



This year's conference was based at Worcester and began with an evening talk about Gloucester Cathedral. Robin Lunn filled in its history. The body of Edward II, killed at nearby Berkeley Castle, was buried in 1327 in the south transept. When Edward III took power 3 years later he directed that his father's body should lie within the 'most beautiful building possible', so a shrine-like

tomb was erected in the quire – the first great Perpendicular-style building, with behind it a new East window (which at the time was the largest in Europe) with angled wings to either side producing the effect of a great triptych of blue and red columns; it was probably made in the same Bristol workshop as the earlier Tewkesbury Abbey windows. Robin detailed its iconography (an example below), Richard Cann (a cathedral guide) discussed the much-repaired 15C Lady Chapel East window and Peter Cormack the history of Christopher Whall's work there. Whall was so keen to get this commission that he accepted half wages, in the hope of securing the entire project – but was thwarted by the 'slippery Dean'. Peter also discussed Whall's use of pure glass colours and pure whites to add 'sparkle' (top), his vibrant slab glass and approach to the figure canopies – called by Ralph Adams Cram 'at the same time perfectly medieval and perfectly modern'.

FRIDAY At Gloucester Cathedral, a major restoration is planned for the Lady Chapel, and Steve Clare detailed his glazing history, his survey done with a cherry picker! He had found in the archives that sulphurous-coal-burning Gurney stoves were installed in the 1860s, causing much damage (a common problem in UK cathedrals) and proposed a policy of 'minimal intervention', removing algal and lichen growth that were causing paint loss on the internal glass, but keeping much old lead.

Peter Cormack pointed out some features in Whall's windows: how in the Nativity (S side) he had continued a beam of light in the original medieval fragment down to his Virgin's head, his



canopies made of foliage, and the lower lights with little narratives relating to the saints in the main lights above (though he had first planned to fill these small spaces with heraldry). We then had some time to wander freely. I revisited the East window, to admire the fluidity of its the figure tracery, and was much amused by the grotesques; many of the large 19C windows were by Hardman, with exquisite painted detail such as the 'weeping angel' (top right). I was most taken, though, by his set of smaller cloister windows in which a mischievous Lucifer tempted Christ, prancing amongst the rocks whilst turning them to bread (left).



After lunch we departed for St Christopher, Warden Hill, Cheltenham, a 1960s building that local artist Tom Denny had filled with a 'virtuoso display' (Pevsner) of 10 windows between 1985 and 1995, which he stated summarized his journey in glass since college – first using mostly Hartley Woods in the earliest



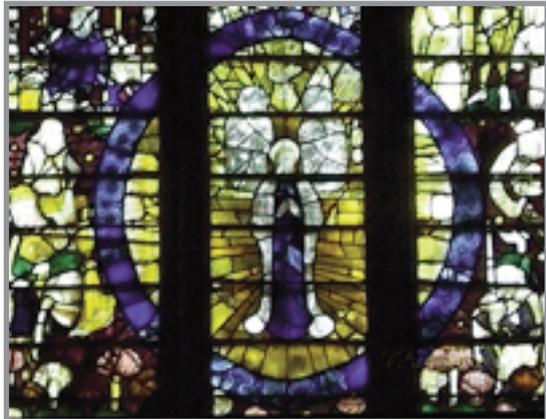
windows; then intense reds, acid etching and stain in The Ravens (above) to 'draw the light in'; and finally using much plated flashed glass; his leading and shapes also evolved from angular forms to circular. Tom also spoke of his approach to design (he began by placing colour and tone rather than where particular things are), his plating technique (he seals the two edges together with Sellotape to make a temporary seal, then carefully cements), and why he uses plating rather than enamels (because of the surface quality).

On finally to Tewkesbury Abbey, which boasts some of the finest mid 14C glass in the country. A series of armoured knights, probably lords of the manor, seemingly elbow their way out of their niches (e.g. right). They are flanked by prophets also depicted dynamically in flowing robes. A 'Last Judgement' in the East window is topped by a rose window of Mary's coronation, with musician angels. In the lower lights, a small, naked kneeling figure on the right of four panels depicting the resurrection of souls appears out of place and has probably been moved there; she is thought to be Eleanor Despencer, who in 1335 inherited a vast fortune and may have commissioned the window.

Most of the later glass is 19C – some of Hardman's finest work, and a few by Kempe. A 1906 'Builder's window' is by James Powell & Sons, there is a Geoffrey Webb (1945) and two by Tom Denny (2002) on 'Love' and 'Work' (detail right), typifying his later 'impressionistic' approach, in restful harmonic tones of greeny-blues and golds with shady images.



