REPORT ON THE CONSERVATION AND DISPLAY OF A DANCE CREST FROM NEW BRITAIN AT THE HORNIMAN MUSEUM, LONDON

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JULY TO OCTOBER 2000

PROVENANCE

The Horniman Museum owns eight Uvol dance crests.

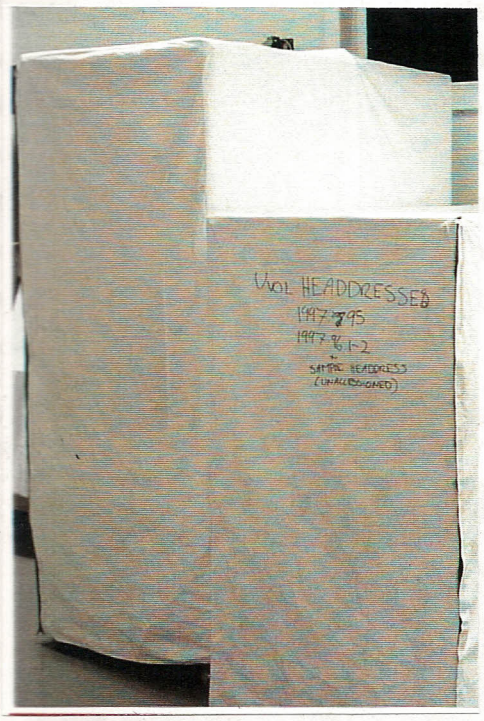
The crests were made by the Melkol people of the village of Uvol and it's neighbouring villages of Inahele, Lausus and Melatong situated on the island of New Britain. The Dutch collector and dealer, Loed van Bussel, stumbled across preparations for a ceremony or *Sing Sing* whilst visiting New Britain in 1987. This ceremony takes place only once every 25 years to celebrate the changing of generations. He returned six months later to witness and document the ceremony and to purchase a total of 75 crests.

The crests represent benevolent spirits or *Rupau*, as they appeared in dreams to the village elders. The crests sit on the dancers' heads, which are completely concealed by the thick palm leaf fringes at their base. They are all of a uniform structure, though their designs and sizes vary considerably.

Of the 75 crests purchased by van Bussel, 11 were sold to The Musee des Arts d'Afrique et d'Oceanie in Paris, 9 to the Linden-Museum in Stuttgart, 6 to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter and the remaining crests were sold to private collectors. The Horniman Museum acquired 8 crests from art dealer, Kevin Konru, in 1997. The crests had by then spent 10 years stored in a garage.

The Horniman Museum has kept the dance crests in store until completion of the new "Collectors Gallery". Four dance crests are to be displayed in the "Scholars, Travellers and Traders" case within this gallery and four in the "Materials Culture" case. The Scholars case is being prepared first, so these four have now been moved to the Conservation Department

Figs 1: The four dance crests in temporary storage in the conservation Department at The Horniman Museum.



In 1998 the Horniman received funding from the Gabo Trust to research the dance crests' materials and possible methods of conservation. They employed a free-lance conservator, Cathy Daly, for a total of 12 weeks to undertake this research, the result of which was a comprehensive report (Ref. 4).

Traditionally the crests are thrown into a river at the end of the ceremony, the Melkoy people having first removed the valued feather decorations for re-use. Because of their intended short life span and the need for them to be light and flexible the crests are, by their very nature, ephemera.

Fig 2: The Tyvek sheeting drawn back, revealing dance crest 1997.98.

Of the four crests to be displayed in the Scholars' Showcase (two at the front and two at the rear) the two at the rear were prioritised for conservation, simply because they needed to be installed first. This report is on one of these, accession number 1997.98.

SUPPORTING THE CREST DURING CONSERVATION

The crest was extremely fragile with highly fugitive paint and leaned to one side. It did not stand firmly on its own. Measuring 1645 mm in height, it was also too large to sit on a lab bench during conservation. The museum's Exhibitions Department devised a simple trolley made with a perforated right-angled steel frame into which was dropped a base board. Castors were attached underneath to allow easy movement of the crest, and a timber "gantry" was secured at one edge, to which the crest could be tied with cotton tape from its main cane. Placed on this trolley, the crest was taken up to the lab in the lift and work was carried out with the crest standing on the floor.

Fig 3: Dance crest 1997.98 on the specially constructed trolley with supporting gantry.

DESCRIPTION AND MATERIALS

Dance crest 1997.98 was made in the village of Inahele and represents the spirit *Nalentena*.

The main support of the crest is a vertical cane, 9mm in diameter, which runs down through the centre of the crest's body with the top extending above. A second thinner cane, 198 mm in length, has been lashed across this main supporting cane at the top, exposed end.

Fig 4: Detail of the main cane support of the crest, showing the cross-bar lashed in place with liana.

This forms a cross, the arms of which act as supports for a large secondary structure. Below this cross bar, the main cane support has been wrapped with layers of thick bark cloth (Cathy Daly had identified "thick bark cloth" as one of the materials used in 1997.98, probably from the Moraceae family, sp. Ficus). This bark cloth is bound at the top with a twine, probably liana, and gives the body of the crest its shape. Leaves may also have been used as padding/shaping as these are visible further down. Lengths of thick pith (approx. 15mm in diameter) have been applied over the bark cloth, forming closely fitting rings. As the bark cloth padding swells towards the middle of the body, so the ring circumferences increase. These pith rings cover the entire body which is pod or zeppelin-shaped, tapering at the top and bottom. On average each ring consists of one or two lengths of pith. The rings are pinned into the bark cloth using dark slithers of wood pushed through the pith. Abutting ends of lengths of pith are joined using these same wood slithers.

At three points on the body, the narrow top, wide middle and narrow bottom, three saucer-shaped disks encircle the body. These are made of the same pith rings, pinned together lengthways and also end to end. These disks have no supporting canes and are structurally weak.

Below the main body is a base. This is cone-shaped and constructed in the same way.

The bottom of the base forms the attachment for the large split palm frond "skirt", used to disguise the dancer's head. The palm fronds are split lengthways and attached in horizontal layers around a domed frame of cane shaped to fit on the dancer's head, with a cloth covered rim and chin straps made of plaited vegetable fibre. The dance crests were stored up-right, standing on these heavy fringes, resulting in distortion of the leaves as they dried. There is now a Plastizote mount inside

the frame, inserted for display, on which the crest stands.

Framing the main body of the crest and the 3 saucer-shaped disks is a large looping secondary structure. It is a long ellipse shape, "folded" in half, with the two "folds" at the bottom and the two ellipse points at the top. This forms a double arch-shaped structure over the crest, supported on its inside edges by thin strips of split cane to which lengths of pith has been lashed with a fine liana (see Cathy Daly). The split cane support is secured to the main body of the crest at the top by the cross bar mentioned above, which supports the underside of the two arch tops, and is lashed in place; and at the bottom by 3 spokes of wood or cane, one end inserted into the pith body and the other end lashed to the supporting strips of cane. The structure is constructed from five rows of pith, pinned end-to-end and edge-to-edge (as above) but with additional binding in places.

Fig 5: Examples of wood slithers and thorns used to pin the crest

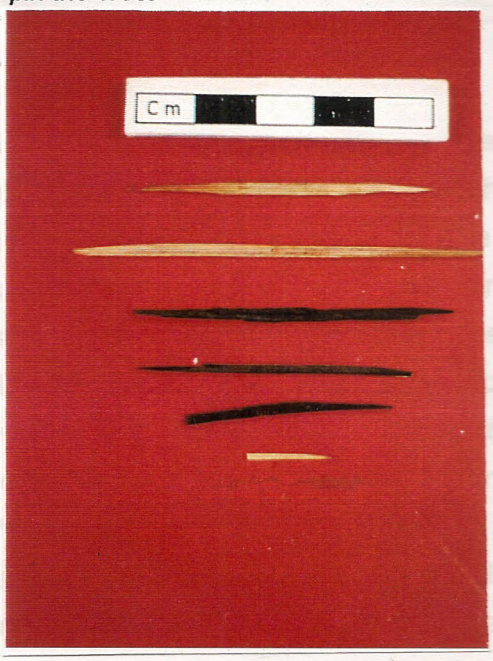


Fig 6: Thin spokes of dark wood or cane used to support the secondary structure.

Surface

All pith lengths have been painted, predominantly bright red. Edging rings of pith on the disks and arched structure are bright yellow. There are also five bands of yellow painted round the main body, and two bands of yellow around the cone-shaped base. A further broad band of brilliant green has been applied to the bottom of the main body, plus another area of green a little higher. The crest has been decorated with triangular-shaped areas of black pigment, daubed with lines of spots in a thick white pigment. On these triangles, thin flat strips of pith have been applied, standing upright, their upper edges cut into regular jagged teeth. These pith strips have been inserted between the rows of cylindrical pith and pinned in place with thorns (usually two or three per strip). They are unpainted.

