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Report from the National Council for Conservators & Restorers

NatSCA is, at present, a constituent organisation of NCCR (National Council for Conservators & Restorers). The latest news from NCCR is that the plans for the Convergence (merging) of the 'main stream' Museum Object Conservation organisations continues smoothly. The main stream organisations consist of; British Antique Furniture Restorers Association (BAFRA), British Association of Painting Conservator-Restorers (BAPCR), Institute of Paper Conservation (IPC), Photographic Materials Conservation Group (PhMCG), Scottish Society for Conservation & Restoration (SSCR), United Kingdom Institute of Conservation (UKIC) [NSCG's old parent]. The 'Vanguard Group' who are guiding the Convergence Project, consists of representatives from CCF, IPC, PhMCG, SSCR and UKIC. The consultancy firm Blue Spark, has been engaged to effect a satisfactory and smooth convergence. They have produced a convergence consultation document, which can be studied further on NCCR's website at <http://www.nccr.org.uk/convergence/index.html>, along with other relevant discussion documents.

The Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works in Ireland (ICHAWI) and The Irish Professional Conservators' & Restorers' Association (IPCRA) are not yet at liberty to join in the merging process for political reasons but they (like NatSCA) will be kept informed of all developments. NatSCA is termed an 'hybrid organisation' with members who are of other disciplines as well as Conservators (curators, collection managers, educators etc.) and we are grouped with the similar 'mixed interest' organisations, the Society of Archivists (SoA), British Horological Institute (BHI) and Care of Collections Forum (CCF). Even though NatSCA is a 'hybrid organisation', we are still, at present, influential on NCCR committee with Simon Moore representing the Professional Development Board and myself as reserve NatSCA rep.

The draft documentation states that hybrid organisations will [probably] not be merged with the new organisation and may not have a vote. Individual NatSCA members who are accredited via (and are members of) UKIC will be eligible as individual voting members of the new organisation. NatSCA will be represented on the Advisory Council; will be an associate member of the new organisation and will be invited to send observers to relevant meetings of the Governing Body of the new organisation. It has yet to be decided whether individual NatSCA members can become individual members of the new organisation, and at a special membership rate. One reason why we left UKIC to form NSCG was because of the high membership rates to cover the cost of individual conservator accreditation. Options for hybrid organisations will remain open for the time being and we are being informed while NCCR converges and becomes the 'new whole entity', which could be in place by September 2004. We await decisions to be made at further merger meetings to discover our individual and corporate inclusion.

NCCR agrees with being inclusive to those who are not primarily professional conservators and to those, such as the Institute of Conservation Scientists, who have shown less interest in merging with the new organisation. We (NatSCA) support the moves to merge NCCR member organisations as 'united we stand for the good of Conservation' and we will ensure that NatSCA will be 'The Group' to consult on all matters to do with Natural Science Conservation in the future. If you have views on the subject, then tell your NCCR representative and please write a letter to 'NatSCA News' for publication.