SATURDAY The previous evening's talks, by Penny Hebgin-Barnes on the medieval glazing of Great Malvern Priory and Roy Albutt on the 20C glasspainters of the Birmingham group, had prepared us for the day's glass-feast, and we started at Great Malvern Priory, which has the most extensive collection of 15C glass in the UK outside York. The many donors of individual windows included the Despencers, the West window given by Richard III and Ann Neville, and the 'Magnificat' given by Henry

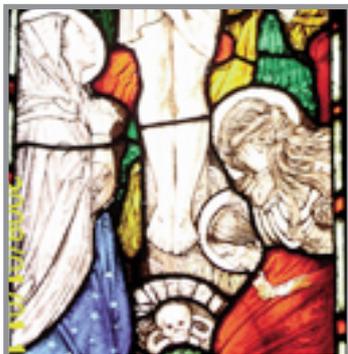


VII, of Mary's Coronation within a vast circle of glorious gold and deep heavenly blue (detail above). As at Tewkesbury, medieval glass fragments had been used to fill in damage from iconoclasts and Cromwell's troops – the E and W windows both containing intruded glass including donors and angels – and other windows had been misplaced, such as the S choir saints and nine orders of angels, originally in the nave. Despite this, and loss of detail to many delicately painted faces, etc., some panels are well preserved, including the Old Testament scenes in St Anne's chapel – in one (right), God creates the Earth, complete with compass!

Our next stop was Madresfield Court, private home of the Lygon family for centuries, with an A&C style chapel designed, decorated and furnished by Henry Payne and his students and colleagues at the Birmingham School of Art. Roy Albutt, author of a recent book on the School, enlightened us. A wedding present from Lord Beauchamp to his bride, the chapel is often considered the most complete expression of the A&C style, with frescoes by Payne



and assistants depicting the family children, altar paintings, triptych, embroidery, altar cross and metalwork all by the 'Birmingham Group'. On the N and S walls are three glass panels of different sizes, including Christ as a young carpenter in greens and reds (left), and a Crucifixion (detail below). Quarries in the doors and screen feature in Christopher Whall's seminal text as quarry examples.



The morning's last visit was Worcester Cathedral, where Tim Bridges talked about its history. Though founded in Saxon times, it was mainly early Norman, but in the 1170s the tower collapsed and the East end was rebuilt in the Early English style. Though a few fragments of grisaille date back to the 1360s, much of the early glass was lost in civil war, when the building was used to stable horses! There is, however, a fine collection of 19C glass (notably a Hardman Powell West window of 1875 and an 1853 Jesse Tree by Frederick Preedy), also early 20C windows by both Whalls and the Bromsgrove Guild artists Eadie Reid and A. J. Davies showing scenes from the church's history (detail right). The Elgar memorial window is by A K Nicholson, and a millenium window is by Tom Denny.



At the next stop, Fladbury, are also Preedy windows (1820–98), ten in total, which span almost his whole career and provide a catalogue of his developing artistic style (the Preedy family lived here). Preedy was a rare individual, training first as an architect but also designing stained glass. His first windows were made by George Rogers but they fell out over the too-purplish blue glass used in his window at Worcester, so Preedy took to making his own windows. Here too is important medieval glass;

a heavily restored early 14C panel of the Virgin and Child, in green pot metal and amber stain (right) is virtually identical to one in Wardon church. It comes from Evesham Abbey, and has been on loan to major Paris and London exhibitions. Among the many heraldic panels (probably also from Evesham Abbey) are the arms of Simon de Montfort, Henry de Montfort and Hugh le Despencer, all killed at the battle of Evesham in 1265.



SUNDAY Great Witley, our last visit, has some rare George I glass, with ten large panels by Joshua Price, bought from a great house at Edgware and refitted into a Classical interior with stucco ceiling. The round-topped windows are largely in vivid enamels painted on thin window glass in a rectangular grid, but with limited amounts of pot metal, where the leading pattern changes to follow the pot outline, and sometimes the leading is used to reinforce the perspective effect (detail below). Steve Clare spoke about its conservation problems – including flaking blue enamel, and the thin glass breaking extensively on removal from Edgware and falling on the pavement, which was dealt with by edge bonding and plating on a back layer. Finally, some of us took tea on the lawn, with much to mull over as we made our way home. Chris Wyard