Fig 7: Typical decorative detail on crest.

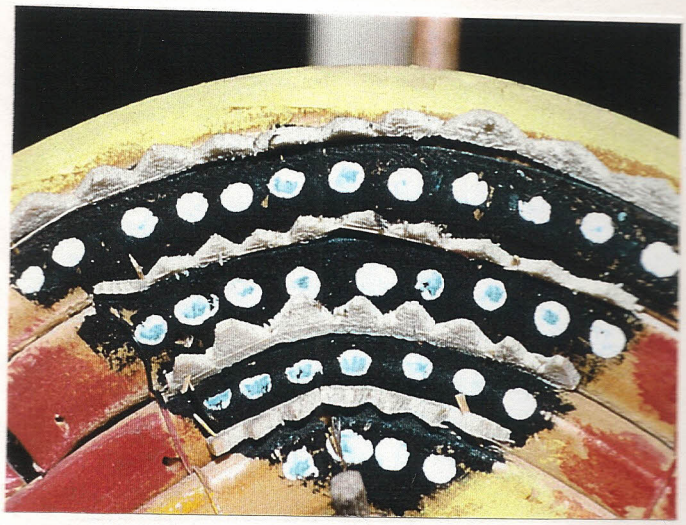


Fig 8: Detail of applied serrated pith decorations pinned in place with thorns.

Attachments/Identifying marks

The Horniman Museum label has been tied around the top exposed section of the main supporting cane, at the cross-bar. The original collector's label (delaminating white corrugated card), is tied around the top of the cone-shaped base. The museum's accession number has been marked in ink on the main body (below the middle disk). An LD45 Plastizote support has been inserted underneath the palm-leaf skirt to allow the crest to stand without damaging the leaves.

Fig 9: The Horniman Museum's label tied to the top cane. The photograph also clearly shows the bark cloth with white pigment.

Fig 10: The original collector's label tied round the base.

Fig 11: The Museum's accession number.

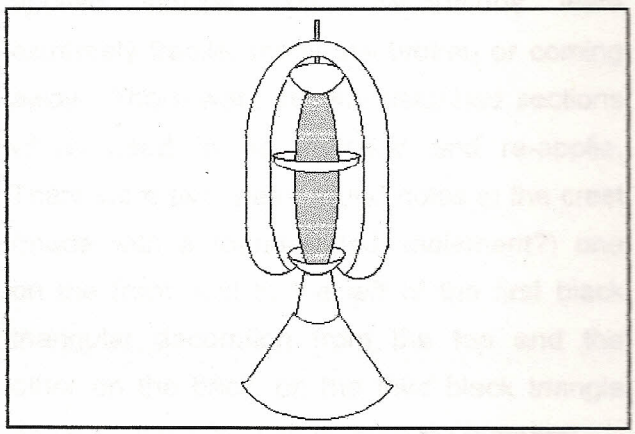
MEASUREMENTS

Height (Top of cane to base of skirt):	1645
Width (At base of skirt):	640
(Across middle of body):	460
Depth (At base of skirt):	730
(Across middle of body):	300

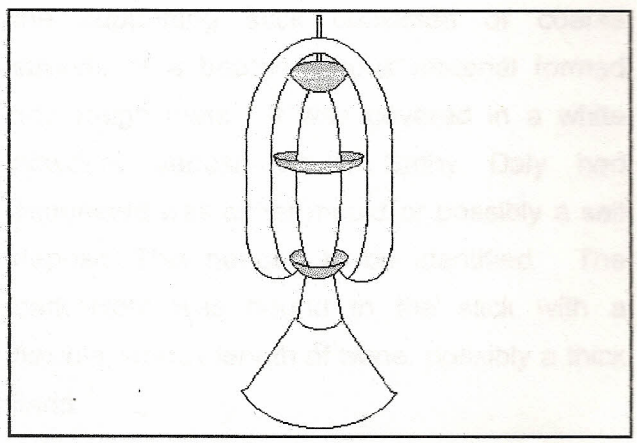
CONDITION

For the purposes of the condition report, the crest was visually divided into sections.

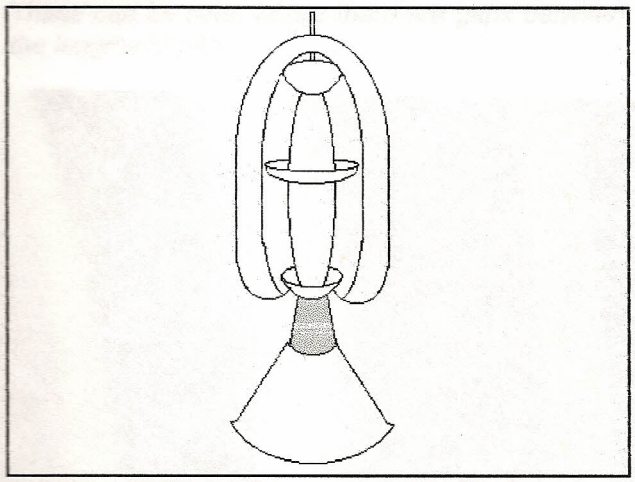
The main body:



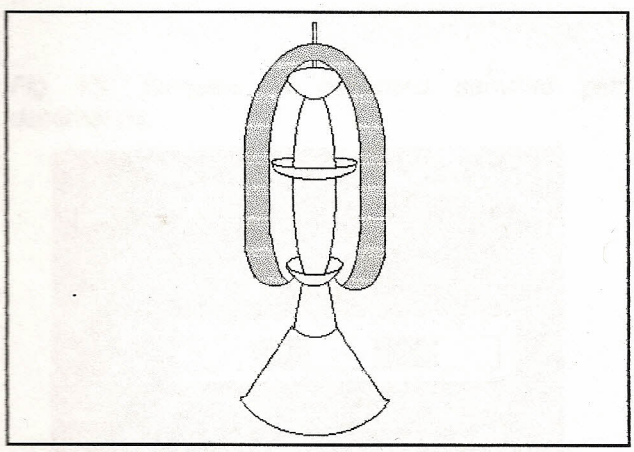
The 3 saucer-shaped disks:



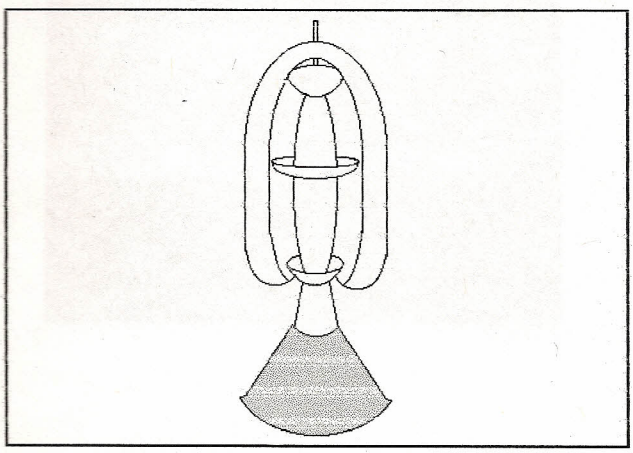
The cone-shaped base:



The surrounding secondary structure:



The palm "skirt":



The back of the crest was taken as the side with the Museum's accession number.

Main Body

The structure was stable and the applied pith rings were generally secure. There were gaps, often large, between some abutting ends of lengths of pith, revealing the wood pins. This may have been due to natural shrinkage, handling or original damage during its use as a dance crest. There was a large amount of surface dust and debris, cobwebs etc. On the front of the crest there was also some cracking, crushing and breaking of pith, particularly on the lower section of the body, on the second yellow band from the top. The applied serrated pith decorations were extremely fragile, many are broken or coming away. There were several detached sections which need to be matched and re-applie. There were two neat, round holes in the crest (made with a round-ended implement?) one on the front, just to the left of the first black triangular decoration from the top and the other on the back, on the third black triangle down. (These may have been for feathers).

The bark cloth visible at the top surrounding the supporting stick consisted of coarse strands of a beaten fibrous material formed into rough mats. It was covered in a white powdery deposit which Cathy Daly had suggested was either mould or possibly a salt deposit. This needed to be identified. The bark cloth was bound to the stick with a flexible, woody length of twine, possibly a thick liana.

Fig 12: Lengths of pith bound side to side with fine liana and attached end to end with dark wood pins. These can be seen where there are gaps between the lengths of pith.

