

74. Final words

The project has been completed and it has achieved its main aims: we have documented and recorded the condition of the monumental stained glass windows from the Carmelite Church at Boppard, photographed them, conserved them and they have been returned to display in much improved condition.



45.487.2.c-d Before conservation 2012 - After conservation 2014

With careful resource planning and prioritising treatment we have been able to achieve more than was originally anticipated and all three windows are back on display. Two of them have a new frame system which will keep them safe and in good condition for the years to come.

I was able to see almost all of the stained glass from the Carmelite Church that is distributed among Museums and historic buildings in the US and in Germany and to compare the condition of this glass with the glass held at the Burrell. This research has helped inform our conservation decisions and significantly contributed to the understanding of the restorations undertaken in the 19th and early 20th century. The project has enabled us to connect with conservators, archivists and historians in these other institutions and helped to further our knowledge and understanding of this important part of European heritage.

The scientific analysis undertaken by Cardiff University was very useful as we were able to prove the presence of a copper based resinate paint. This use of unfired paint was perhaps not so unusual in early stained glass but it rarely survives. The analysis of fired paints, cold retouching and other surface accretions was less conclusive, either because the samples were too contaminated by lead or because the results could not be matched to existing databases with absolute certainty. It confirmed that more research needs to be undertaken in this field.



Above, Megan and Katie cleaning glass and below right, John's donor panel

While Megan and I carried out most of the treatment, we were much helped by Katie Harrison for the last weeks of the project. In total we cleaned about 60 m² of glass, we secured torn lead and replaced putty, and worked on improving support structures.

John Rattenbury, was a huge support during the project. He helped us with digital media and made a massive contribution to the blog. As a volunteer guide, his help was a donation to the project and to thank him we presented him with a donor panel that Megan and I made ourselves - albeit not during working hours.

John's donor panel

While clearly not strictly an exercise in conservation, this was a great opportunity for us to try out some of the technology that would have gone into making the Boppard stained glass and it made us really appreciate the skill and cost of these windows made by two workshops between 1443 and 1446.

The last 2 years have been a real highlight in my career giving me the opportunity to focus on a conservation project in the discipline that I originally trained in and I am very grateful to the Clothworkers' Foundation for making that possible.

- Marie Stumpff

