

International Placement Experience - Cologne Cathedral April - July 2016.

Funding from the Churches Conservation Foundation helped me to realise an ambition of completing a 12 week international conservation placement which has been a tremendously valuable, fascinating and rewarding experience. It was especially interesting to discuss international issues in stained glass conservation and witness at first hand the specific problems, conservation responses and the pioneering research being conducted in Cologne.

The commanding 157 metre high gothic towers of Cologne Cathedral dominate the city. Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1996, the cathedral attracts thousands of visitors every year and is internationally renowned as one of the most iconic cathedrals in the gothic style. The foundation stone was laid in 1248 yet the cathedral was only officially completed in 1880. Nonetheless, between these times it continued to be the seat of the archbishop and the centre of Christian liturgical practice in the city. Cologne Cathedral was and remains to be one of Europe's most important pilgrimage churches. It is one of only a handful of cathedrals still to have an on-site workshop specialising in the conservation and maintenance of all aspects of the building and contents. The art historians, craftspeople and conservators of the *Dombauhütte* are, amongst other disciplines, experts in stone masonry, carpentry, metal working, glazing and stained glass conservation combining both traditional and pioneering methods.



Cologne Cathedral, Germany. West Façade. Source: Barbara Schock-Werner, *Kölner Dom*, 2nd ed. (Köln: Greven, 2011), 16.

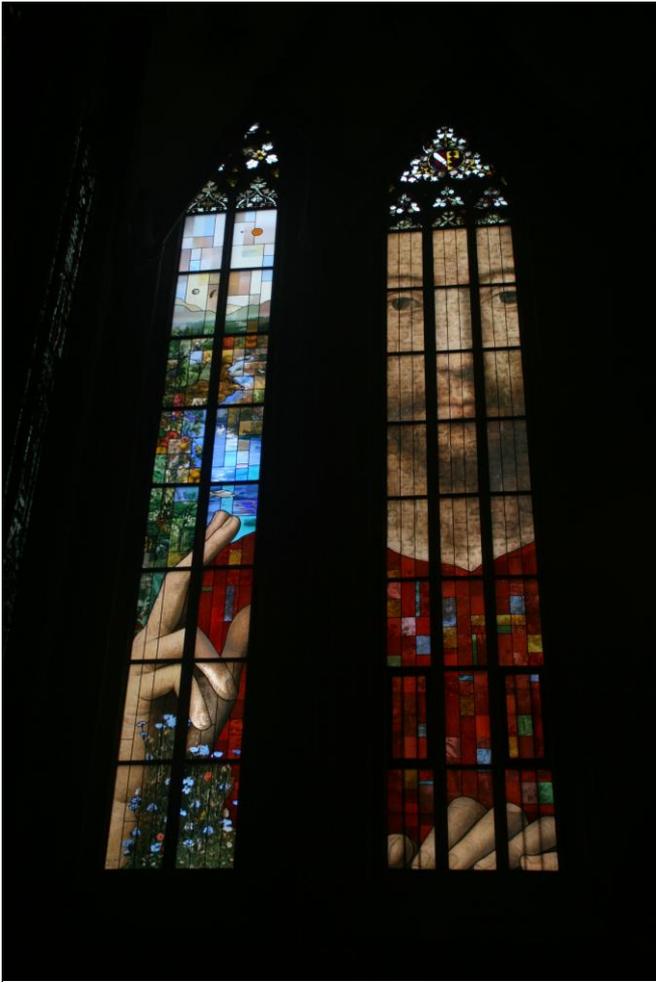
The placement allowed me to develop my proficiency in practical conservation in an outstanding studio environment under the guidance of experienced professionals and experts in the field. Cologne Cathedral conducts leading scientific research in the field of stained glass conservation. Whilst at the Dombauhütte I was involved in a collaborative project where glass sensors were installed into the cathedral to measure the efficiency of isothermal protective glazing systems. The Cathedral uses internally ventilated isothermal protective glazing, currently thought to be the best possible type of protection for vulnerable glass and unstable paint surfaces. During the 12 weeks I also completed necessary conservation work on two medieval panels c.1300 from the clerestory 'Cycle of Kings.' I conducted documentation, cleaning, paint consolidation and lead matrix stabilisation on both panels. Through this I strengthened my dexterity and applied skills, improved my problem solving and developed my conservation judgment. I have learned a great deal about the history and theory of stained glass practice in Germany, its conservation and ethics as well as the wider issues affecting the historic built environment both in Germany and the rest of Europe.

I was given the opportunity to visit the 12 Romanesque churches in the centre of Cologne and also to join the Dombauhütte staff on their annual study trip which was held this year at Strasbourg Cathedral, France. I spent two days with colleagues exploring stone conservation techniques, innovative glass printing and observing the conservation strategies for the original medieval architectural plans still existing at the cathedral.

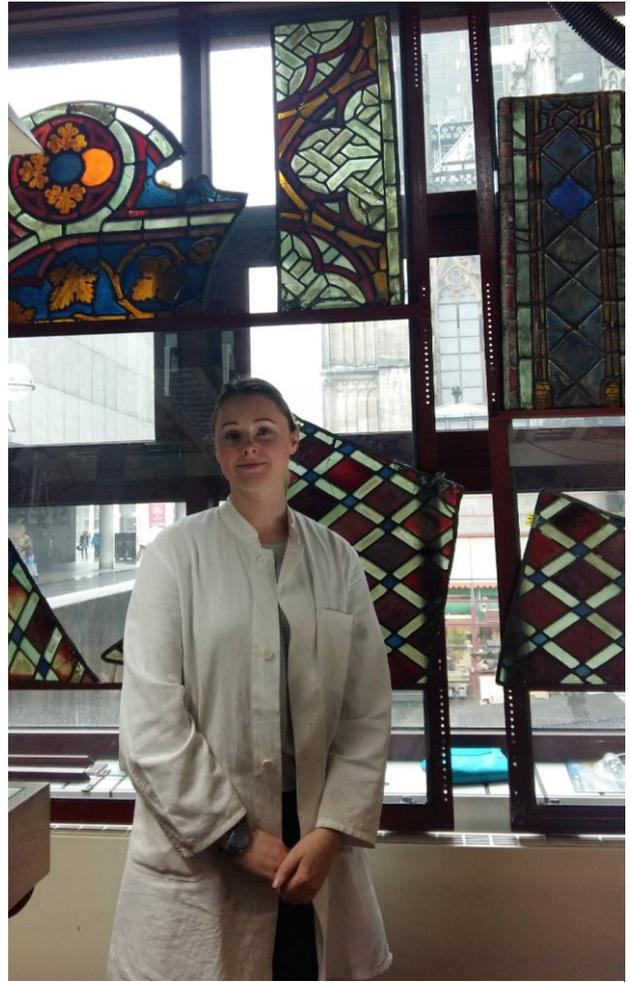
Alongside working in Cologne this summer, I have been fortunate enough to contribute to seminars in the UK and become a volunteer at St. Martin cum Gregory Church, York, which houses the Stained Glass Centre. The varied experience I have gained is invaluable and the knowledge and skills I have attained and strengthened will be the basis for my future in stained glass conservation. The more I see and learn, the more I wish to dedicate my future to the care of churches and their magnificent works of art. I offer this brief report with sincere gratitude to the Churches Conservation Foundation.



Cleaning the lead matrix of a medieval stained glass panel. June 2016.



Innovative printed window at Strasbourg Cathedral, France. Installed 2015. Photograph taken during study trip June 2016.



With completed panels, July 2016.