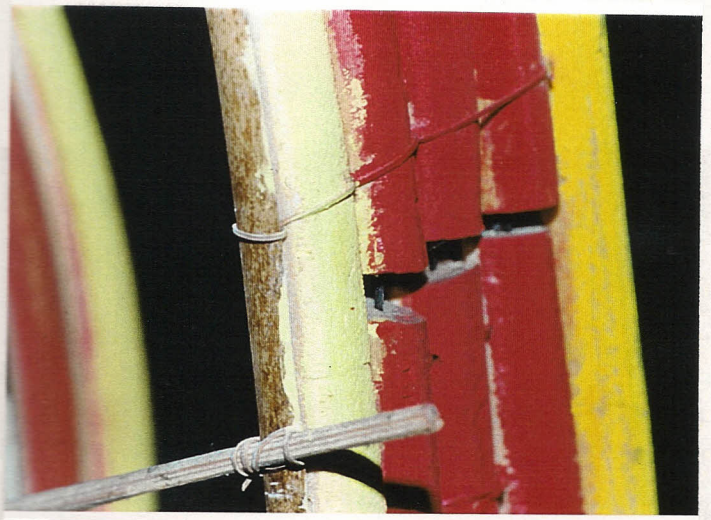


Fig 13: Samples of detached serrated pith decorations.

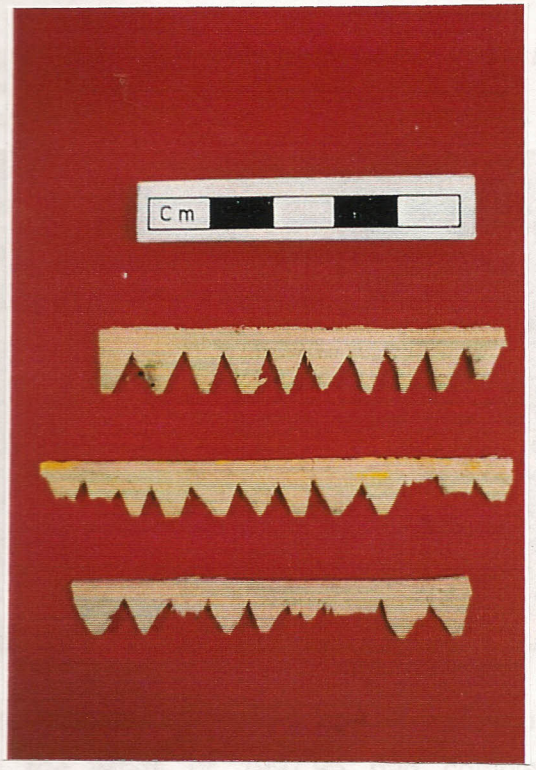
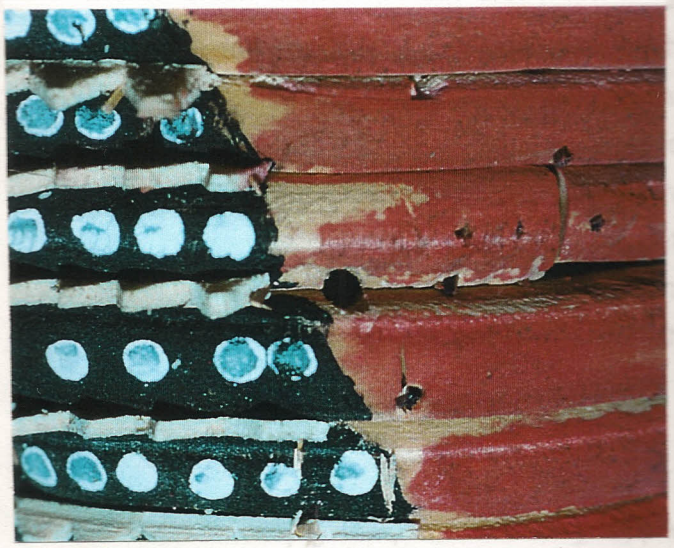


Fig 14: Round hole on main body of crest, possibly a feather decoration insertion point.



Pigments

According to Cathy Daly's report, all pigments applied to the pith were mixed with the juice of wild oranges as a binder.

The **Red** pigment was matt, thickly and unevenly applied. It appeared powdery, but could be touched lightly without loss. No samples of red were taken from this crest by Cathy Daly for testing. However, samples she took from other crests suggested it was a synthetic organic pigment and that the red was possibly an Azo compound.

The **Yellow** bands were again in a matt pigment, which was more stable and less fugitive than the red. It was again, roughly applied. Three distinct shades of yellow had been used, the top band being a darker yellow, whilst the other bands were a more lemony yellow. There was also a harsh, bright yellow. Red pigment had bled and smudged on to the yellow. No samples of yellow were taken from this crest by Cathy Daly for testing. However, samples were taken from 1997.93, 1997.94 and 1997.97. She found 2 distinct pigments - 1997.93 possibly an iron oxide, whereas EDX analysis on 1997.97 showed that it is a synthetic organic pigment, possibly an Azo mixed with chrome yellow.

Fig 15: Red pigment sample taken by Cathy Daly from 1997.93 and viewed under x100 magnification.

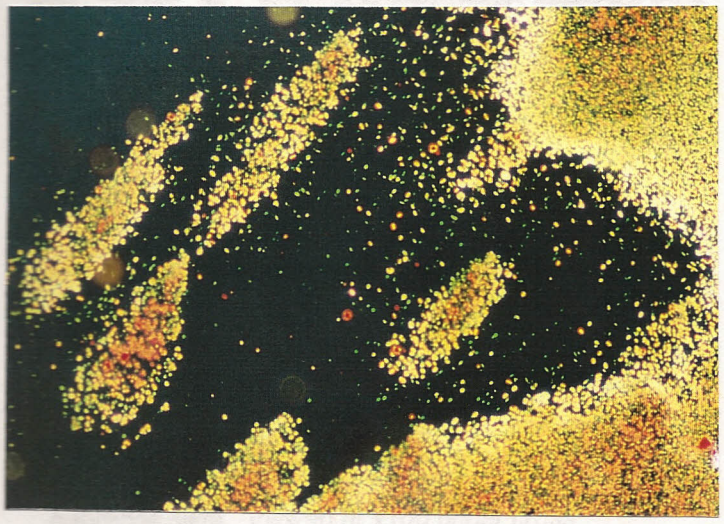
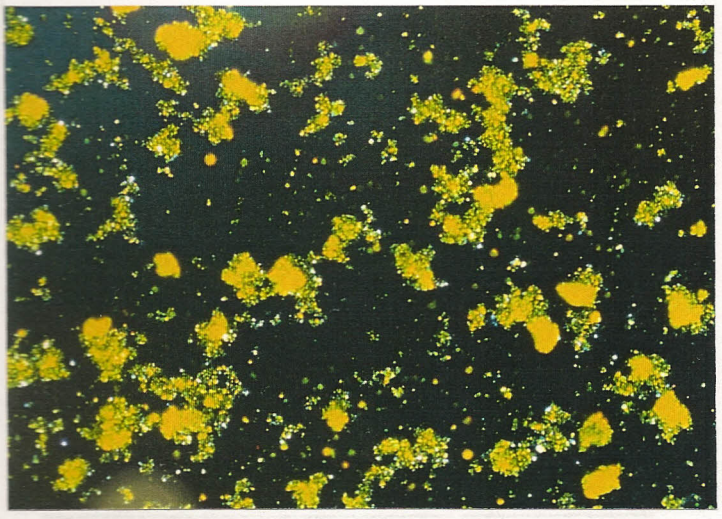


Fig 16: Yellow pigment sample taken by Cathy Daly from 1997.93 and viewed under x 100 magnification.



She also commented that a bright yellow used on the wings of 1997.96 had completely disappeared, but suspected that this may have been due to mechanical damage. In light ageing tests carried out by the Tate, samples of yellow pigment were found to be the most fugitive of the colours.

The **green** pigment was a matt, emerald green, again thickly applied and more stable than the red. The red had also marked the green. This pigment was the only colour that Cathy Daly had tested from the crest. Analysis showed that it was not a traditional artist's pigment, but a mixture of synthetic organic yellow and a green - pthalocyanine. No light ageing tests were carried out on the green.

The **black** decorative triangles were painted in a matt black pigment, more evenly applied than the other pigments. The **white** spots were thick, thinning towards the middle, suggesting they were made using the flat end of a stick dipped in paint. No samples of either black or white were taken from this crest by Cathy Daly for testing. However, samples of black were taken from 1997.97 and 1997.93 and were identified as synthetic pigments, possibly a dark pthalocyanine blue. Van Bussel reported that the Melkoy people made the black pigment themselves from crushing burnt palm leaves and using coconut milk as a binder. The white pigment, tested from a loose piece of pith confirmed it to be Titanium White. No light ageing tests were done on either black or white pigments.

