

Institution: University of East Anglia
Unit of Assessment: 30 History
Title of case study: The Norfolk Medieval Stained Glass Project
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Outstanding both for its quality and quantity, the medieval stained glass of Norfolk represents a major aspect of world heritage. It also supplies a rich resource for artists, museum curators, teachers and local study groups. Under the direction of Carole Rawcliffe, and utilising the academic expertise of David King, a leading authority on medieval glazing, the Norfolk Medieval Stained Glass Project secured funding of £266,888 from the Leverhulme Trust to promote a wider awareness and appreciation of the treasures in our midst and to ensure their (previously threatened) long-term future. Between 2005 and 2010, the project catalogued the surviving glass and documented what had been destroyed. Impact was broadcast via an innovative website and by published materials and exhibitions intended to deliver findings of interdisciplinary significance to an international constituency of museums, historians, teachers, tourists and other members of the general public.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>An interest in the material culture of the late Middle Ages has been integral to the work of Rawcliffe since her earliest days researching the history of the fifteenth-century Stafford family. An interest in heraldry and symbolism inevitably led her to the images preserved in medieval stained glass. Although widespread destruction in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, followed by 'improvements' in the Victorian period, caused irreparable losses to Norfolk's stained glass, over 270 of the county's buildings (mostly parish churches) still preserve their glass in whole or in part. Much of this is exceptional both for its quality and for the fact that it is richly documented. It offers unique insight into the aspirations, beliefs and political affiliations of the men and women who paid so handsomely for their buildings to be decorated.</p> <p>In 1998, Rawcliffe obtained a grant of £59,530 from the Town Close Charity for the production of a two-volume History of Norwich, showcasing the city's material and documentary evidences, amongst them the medieval stained glass. David King was then an honorary research fellow of the School of History at the University of East Anglia (UEA). He is a leading international authority on stained glass and is himself descended from a family prominent, over several generations, in the stained glass trade. He was nearing completion of his study of the glazing in the Norwich church of St Peter Mancroft, since published under the auspices of the British Academy's Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi (CVMA). King was invited to contribute a chapter on 'Glass-Painting' to Rawcliffe and Wilson's <i>Medieval Norwich</i>, published in 2004. His chapter was praised by reviewers, not least because of the insight that it offered into the city's economy, culture and religious life.</p> <p>The need to catalogue the equally impressive but still little known examples of medieval glass scattered throughout the county was clearly apparent, as was the imperative to document what had been lost or moved. Since much of the surviving glass remained vulnerable to church closures, vandalism and environmental damage, the urgency of such an undertaking was undeniable. There was a clear need here for an interdisciplinary approach, spanning the work of historians, art historians and experts in late medieval religious culture. The School of History at UEA enjoys close and longstanding relations with UEA's art historians, most notably with Professor Sandy Heslop who acted as advisor to the bidding process and who thereafter helped Rawcliffe in the mentoring of King. Furthermore, the new advances in computer technology, exploited in collaboration with the digital humanities centre at King's College London, offered an opportunity for truly innovative design and dissemination of the resulting materials. With the enthusiastic support of the CVMA, in 2005 Rawcliffe made a successful application to the Leverhulme Trust for a research grant of £266, 888 to employ David King as a senior Research Fellow in the School of History for a period of five years. The award also provided full funding for a PhD student (Claire</p>

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Daunton) to examine the patronage of Norfolk glass under Rawcliffe's supervision (2006-2009). The project had two interconnected aims: to produce a series of scholarly articles and a full-length academic study of Norfolk medieval glass for publication in the CVMA British Series, and to disseminate this research in a more immediately accessible way, promoting preservation and conservation, and providing relevant information for archivists, curators, conservators, teachers and tourists.

3. References to the research

David King, 'Glass-Painting', in Carole Rawcliffe and Richard Wilson, *Medieval Norwich* (London and New York: Hambledon and London Books, 2004), pp. 121-36.

David King, *The Medieval Stained Glass of St Peter Mancroft, Norwich* (Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi, Great Britain, V, Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 2006), pp. ccxxxvii + 203; 24 plates and 187 figures

Claire Daunton, 'The Patronage and Iconography of Stained Glass in Late Medieval Norfolk: An Historical Analysis' (PhD thesis, University of East Anglia, 2009)

Research Grants

A grant of £59,530 to Carole Rawcliffe and Richard Wilson for the production of a two-volume History of Norwich by the Town Close Charity, Norwich.

The project was thereafter funded by a grant to Rawcliffe of £266,888 from the Leverhulme Trust, as a five-year research project. There is intense competition for Leverhulme research grants, applications being subject to stringent peer-review. The project was monitored throughout by an external steering committee, which met annually; and by detailed progress reports submitted each year to the Trust, which expressed satisfaction at every phase.

Justification of Quality

Like all the other contributions to *Medieval Norwich*, King's chapter was subject to peer assessment before publication. For reviewers' favourable response, see, for example, Professor David Palliser's comments in the *English Historical Review*, cxxi (2006), p. 917. All CVMA publications undergo a stringent reviewing and editing process before publication. Published reviews of *The Medieval Glass of St Peter Mancroft* have been uniformly favourable, describing it as 'authoritative' and 'a splendid exemplar of a Corpus Vitrearum study' (*Speculum*, lxxxiii (2008), pp. 207-9); as 'written in a lucid and accessible prose which makes it a pleasure to read' (*Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, clxi (2008), pp. 191-2); and 'parfait dans sa forme et passionnant quant au fond ... un livre magistral, donc, et qui dépasse de loin les seules bornes de son ambition affichée' (*Revue de l'Art*, clv no 1 (2007), pp. 75-7).

