photographic results. Unfortunately, where archaeological specimens are involved, the original color of a bead is frequently obscured by a layer of patina, resulting in rather drab photographs, regardless of the photographer's skill. In such cases, it is important to try and reveal a bead's true color.

If the patina is thick, there is little that can be done. However, if it is relatively thin, an application of a high-quality mineral oil will bring out the original color without harming the bead. The best way to apply the oil is with a camel hair brush. Apply the oil sparingly as an excess will cause glare. Keep in mind that the oil will evaporate quite quickly under hot studio lights so, if not using a flash, perform bead layouts and focusing before the oil is applied. If the oil does evaporate, simply apply more. *Never* utilize vegetable oil or lubricating oil as these will leave a sticky, dust-collecting residue that will also stain whatever the bead touches.

Once the photographs have been taken, oil residue should be removed from the beads. To accomplish this, the beads, held in forceps or mounted on a wire loop, should be rinsed in a series of four beakers of petroleum ether 30-60 in a well-ventilated area. Both the mineral oil and ether are inert with glass and, consequently, the procedure described here will not conflict with the desire to preserve the specimens, a major concern to collection's managers and curators.

My thanks to John Stewart, Senior Conservation Scientist, Conservation Division, Parks Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, for his input regarding the procedure described above.

46. AN UNUSUAL MODERN BEAD (?) FROM CHINA, by Karlis Karklins (1996, 28:19-20)

Just when you think you know it all, along comes something to put you in your place. This was the case when Vonda Lee Adorno handed me a large bead at the Third International Bead Conference in Washington, D.C., last November and asked my thoughts on it. The object that sat heavily in my hand was globular, 24 mm in diameter, and weighed 15.5 g. It was coral colored and had been obtained in Beijing in 1994. Part of the bead had broken away, exposing the internal structure (Pl. IB top). The specimen had a wooden core with five lead plugs ca. 6 mm in diameter set 5-11 mm apart in a band that diagonally encircled the bead. The core was covered with a shiny, 1.5- cm-thick layer of a coral-colored material that was difficult to scratch with a pin and was also resistant to burning. The material exhibited a conchoidal fracture and a slightly laminated structure and may be some sort of plastic. The object had a ca. 3-mm-diameter hole through it. The wood looked new and the lead plugs were only slightly oxidized, suggesting that the specimen was of recent manufacture.

So, what is this thing? At first I suspected that the lead had been added to give the bead extra weight to mimic that of coral. But, as Vonda pointed out, the lead actually made the object much heavier than coral. The weight suggests that it did not function as a necklace component but as an attractive weight on something–possibly a curtain pull or something similar. Anyone with any thoughts on this unusual object and its possible use(s) is asked to contact the editor.

47. MORE ON THE "UNUSUAL MODERN BEAD (?) FROM CHINA," by Karlis Karklins (1996, 29:7)

In response to the item on "An Unusual Modern Bead (?) from China" in the April issue, Joan Eppen from California sent in a couple more examples found on a strand of imitation coral beads from Asia. Obtained in the early 1990s, the specimens are clearly imitation-coral beads. They are barrel shaped, measuring 11.8 mm in diameter and 9.5 mm in length, with deeply cracked surfaces. Like their larger counterparts, these have a wooden core as well but, due to their size, only have a single cylindrical lead insert which passes through the core perpendicular to the perforation. The latter has been drilled through both the wooden core and lead insert. As Joan said in her accompanying note: "Someone worked really hard to make these, but why?" Why indeed? It would take a fair bit of time to produce the core, drill it, insert the lead cylinder, then drill the perforation and cover the whole with a layer of coral-colored material. The reason for the lead inserts is clearly to give the beads weight like that of real coral, but since the finished products look like plastic, why go to the bother? Joan further informed me that, according to Paddy Kan who imports these, "they were indeed Chinese, 19th Century, and that the covering was of a kind of tree resin (early plastic?)." However, they just look a little too "fresh" to be that vintage and the identification of the outer layer still needs to be verified. Any plastics experts out there willing to look at one of these beads and give us an opinion?

As it now stands, we know that these items were beads made to imitate coral, probably in China, but we still do not know where or when exactly, by whom and why. Maybe someone can provide more information in the next *Forum*.

48. BEAD RESEARCH DOS AND DON'TS, by Karlis Karklins (1998, 32:10-15)

As ever-increasing numbers of people are drawn to beads, more and more of them want to know more