Fig 17: White pigment sample taken by Cathy Daly from 1997.93 and viewed under x100 cross polarising light. Note it's similarity to Fig 77 - a reference slide of Titanium White.

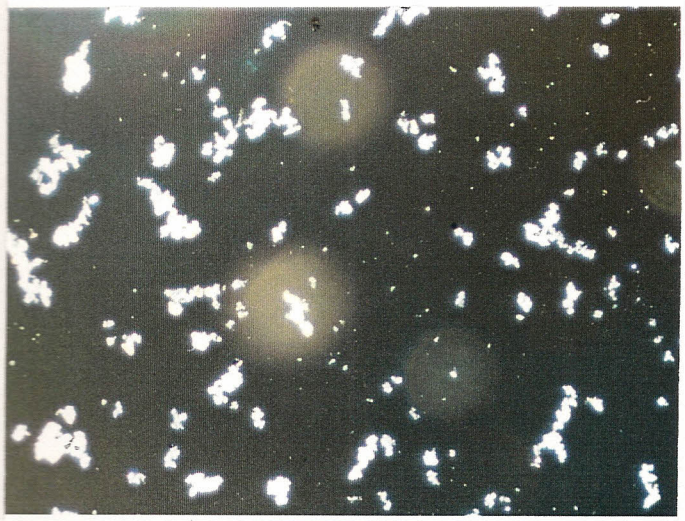
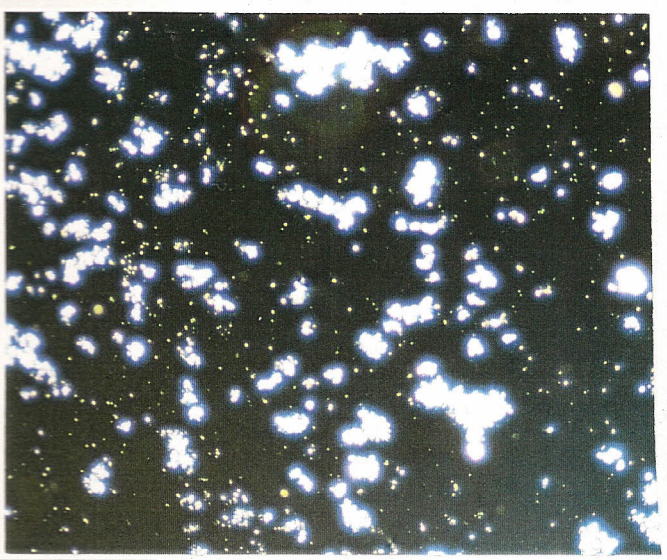


Fig 18: Titanium White. Photograph from a reference slide. Viewed at x100 under cross polarising light.



The three saucer-shaped disks

Again, there was a large amount of loose dirt and debris, particularly on the upper surfaces of the top and middle rings (See Figs 78 and 79), including dried leaf particles, cobwebs and a small dead spider (Fig 80).

Fig 19: Surface dirt on the upper disk of the crest

Fig 20: Surface dirt on the middle disk of the crest.

Fig 21: A small, dead spider plus web on the underside of the upper disk.

The top disk was fragile and moved when touched. The outer ring of pith was broken and abraded, and a small hole on the front edge had been marked with a green tipped stick/matchstick (possible feather insertion point?). On its upper surface, wooden pins had broken through the surface of the pith. The coiled pith centre was raised up and appeared eroded or had perhaps been subjected to insect attack. There was one black triangular decoration on the disk's underside at the front of the crest. The red pigment on the upper surface was faded and discoloured. On the underside it was thickly applied and bright and clean. Yellow pigment had only been applied to the outer ring at the back. It had not discoloured as much as the red, but the red had again bled and smudged.

The **middle disk** was structurally more stable. There was one crack or cut (original?) in the outer pith ring at the front, plus a hole which had been filled with a fresh piece of stick/matchstick (possibly to mark a feather insertion point?), and abrading of the same ring at the back. There were two black triangular decorations painted on the underside, one at the front and one at the back. Red and yellow pigments on the upper surface were discoloured.

Fig 22: The outer edge of the top disk, showing breakage of pith and green tipped match stick piece

Fig 23: The raised central pith of the top disk.

The **lower disk** was again unstable and moved with slight pressure. The outer pith ring was in many pieces, and it was also heavily abraded on the left edge where the arched secondary structure had knocked it. The wooden pins had broken through the pith's surface in places, detaching small chips (still attached). There were two triangular decorations on the underside and one on the upper surface - which had no pith decorations (this appeared to be original). The red pigment had faded and was completely missing in places - it may have been rubbed off. The yellow on the upper surface was also slightly faded and abraded. The pigments on the underside were bright.

Fig 24: The outer edge of the lower disk showing abrasion from the secondary structure.

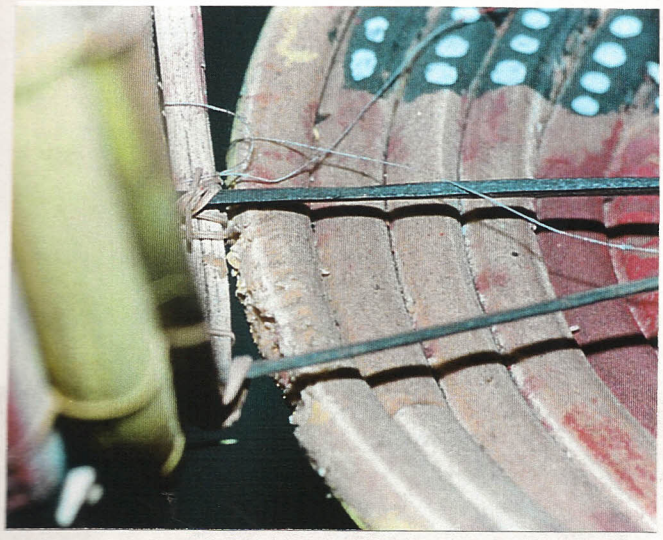


Fig 25: The upper surface of the lower disk where small chips of pith have been raised by the pins

The cone-shaped base

Again, there was much surface dirt and debris. Large gaps in between the pith rings at the back revealed the bark cloth beneath (with the same white deposits), plus dried leaves

and palm fronds. The pith rings were badly cracked and crushed in places, particularly at the top where the collector's label had been tightly tied and had sunk deep into the pith. However, the structure was generally stable.

Fig 26: Gaps between the pith of the cone base. The material visible behind is dried leaves.

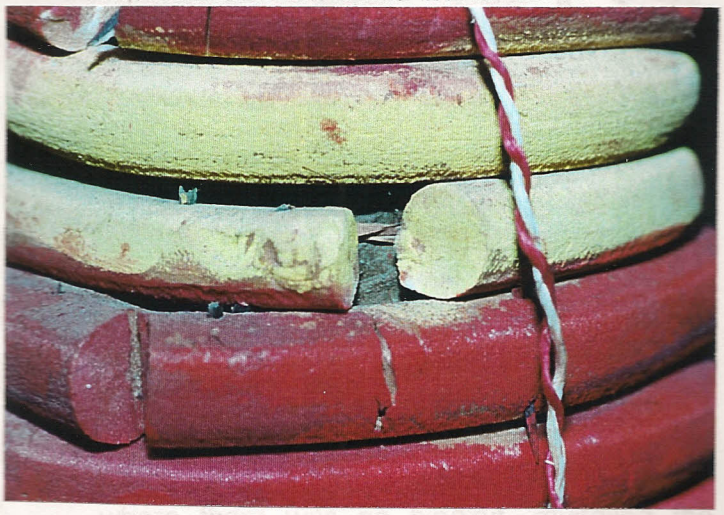
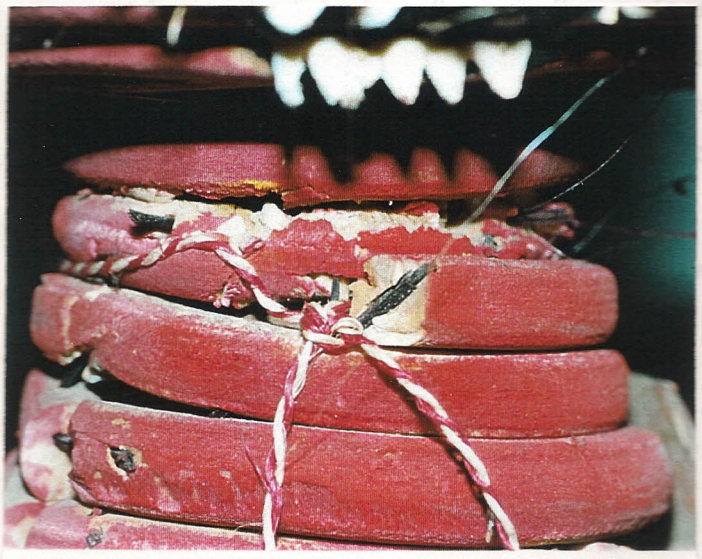


Fig 27: Damage to the pith of the cone base caused by the collector's label.



