

# Creative Approaches to Integrated Pest Management: Engaging Museum Staff and Creating Buy-In

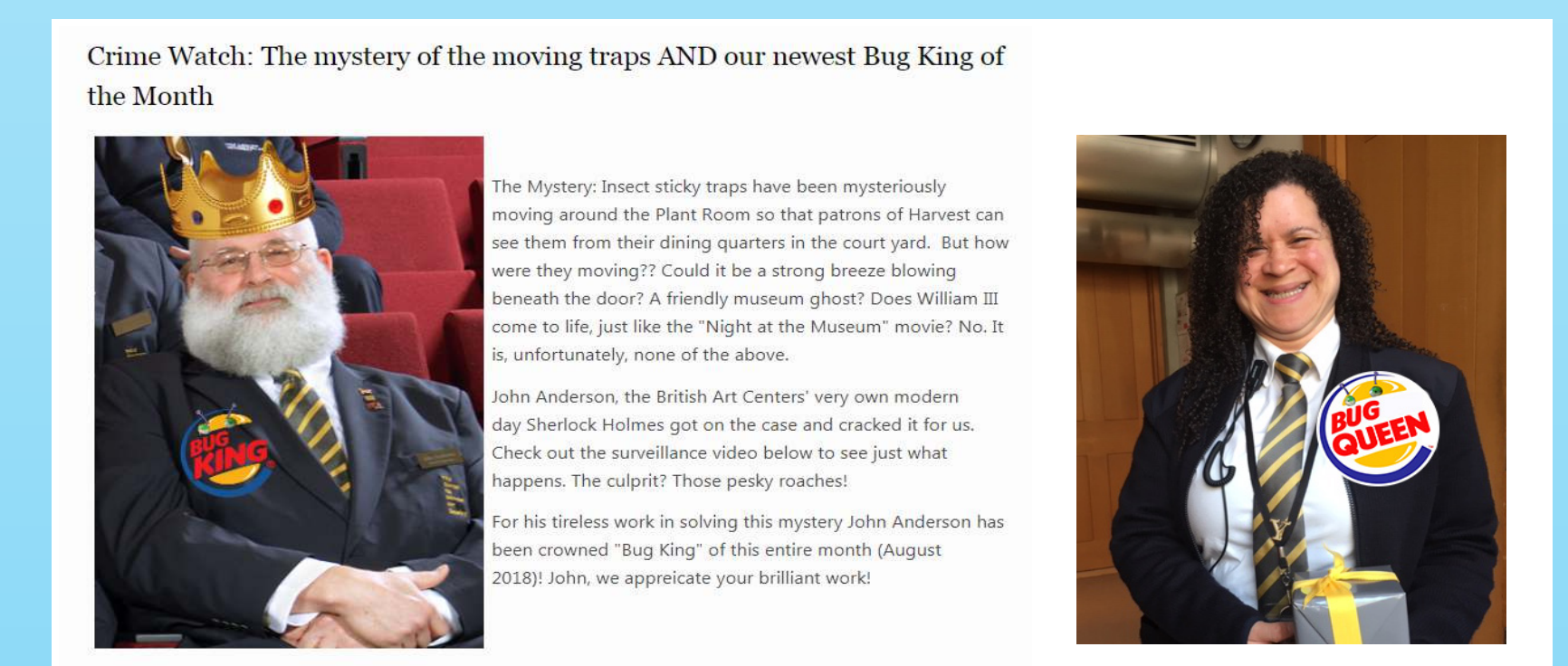
Abbie Griffiths Kundishora  
Conservation Assistant

YALE  
CENTER  
FOR  
BRITISH  
ART

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a critical component of collection care. At the Yale Center for British Art (YCBA) a small team manages our recently re-invented, museum-wide IPM program to protect our collections from insect infestations and rodents. Monitoring all corners of the museum takes a significant amount of time and energy. Because of this, it has been essential to increase incentives for all departments to participate in the IPM program. Using four creative campaigns that promote positivity in both communication about IPM issues and interaction with the environment of the museum, we have achieved an increased level of buy-in from general staff at the YCBA and an overall increase in efficiency of IPM monitoring and pest prevention.

## Author

Abbie is the Conservation Assistant in the Paper Conservation Department at the Yale Center for British Art. She received her Bachelor's degree from The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, UK in 2010, and a Fine Art Post Baccalaureate from Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts in Connecticut, USA in 2015. She has worked globally, in the UK, Kenya, and USA, for numerous non-profit and arts organizations. Email [abbie.kundishora@yale.edu](mailto:abbie.kundishora@yale.edu)



## Bug Jars

Providing each staff member with a clear screw top "bug jar" has increased the number of insects being passively caught around the museum.



### What:

- A transparent, screw top, receptacle to catch any insects staff come across
- personalized with novel insect image stickers


### Why:

- Physical reminder of the IPM mission
- Not all people like insects, in fact some people really hate them, but the stickers on the jars portray insects that are frequently considered to be cuter and less threatening than the rest; these include butterflies, ladybirds, and even praying mantises.


