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and comparing these with the organic results of the sheets using ICP-MS. Also a questionnaire will be drawn up for institutions around the world to relate their pest control procedures with the findings of this project.

Vicky Purewal
National Museums & Galleries of
Wales



Low Temperature Treatment at the Victoria and Albert Museum

Textiles are routinely treated by freezing at the Victoria and Albert Museum. This is an integral part of the Museum's insect pest management strategy. Our strategy for the control of insect pests has evolved since 1989. It includes a trapping and monitoring programme, where sticky insect traps are placed in the galleries and stores of the Textiles and Dress collections, along with the Furniture and Woodwork collections. All other disciplines have been involved but there are insufficient resources available to

fully monitor the whole museum site. Insect activity is recorded for two species of carpet beetle, the Guernsey carpet beetle, *Anthrenus sarnicus* and the brown carpet beetle, *Attagenus smirnovi*. In addition, there is an ongoing programme of deep cleaning in galleries and stores, with the use of insecticides where appropriate.

Two exhibitions recently opened at the V & A, contain material treated by freezing, 'The Colours of the Indus', an exhibition of textiles and costume from Pakistan, 9 October - 29 March and 'Carl and Karin Larsson, The Swedish Style', 23 October - 18 January 1998. The inclusion of exhibition items in a freezing programme controls infestation and prevents insect pests from being transferred within and between exhibition/storage sites. All new proteinaceous and textile acquisitions are treated similarly.


Low temperature treatments were initially introduced at the V&A as an alternative to using chemicals hazardous to health. The first freezing project in 1990 was implemented in direct response to an infestation of carpet beetle larvae. The following year there was a much larger programme of treating over 500 tapestries and carpets, prior to their move from an

old basement store to a newly outfitted store at Blythe House, which was insect-pest free. Several freezing programmes have been carried out since then, either using a large, hired freezer unit or a domestic chest freezer. The chest freezer is situated at the Blythe House store in a room with sufficient space for the preparation of objects for freezing. The chest freezer is left on at all times and can therefore be used either for emergency treatments or for planned programmes.

Methodology for treatment using the large hired unit and the chest freezer is similar. All the textile objects are first wrapped in acid free tissue or polyester wadding. They are then wrapped in stout polythene which is secured with parcel tape over a double seam and then clearly labelled. In the large unit, objects are placed on racking shelves or palettes and in the chest freezer they are laid on to sheets of Plastazote. All objects are treated for a period of four days at a temperature of -30°C. After the objects are removed from the unit they are left untouched and unopened for a further two days. Any condensation forms on the outside of the packet and not on the inside. The objects are then unwrapped, condition checked and,

where possible, vacuum cleaned to remove any insect remains that may provide an additional food source for insect larvae. The textile objects are then prepared for storage or display.

Val Blyth
Textiles Conservation
Victoria and Albert Museum



Pesky Moths! -controlling an outbreak with the aid of pheromones.

Introduction

At the end of 1995 an outbreak of the clothes moth *Tineola bisselliella* occurred in an open natural history diorama exhibit at the National Museum and Gallery of Wales (NMGW). What immediately followed was an example of poor communication and poor protocol. Eventually the infestation was controlled with a combination of pesticide treatments and pheromone traps, and without the need to close the gallery for more radical treatments. However a number of specimens were lost and the infestation