The pigments were bright and thickly applied - a matt red and two lemony yellow bands. As before, the red was more fugitive than the yellow. There were no black triangular decorations on the base.

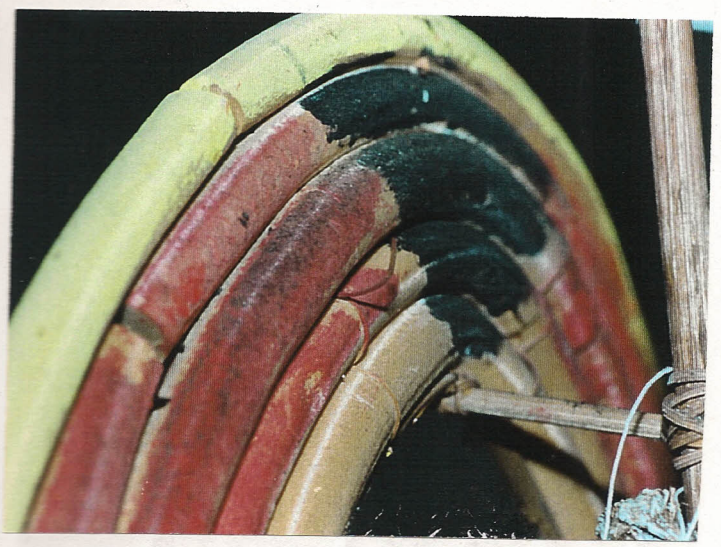
The Secondary arched structure

Generally, this was extremely fragile and vulnerable. It was relatively clean, except in the bottoms of the loops and the top surfaces.

The split cane supporting structure

This ran in a continuous length around the inner edge of the folded ellipse. It was not broken and was firmly bound to the pith with fine liana. Only one of these bindings was broken - inside top of the back arch. The bindings were wound round the cane supports and then woven through usually three bands of pith.

Fig 28: The top of the secondary structure. A broken liana twine is visible.



The cane struts and spokes

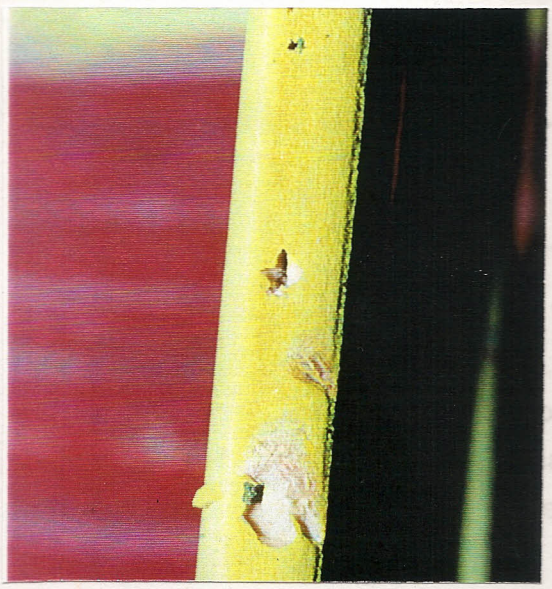
The top cane cross bar was firmly bound at both ends to the split cane supporting structure. Of the side struts which straddled between the two arches anchoring them together (two on each side) the top, right had detached from its binding at the front end. The bottom three "spokes" were bound securely to the cane supporting structure at one end and inserted into the pith rings of the main body at the other.

Fig 29: Supporting cane on the secondary structure detached from its binding.

The pith lengths

The arches were five pith lengths wide. As well as being pinned together in the normal way, some lengths were bound at intervals. The lengths were tending to part in places where there was no binding, revealing the pinning. The pith was also cracking in places and pins had broken through the surface. There were various holes in the outer edges of the arches, some probably housed feathers. A few had been marked with slivers of wood/match sticks.

Fig 30: The outside edge of the secondary structure with marking matchsticks.



The red pigment was bright, however, there was some loss of colour in the bottom of the loops. There was bleeding and smudging of the red onto the yellow. There were a number of black triangular decorations painted around the secondary structure.

Palm Skirt

The fringe had been built up in layers of split palm fronds and although brittle and dry, with many leaf tips broken off, it was generally stable. There was a large amount of surface dirt and debris. The leaves at the bottom edge were curled upwards, where they had dried as they rested. Some of the long, surface leaves were broken and/or bent in places. There were many detached fragments, plus a loose length of twine (possibly from the underside?). A number of leaves had small nicks out of the edges - possibly old insect attack.

Fig 31: Palm leaf fringe. Leaves were thickly coated with dirt and many were bent.

Fig 32: Other leaves were broken.

Fig 33: Old insect attack to the palm leaves.

SUMMARY OF CONDITION

Structurally, the crest was stable. Viewed from the front, it leant a little to the left, but it's supporting frame was in good condition. Considering the fragility of the materials and the nature of its construction, the crest was remarkably intact.

The crest, as is standard practice at The Horniman Museum, was fumigated with Methyl Bromide on arrival at the museum in 1997.

TESTS AND EXAMINATION

To establish a method for cleaning the painted pith

Several soft brushes were tested on spare pieces of painted pith:-

- 1/4 soft hair brush (999) Osborne and Butler Artist's brush
- 1" squirrel hair lacquer brush
- Gilder's squirrel hair mop
- Photographer's blower brush.

Of the brushes tested, the gilder's mop was the softest and suitable for removing surface dirt on all pigments ***except*** red. On the red, even this brush removed some pigment. Brushing the painted pith was not, therefore, an option as red was the predominant colour. Although the brush on the photographer's blower brush was too harsh, the blowing action was effective.

Because of this, **CLE vacuum tweezers** with a fine nozzle fitted and the tube placed over the outlet valve was tested. This provided a gentle stream of air which effectively removed surface dirt without damaging any pigment.

To establish a method for cleaning the palm leaves

Various mechanical methods of cleaning were tested:

- Chemical sponge
- Groom stick
- Brushes (as above) with vacuum cleaner

The groom stick was too tacky, even after refrigerating to harden. The chemical sponge and brushes worked well, but left areas of staining where dirt was more ingrained. The chemical sponge also required a measure of pressure, which meant each leaf had to be supported from beneath during cleaning.

Tests were then carried out on broken pieces of palm leaf for solvent cleaning using cotton swabs, trying RO water first as the least invasive method. It worked well and did not appear to affect the visual properties of the leaves (Chroma Meter Readings were taken before and after):-

Before:

L = 51.70 a = +7.45 b = +26.35

After:

L = 53.16 a = +8.07 b = +27.89

This shows that the leaf tested had simply got slightly lighter (L) and its colours brighter (a and b). This was to be expected after cleaning.

To establish a method for mending broken serrated pith decorations

The method identified by Cathy Daly worked well (Arrow Root/Sodium Alginate starch paste).

To establish a method for mending/ straightening broken/bent leaves

The method identified by Cathy Daly on loose broken palm leaves (using Japanese paper as a repair support and starch paste as above to bond) was tested using various types and weights of Japanese paper. However, several problems were encountered. Initially, the starch paste was slow to adhere making it difficult to position the leaves. The Japanese paper, once wet with adhesive offered little support until it dried. Supporting and clamping leaves between squares of silicon release paper and acid-free blotter was tried. This straightened them as well as supporting the bond. Once dry the repairs were tested by gently flexing. In all cases, the Japanese paper parted from the leaf. The bonds were not felt to be strong enough.

Fig 34: A leaf before straightening.