### Results:

- Increased positive conversations about IPM
- Normalized insects as something less intimidating than commonly perceived.
- The transparent nature of the jar facilitates live capture, which allows for easier identification.
- Uptick in passive monitoring has identified key areas where cleaning needed to be increased.

**Found a Bug? What to do if you find a creepy crawler!**  
If you find just one insect please **trap** it and let Abbie know that you have something for her! You can **use your handy bug jar**. If you can't trap it, **carefully** kill it - grab some **clear tape** and carefully stick it, or falling that gently squish it using something soft like a **tissue** and **your finger** so that Abbie might still be able to get an identification from the remains. If it is already dead, even better - give Abbie a call and she will come and collect it herself! If you find an infestation (more than one insect or signs of breeding or damage) **on a collection object or in a collection space** please **call Abbie immediately**. If for any reason Abbie is unavailable wrap the object in a clear plastic bag and seal it with tape. If you find an infestation somewhere else in the building other than collection areas please call both Abbie Kundishora and Paul Harding.



**Found a Rodent? What to do if you see a mouse or a rat!**  
If you see a mouse or a rat inside the building **leave** and **seal** the room. Call Abbie Kundishora and Paul Harding.



*Banky: Our Time Will Come*

## Intranet page and positive language

The way in which policies and IPM information are communicated to staff is key for building and sustaining staff engagement.

### What:

- An intranet page delivers guidelines that each staff member can follow to assist the IPM efforts. This is instead of a formal list of policies that will likely sit unread
- Guidelines are phrased positively rather than as instructions beginning with "Don't"
- A quarterly email update is sent to all staff so that information is accessible to those who have limited access to computers in their positions, such as security and custodial staff

### Why:

- Informal language and fun anecdotes make information easier to absorb
- Listing updates about our IPM findings with images in one place makes the information easy to find and reinforces the policies

### Results:

- The page generates conversations in person about IPM and our museum.

## in their words

*Bug jars are helpful. When I did see a spider, there was nothing to put it in. Now there is.* {Prints & Drawings}

*I like having my bug jar nearby in case of bug incident* {Paintings & Sculpture}

*I like the announcement feature [on the Intranet site], I feel that it is informative* {Prints & Drawings}

*It is a huge relief that pests are being 'managed'* {Conservation}

*It has made it more fun and has increased my awareness and knowledge of the program* {Security}

## Bug Bingo

"Bug Bingo" was introduced as a game to all departments. The goal is to report five of the listed environmental or common museum pest incidences.

### What:

- A check board listing insects and other factors that contribute to insect activity within the museum
- Every time a member reports something that is in a square on the board it is crossed off
- The winner of Bug Bingo gets a gift from the YCBA gift shop and is awarded title of Bug King or Bug Queen of the month

### Why:

- used as a training and educational tool in workshops for security and custodial staff
- applicable to all departments
- fun way of introducing ways that all staff can pitch in to IPM efforts
- demonstrates need for inclusive action without formally adding IPM tasks to staff members long list of responsibilities

### Results:

- friendly competition between staff members has created positive conversations about IPM throughout the building
- people feel open to asking questions about what is happening and what insects have shown up in the museum
- staff are happy to offer information about things that they see knowing that it will be openly received

*People are happy to help and have fun being King or Queen* {Security}

*I believe that the work being done by [the IPM team] has a positive response and an increase in morale* {Security}

*This sheds light into a deep BAC secret. Bugs have always been a part of BAC life, I'm happy we're celebrating at long last!* {Installations}

*I feel pest management is now properly managed and am always impressed & reassured by prompt responses to bug issues* {Paintings & Sculpture}

## Bug King & Bug Queen

Acknowledging the staff who have contributed to the IPM efforts in unique or significant ways has proven to create friendly competition amongst staff.

### What:

- Staff members are acknowledged for their IPM efforts by being awarded title of "Bug King" or "Bug Queen" of the month
- Each King or Queen is gifted a fun pin to wear if they want to
- Given a shout out on the IPM intranet page and featured in the quarterly email newsletter

### Why:

- Acknowledging people is important for the creation and continuation of open communication between departments
- Acknowledgements maintain positive relationships with custodial staff who have shouldered an increase in work due to the IPM program.

### Results:

- Increased engagement with IPM from many staff across different departments
- Positive relationships have been built throughout the museum with some staff mentioning an increase in morale
- Honest and open conversations are being created
- Team building and the recognition of IPM as a common goal for all departments



## Conclusion

IPM programs support the common goal of preserving and protecting collections in museums and other cultural heritage sites. Novel and inclusive activities, education, and positive reinforcement for behaviors that support IPM policies have empowered staff at the YCBA to respond to their wider work environment and fostered a greater sense of community, morale, and responsibility for the care of our collection objects.