

Conservation of a Buckinghamshire Colour



Conservation and slide presentation :
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The beginning

- The first time I saw the Colours, in 2002, they were displayed high on the sun drenched walls of the old Drill Hall, where they had been for several decades.



Taking the Colours down

It was nearly a year later that we were finally able to take the Colours down and roll them for storage.

This was when I realised just how faded, weak, brittle, and desiccated they actually were.



Conservation work begins!



The Colours were brought to my conservation workshop in the autumn of 2005 and work began at the end of November. The first thing I did was unroll them and refresh my memory.

**This is the story of the
conservation of the
First Buckinghamshire
Volunteers Colour of
1803:**



The Colour had been sandwiched between two layers of brown net and stitched in a grid pattern. After years of bright sunlight, this net was completely rotten so the first job was to remove it.



Firstly the grid stitching was cut through and the net on the upper side peeled away.

The photos which follow show the net being removed.









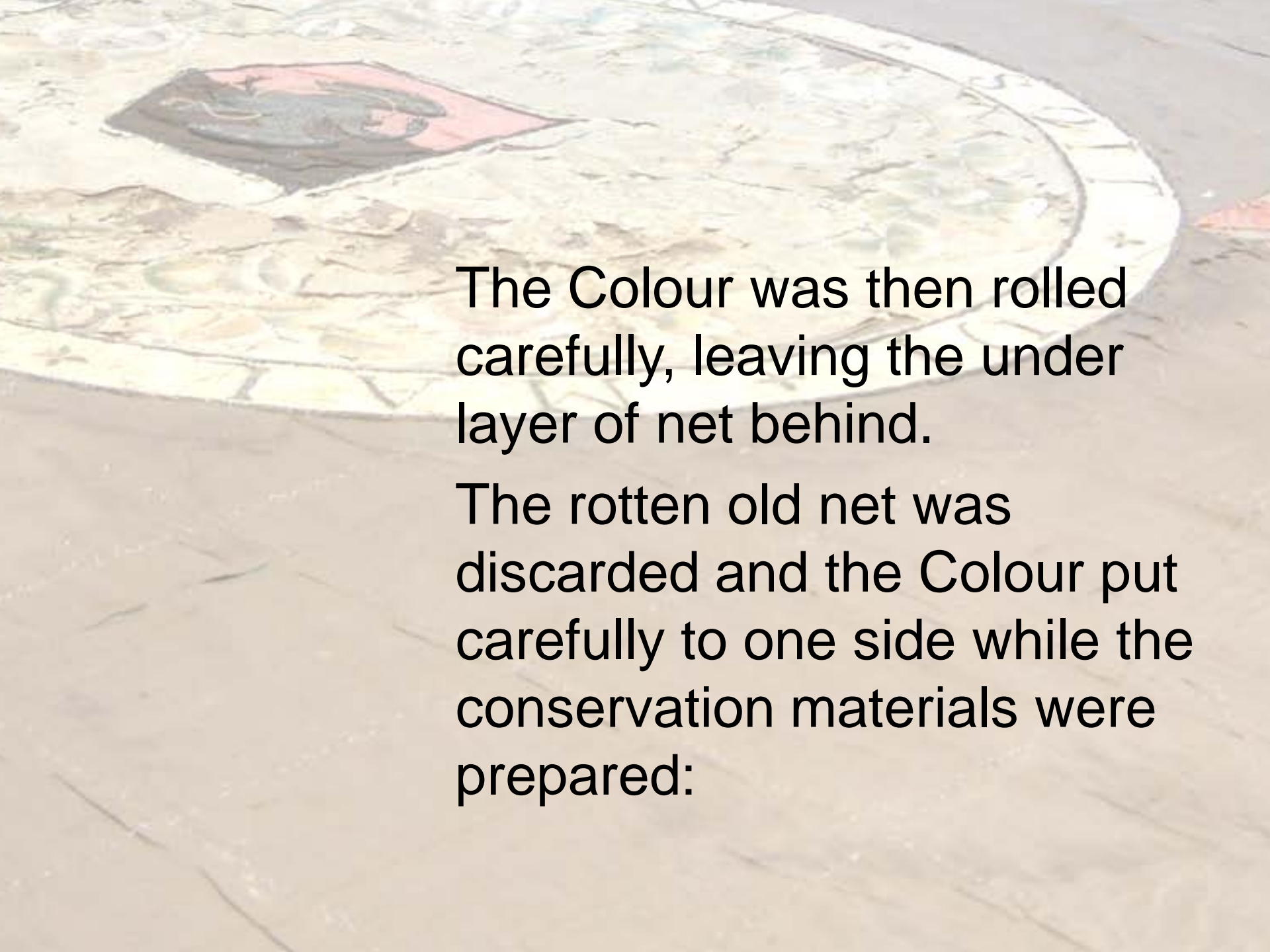










A large, circular, textured object, possibly a net or a piece of fabric, with a central red and black pattern. The object is set against a light-colored, textured background. The central pattern is a dark, irregular shape with a red border. The overall appearance is that of a large, circular, textured object, possibly a net or a piece of fabric, with a central red and black pattern.

The Colour was then rolled carefully, leaving the under layer of net behind.

The rotten old net was discarded and the Colour put carefully to one side while the conservation materials were prepared:

Because the Colour was extremely fragile, brittle and, literally, turning to dust in many places, I decided that the only safe way to hold it together would be to use conservation adhesives.

Sewing was just not an option!

Firstly I took several lengths of very fine silk gauze and laid them out on tightly stretched polythene. I then painted on a specially formulated conservation adhesive and allowed it to dry.

The following photos show this process:















As soon as the adhesive was fully dry, I carefully removed each length of silk from the polythene base by rolling it onto a plastic pipe. The next few photos show me doing this:

















The silk gauze was then laid out on the work table, adhesive side up, and the Colour unrolled onto it.



After unrolling and removing the tissue paper, the Colour had to be eased into position and loose pieces put into their correct places:







Key parts of the Colour were then fixed in place on the adhesive coated gauze, using the gentle warmth of a spatula iron:



Because the Union Flag area of the Colour was very fragmented, some of the brown net had been left in place until the tiny pieces of silk could be stuck down. Before work could continue, the remaining net had to be removed.

The following pictures show this process :













After positioning all the pieces of silk, loose dust was removed using a soft brush and suction from an adjustable vacuum cleaner, set very low!



An iron, set on “Cool”, was used to soften the adhesive on the silk gauze and to stick the Colour firmly in place. The special paper between the iron and the Colour is to prevent the two from sticking to each other!



Mounting the Colour

A mounting board was constructed for the Colour. It was then covered with an isolating film, soft cotton and finally a strong, natural coloured linen.



The Colour was unrolled onto the new mounting board and then covered with some very fine net, which I had dyed to match the silk.



The Colour and the net were both carefully positioned and then stitched into place. As you will see, working around the edges is quite easy, but securing the middle is not always the most comfortable job!



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I then covered the red pole sleeve with red net and stitched it down.



Finally I repaired and secured the broken tassels and stitched them into position on the mounting board.



Here is
the
finished
Colour !