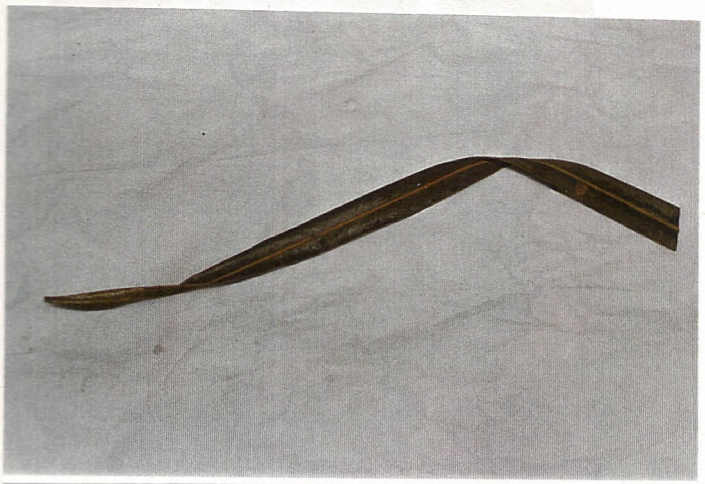


Fig 35: The same leaf clamped between dampened acid free blotter, Plastazote blocks and bull-dog clip.

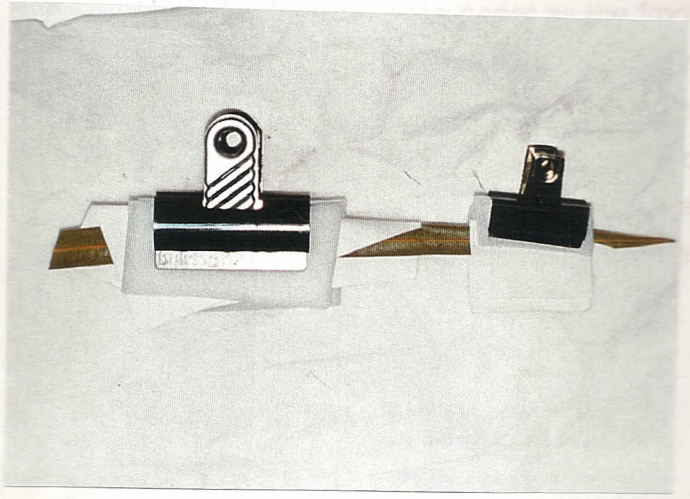
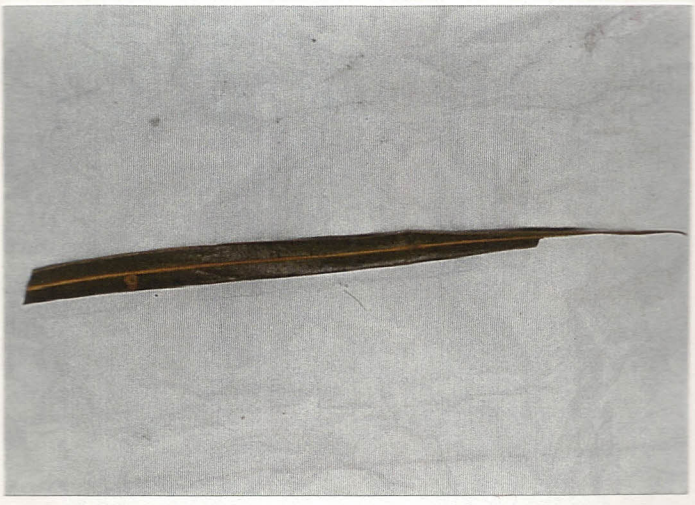


Fig 36: The same leaf after straightening.



Further tests were carried out using alternative support materials:

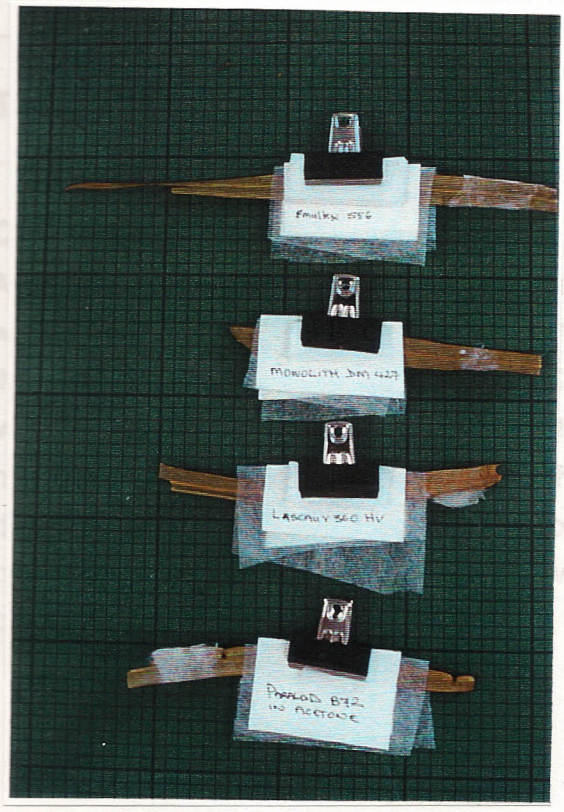
- Nylon gossamer
- Silk crepeline
- Thin conservation quality card as a backing "splint"

Fig 37: Test leaf repairs using a variety of materials for support.

and alternative adhesives:

- 5% Klucel G in IMS
- Emultex 586
- Mowolith DM 427
- Lascaux 360 HV
- Paraloid B72 in acetone

Fig 38: Test leaf repairs using different adhesives.



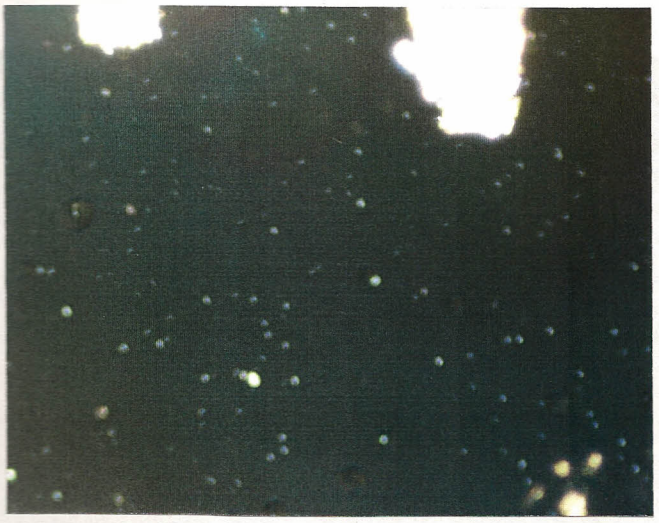
It was decided to stay with Cathy Daly's decision of using Japanese paper as the front repair support (Test 3), but to back with thin strips of card to give extra support. Mowolith DM 427 worked well as an adhesive. It had good initial tack, making it easy to position the leaves and repairs, and dried into a strong, yet flexible bond.

Fig 39: Test leaf repairs. Close-up of Test 3.

To identify the white substance on the bark cloth

A microcsope slide was made up with a sample of the white powdery substance, and examined it under a microscope using a polarising light. Although no definitive identification was made it was almost certainly an applied white colour consisting of mixed pigments. Gypsum particles were identifiable by the presence of tabby extinction, plus other minerals.

Fig 40: White pigment sample taken from the crest's bark cloth and viewed using cross polar light at x100 magnification. The large particles were positively identified as gypsum.



Monitoring of pigment colour changes

Where possible, I took chroma meter readings, two sets of each colour present on the crest, one from the front and one from the back.

TREATMENT

Cleaning

All large pieces of debris, dirt and cobwebs were removed using **tweezers**. Working from the top of the crest downwards, using **CLE vacuum tweezers** on "blow" fitted with a fine nozzle, plus a vacuum cleaner to collect lifted dirt, the painted pith, pith decorations and bark cloth were cleaned.The can structure was brushed with a **gilder's mop**.

Fig 41: Cleaning the crest with vacuum tweezers and vacuum cleaner.

Fig 42: The middle pith disk following cleaning.

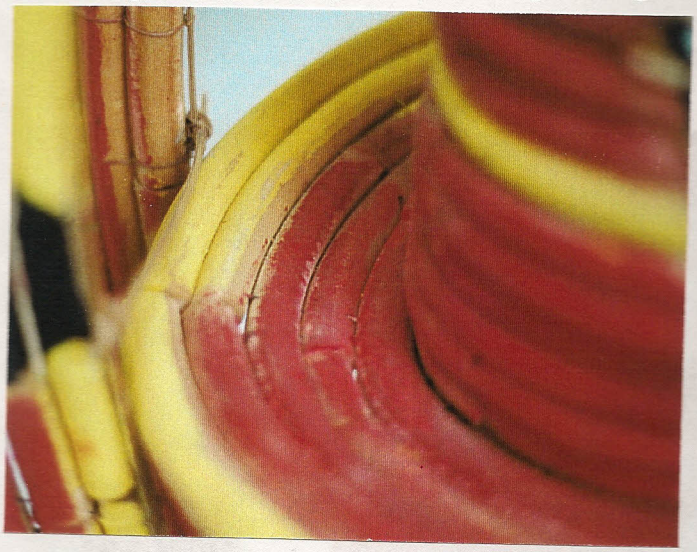


Fig 43: The bottom pith disk following cleaning.

