtat



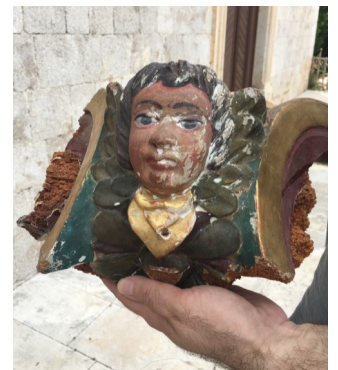
The figure of Christ, after conservation,
Our Lady of Sunj, Lopud



The Workshop in the church of
St Nicholas, Komiža, Vis



St Nicholas Church, Komiža, Vis



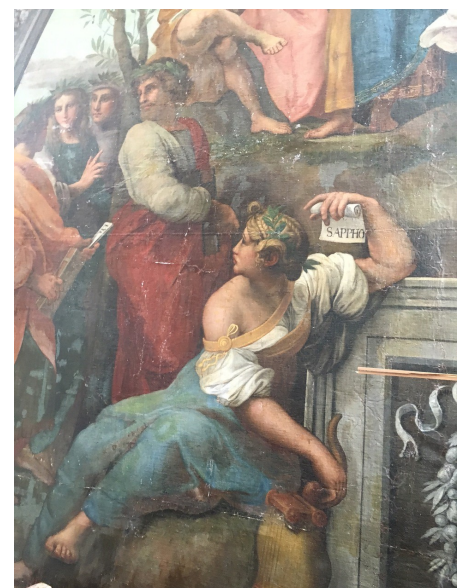
The workshop in the church of St Nicholas, Komiža, Vis



Parts of the ceiling of the Bishop's
Palace at Villa Stay



A view of Trogir



Detail from a copy of a Raphael
fresco