

more conservators to attend and should also target curators so that they could gain an awareness of conservation theory. One participant wrote, “I have learnt a great deal and have a lot to go away and think about – I feel lucky to have had this opportunity”.

**Weaknesses:** Having praised the flexibility of the course, there were comments about poor timekeeping. One participant felt that there had been too much emphasis on architecture and ethnography and insufficient discussion of paintings and museum collections.

**Threats:** All of the participants were concerned that the course might not continue due to lack of funding. It was hoped that more conservators could benefit from the course.

## Conclusion

The real importance of the two SCD-UK courses may be that they highlight deficiencies in UK conservation training courses and the need for continuous professional development of conservators. It suggests that the history of conservation theory and current developments in conservation thinking are not being addressed. This means that UK conservators do not have the vocabulary or negotiation skills to engage in the decision-making process. Despite the fact that the two courses were successful and well received, the future of further SCD-UK courses is under threat because private conservators and students cannot afford the time or fees to attend three-day courses. One of the participants, Jenny Williamson, has already planned an ICON Sharing Conservation Decisions course. It will be held from 23–24 June 2011 in the National Library of Wales and Aberystwyth University (funded by Museum Archives and Libraries Wales CYML). It will be interesting to monitor the other sixteen participants who attended the two courses and learn what use they have made of the ICCROM toolkit.

This state of affairs in conservation training is being discussed with ICON (Institute of Conservation) in the formulation of a future National Conservation Education and Skills Strategy. Conservation Theory underpins and simplifies the whole process of conservation–restoration and should be embraced.

## Note

1. Rather ironically, as a result of my article, I was invited to contribute to the series of international seminars held to celebrate the centenary of the birth of Cesare Brandi in 2007. Although I protested my ignorance, evidenced by my article, it was argued that I had at least heard of Brandi unlike the majority of UK conservators.