The palm leaf fronds were cleaned using **large cotton swabs** dampened with **RO water**.

Fig 44: The palm leaf skirt after cleaning.

Fig 45: The base of the crest after cleaning.

Consolidation

A decision had been taken ***not*** to consolidate the pigment on the crests. This decision was taken partly in response to the growing trend for non-interventive conservation for ethnographic materials and partly because the showcases had been designed to be dust-proof.

Repairs

The original **collector's label** (tied round the conical base) was removed to prevent any further damage to the pith base.

Fig 46: The conical base with the collector's label removed.

Fig 47: The removed label. Front.

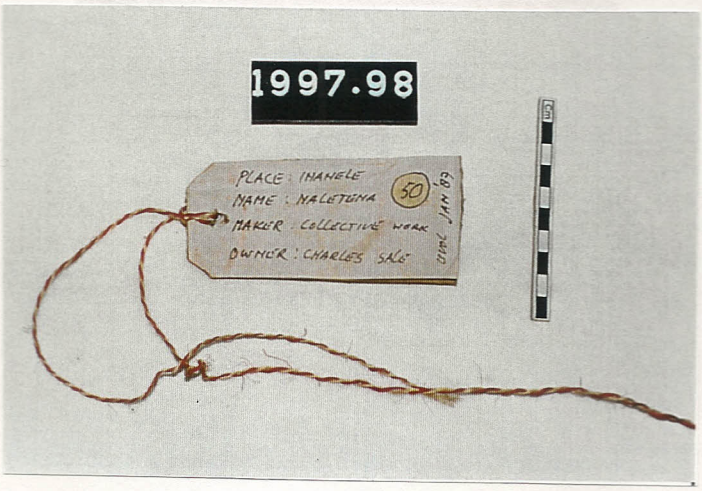
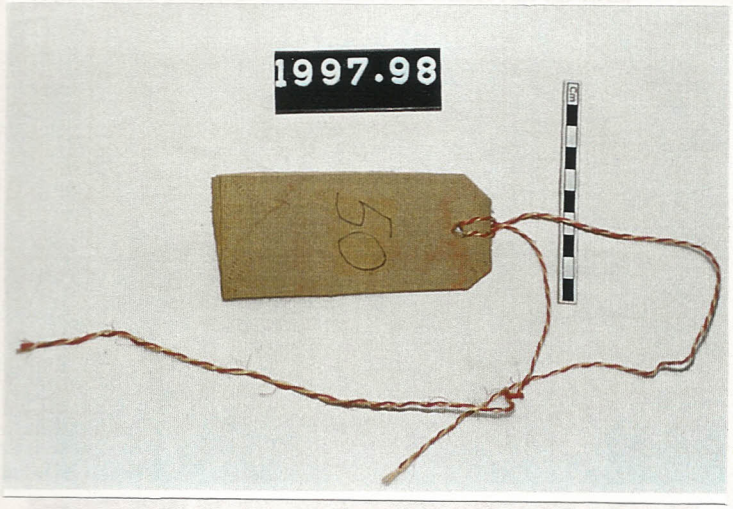
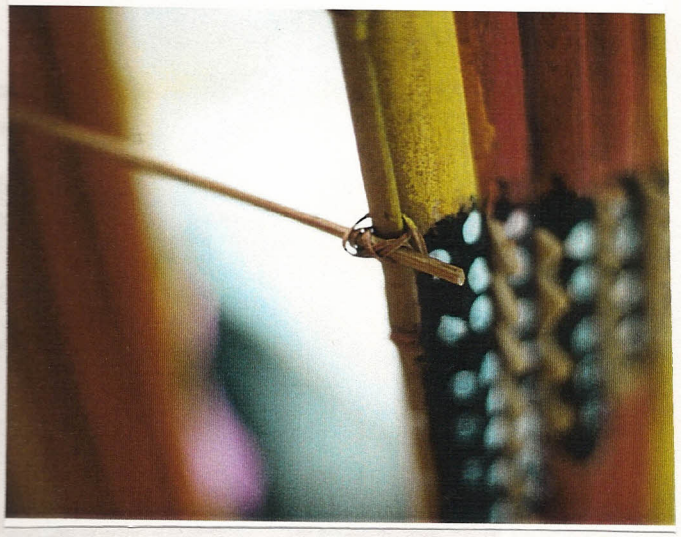


Fig 48: The removed label. Back.



Cane struts which had pulled out of their bindings were pushed back in.

Fig 49: Re-positioned cane struts.



Loose and broken **pith decorations** were re-secured using starch paste and, where available, the original thorn pins. Where these were missing, new pins were made from birch tooth picks. Loose pieces of pith decoration were matched up and re-applied.

Broken and bent palm leaves were straightened and repaired using thin, conservation quality white card splints tinted with Raw Sienna artist's pigment applied along the back of the leaf; light weight, fibrous Japanese paper (tinted as above) and torn into strips (torn to pull out the fibres) over the front of the repair. The adhesive used was Mowolith DM 427. Repairs were supported and straightened by clamping between layers of silicon release paper, acid free blotter and bulldog clips padded with small blocks of Plastizote and left overnight.

Fig 50: Serrated pith decorations re-attached using starch paste and supported with original thorn pins.

Fig 51: Replacement pins made from birch tooth picks (example far left). Genuine thorn pin far right.

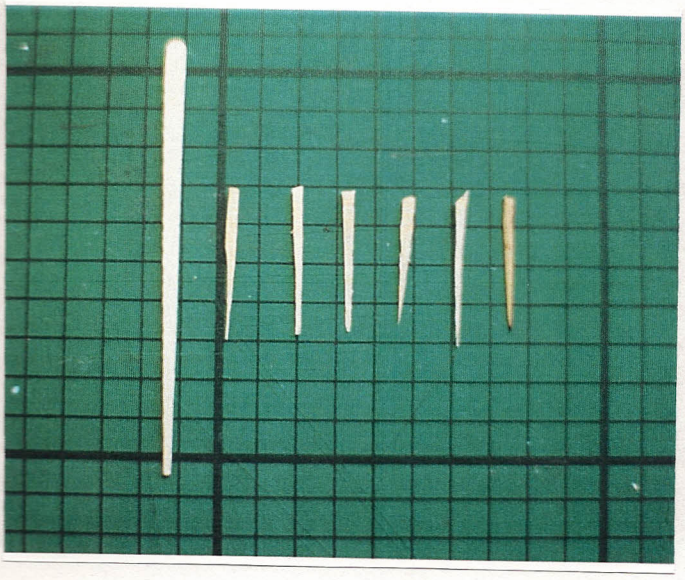


Fig 52: Serrated pith decoration secured with replacement pin.

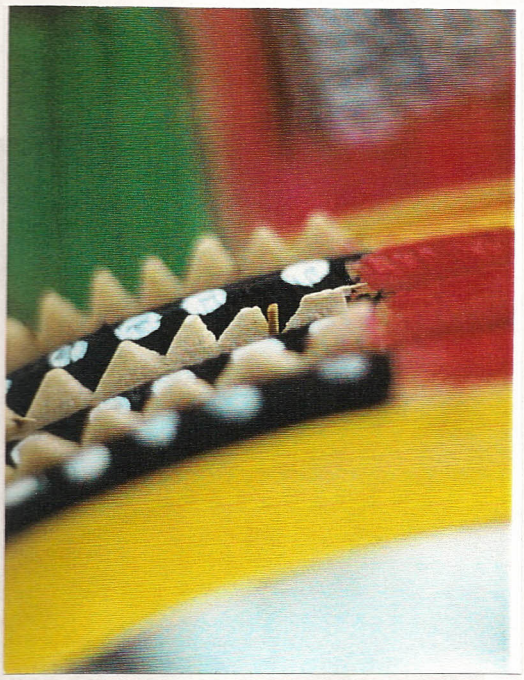


Fig 53: Leaf tip, splinted with thin white card, tinted on the back with raw sienna, ready to re-attach to leaf base.

