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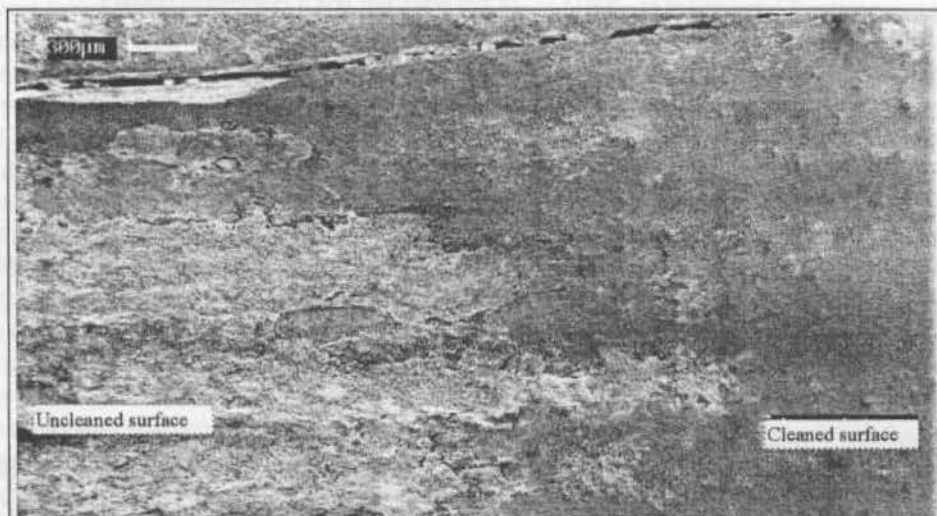


Figure Surface of ivory fragment. Results of experimental cleaning with airbrasive powder #4A (sodium bicarbonate)

Future work

Experimental work is continuing into the chemistry, structure and stability of the West Runton bones and work has begun on exposing and cleaning one of the large limb bones to determine how best to overcome the practical problems involved in handling and manipulating heavy, fragile finds. A purpose-built airbrasive cabinet has been constructed in the Castle Museum workshops so that large bones may be cleaned safely and effectively. Arrangements are also being made with suitable specialists to investigate the possibility of ancient proteins and

biomolecules surviving in skeletal material from the Forest Bed.

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Book Review

Storage of Natural History Collections: a preventive conservation approach. Carolyn L. Rose, Catherine A Hawks, Hugh H Genoways (Eds) volume I 1995. Published by the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections, Iowa USA.

ISBN 0-9635476-1-5. Obtainable from Julia Golden, Dept of Geology, The University of Iowa, 121 Trowbridge Hall, Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1379, USA (\$46 inc. airmail). 448pp

This is actually the first volume of 'Spinach' books on the care of natural history collections, the second having been originally published in 1992. Both are now available printed on alkaline paper as A4 hardbacks. A review of the 1995 reprint of volume 2 "Ideas and practical solutions" will follow sometime in the future.

The preventive conservation volume is divided into five sections:

1. creating and managing storage facilities
2. creating and monitoring storage environments
3. selecting and testing storage equipment and materials
4. storing archival collections and collection documentation
5. funding for collections care

For museums setting up new storage facilities this book shows how to 'get it right the first time' from a museum professional's point of view - the structure and planning of a storage facility. For both new ventures and for those who wish to update their present stores, essential aspects such as security, fire protection and emergency preparedness are discussed with other topics ranging from air quality to ultra-cold freezer storage. Using the expertise of their huge membership, the SPNHC have compiled the ultimate in printed natural history museum curatorship; the society members extended into the fields of organic conservation, ethnography and some archaeology. Apart from sections about atmospheric and types of wood used for making storage cabinets there is little material specifically for geologists in this volume: minerals are mentioned as salts in degrading photographic materials or as corrosion products.

The section on fluid preservative storage by John Simmons outlines the biochemistry of fixation by formaldehyde, glutaraldehyde and compounded fixatives, the use of alcohols as preservatives and the correct procedure for transferring specimens from one type of fluid to another. He covers types of storage jars, internal labels and inks that will or won't survive prolonged immersion, ideal storage environments and hazards relating to fluid fixatives/preservatives - all the basic but essential information that curators require. There follows a useful appendix of fluid preservatives suitable for various plant and animal taxa, although users of some of the less well-known preservatives, cf. Dovicil, Pampel's (Pampl's) fluid, should beware since these fluids have been known to cause dissociation of tissues in the long term. The old problem arises of no long-term testing (or non-availability of results) from anyone who has used these fluids for storage periods longer than 20 years.

The section on pest management by Wendy Jessup, is equally comprehensive covering daily/weekly routines: a tightly written section of preventative conservation. Other sections cover storage equipment including the correct materials used in their construction, down to such important details as chemical resistance and hardness, types of wood used and their suitability, the incorporation of synthetic polymers and the correct storage for archival collections and documentation, including photographic materials and video tapes.

Fund raising is an unfortunate but necessary part of most museum curators' remit: the book concludes with a chapter suggesting the best fundamental approaches for raising

money. At the end of each section is a comprehensive bibliography of recent works relating to each chapter.

A glossary of terms is included with an explanation of chemicals and reagents used. Overall the book contains many updated techniques and useful homespun, new and effective ideas. It is a must for curators and collection managers as it complements the *Manual of Curatorship* (Museums Association). I also prefer the newer-style coiled wire binding on the reissue of volume 2.

Simon Moore

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