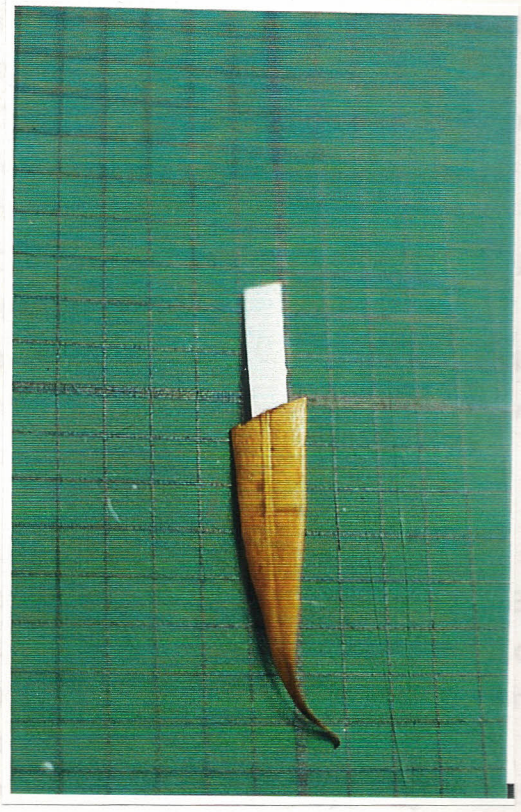


Fig 54: Strips of fibrous Japanese paper tinted with Raw Sienna to bind the leaf repairs.

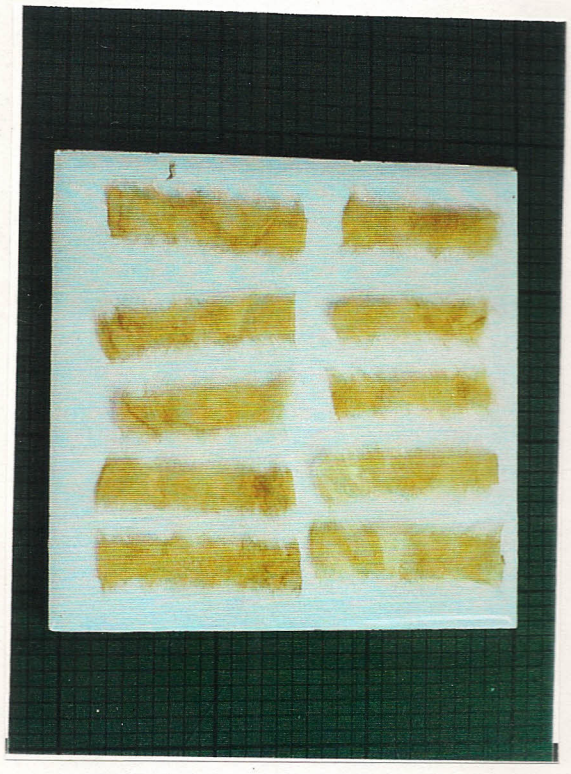


Fig 55: Repaired leaves clamped between silicone release paper, blotter, Plastizote and bulldog clips.

Fig 56: Detail of repaired leaf.

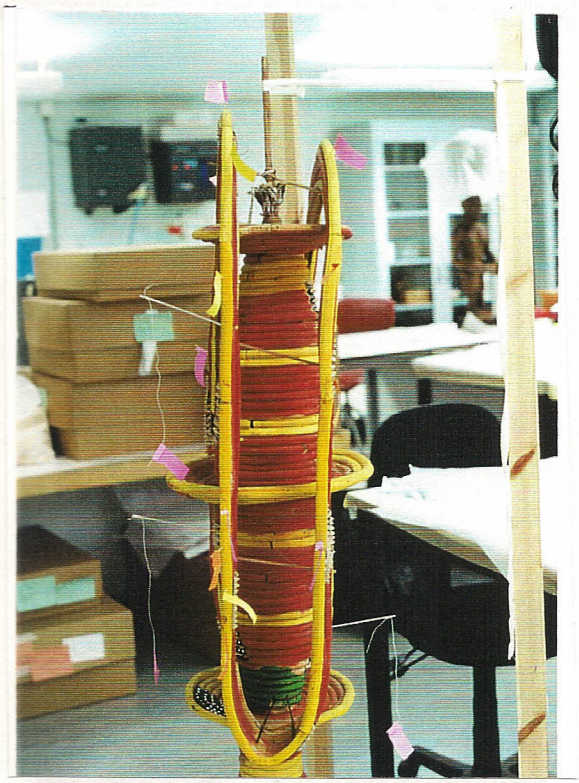
Location of holes for original feather decorations

The feather decorations had been removed prior to transportation from New Britain. Cathy Daly reported that van Bussel had marked feather holes with green-painted match sticks. A few of these could still be located. Cathy Daly worked on the reserved feathers whilst at the Horniman. These had been stored separately in boxes for many years and many had suffered bad insect attack and were in poor condition.

Using the photographs of the ceremony and of other dance crests taken by van Bussel, possible feather insertion holes were located along the edges of the secondary structure and on the main body of the crest. These were marked with brightly flagged toothpicks and sticks. The crest was then photographed for reference, to suggest possible positioning for any feathers that may be replaced once in the show case.

Fig 57: Back view of crest with suggested feather decoration insertion points flagged with brightly coloured paper and sticks.

Fig 58: As above. Side view of crest.



INSTALLATION AND DISPLAY OF THE CREST

To reach the new gallery the crest was transported by van with a rear tail-lift to the front of the museum. Still on its trolley, a large sheet of Tyvek was wrapped around it, draped over the gantry.

Fig 59: The crest still on its trolley, wrapped in Tyvek ready for transporting to the gallery.

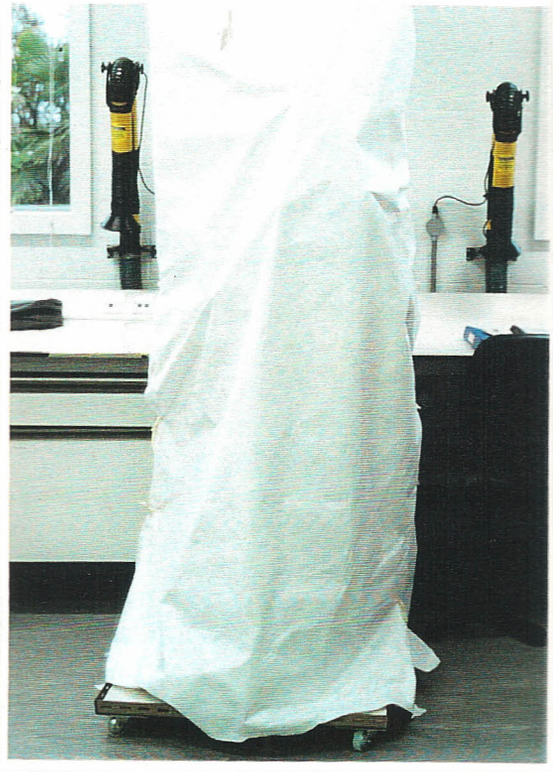


Fig 59: Horniman Museum Conservator, Jeremy Uden (left) and the Buildings Manager loading the crest into the van.

Fig 60: Wheeling the crest to the museum's side door (nearest point of access for the new gallery)

Once in the gallery, the crest was unwrapped and inspected. Apart from a few broken leaves it had suffered no other damage. The museum label was removed and the crest was lifted via its main structural cane, with a second person supporting it by its cane frame underneath the palm leaf fringe. In this way it was lifted into the showcase and into position.

Fig 61: Jeremy Uden (left) plus Nathan Jones and Tony Jones from the Exhibitions Department lifting the crest into the showcase.

The Scholars, Travellers and Traders Showcase

The four dance crests will be displayed on small circular platforms extending from the rear wall of the case on aluminium brackets. Because of the packed conditions within the case, it is doubtful whether all the feathers can be repositioned on the crests. Many of these will be displayed separately in the second showcase.

The case has been designed to be dustproof - a major argument for not consolidating the crests' pigments. It has not been designed to maintain a microclimate as the new gallery space is fully environmentally controlled.

Fig 62: Scholars, Travellers and Traders showcase in the process of being dressed, showing the floor to ceiling display.

Fig 63: The dance crest platforms constructed of aluminium L-brackets supporting circular platforms.

Fig 64: A close-up of the platforms. The platform on the left will take dance crest 1997.98. A non-slip matt has been placed on the platform to cushion and prevent movement.

Buildings Management System probes have been built into the showcase floor to continuously monitor environmental conditions, sending RH and temperature data back to a central computer. Until this is up and running Hanwell Data Loggers are being used. The brief for the showcases in this gallery was to keep RH to between 45% and 55% and temperature between 17°C and 21°C. The lighting is fibre optics and light levels do not exceed 50 lux.

Fig 65: Feathers from the dance crests in Materials World. Some will be put back on the dance crests, others will remain as separate exhibits.