4. Details of the impact*The Process:*

The project began by photographing, measuring and describing all the known examples of medieval stained glass in Norfolk, while also undertaking the necessary archival research for the accompanying commentaries. It was soon possible to start making the most significant entries from the gazetteer available online, so that they could be freely consulted by the public, as well as specialist users, such as conservators and art historians. The necessary IT support was provided by the Computing Centre at King's College London and the organisers of the CVMA website, which acted as host. The value of this digital resource is underscored by the fact that a good deal of Norfolk glass remains in remote locations, sometimes locked away from view, while even the best-known examples benefit from on-screen magnification.

The resulting website is both innovative in design and appearance and widely used by the general public (many thousands of 'hits'). It is indeed the most visited web resource for stained glass not only in the UK but internationally. It now constitutes a valuable resource for museum curators and administrators, both at home and overseas. It has also had commercial impact via the contacts established between the project and the new Hungate Medieval Art Centre, itself Heritage-Lottery funded and opened in central Norwich in 2009. Claire Daunton, the research student attached to the project, was invited to organise the Centre's first exhibition, which attracted considerable media attention and has since toured to two other venues in the county. King played a leading role in producing the Centre's online and printed material designed to foster an appreciation of medieval glass. Thus has a research project, originally geared towards the needs of scholars, been calibrated to ensure maximum impact, scholarly, public and commercial. The project website is a world class show-case, transcending what might otherwise seem rather dry and dusty localism. The Hungate exhibition demonstrated a willingness to engage with tourism and the local community. As a practical illustration of the quality, vibrancy and influence of England's medieval stained glass, and as a means of advertising the expertise of UEA's historians to the very widest of constituencies, the project has achieved truly international reach.

Impacts and Benefits:

A website (incorporated in that of the CVMA) now offers high-quality digital photographs of all the medieval glass in the fifty-eight Norfolk churches most noted for their glazing, along with information about the context, location, patronage and subject matter. This material is interdisciplinary, innovative and freely available to the general public to consult and to download. It today constitutes a significant part of the CVMA online archive: the largest and most widely consulted of all such image banks, and a resource of internationally recognized authority and significance. Cultural capital is thus interpreted, and the public informed of its heritage.

The new HLF-funded Hungate Medieval Art Centre has drawn heavily on the expertise of those involved in the project: Rawcliffe has acted as vice-chair of the Trustees from the Centre's inception onwards. The Centre's opening exhibition in 2009, 'Journeys through the Light', on Norfolk stained glass, was curated by Daunton. King helped to train the volunteers involved in running the Centre and provided information for other displays, including complimentary booklets, educational packs and materials targetted both a schools and the general public. Rawcliffe, Daunton and King have all delivered public lectures at the Centre. The resulting exhibition of stained glass continues to be widely visited and admired. Education is informed and influenced, wealth is created, and tourism stimulated.

In collaboration with Hungate Medieval Art and as a direct spin-off from the project, King wrote descriptions of the glazing in forty Norfolk churches for a series of ten lavishly illustrated 'Hungate Stained Glass Trails' booklets. These are provided free of charge to visitors to the Centre; they are also freely available in each of the churches and may be downloaded freely from the internet (see <http://www.hungate.org.uk/Learning.aspx>). Throughout the duration of the project (and after its conclusion), lectures and talks have been delivered to a wide variety of non-academic audiences, including local historical societies, groups of conservators, and archaeological associations. Thus, once again, tourism, education and public heritage are all served.

The project has impact on other institutions. King, for example, assisted the Norwich Castle Museum in its successful bid for funding to acquire important examples of Norwich medieval glass, and helped with the preparation of the new medieval gallery where it is exhibited. The project has enjoyed international reach, so that King was consulted by staff of the Schnütgen Museum, Cologne, during the preparation of an exhibition on 'Rheinische Glasmalerei'. Thus public bodies are informed, and their policy is influenced.

Having supplied the information necessary to prevent the export overseas of the historic archive of G. King & Son, Norwich, Ltd, the leading British firm of glaziers and glass conservators, David King assisted Norfolk Record Office staff and a team of volunteers in photographing, conserving and

cataloguing this unique collection. Support from the Norfolk Medieval Stained Glass Project played a major part in the NRO's successful bid to The National Archives for a grant of £31,000 towards the costs involved. This archive will itself have long-term impact on scholarly and public understanding of the trade and its products. In 2011, it was the subject of a public exhibition at the Archive Centre in Norwich (the former Norfolk Record Office): 'Leading the Way: the Archive of G. King and Son (Lead Glaziers) Ltd', with more than 20,000 visitors (see the testimonial from the county archivist below). King has also provided art-historical reports and made several consultative visits to the studios of the glaziers, Devlin Plummer, to assist in their conservation of Norfolk medieval stained glass. Thus heritage is preserved and the public interest maintained.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. The main CVMA website: www.cvma.ac.uk
2. Testimonial Hungate Medieval Art: Chairman of Trustees, Hungate Medieval Art, St Peter Hungate, Princes Street, Norwich NR3 1AE
3. www.hungate.org.uk, the Centre website, including download links for King's 'Stained Glass Trails'

Testimonials

4. Dr Dagmar Täube, former Deputy Director of the Schnütgen Museum, Cologne, now at The Draifflessen Collection, Georgstraße 18, D-49497 Mettingen, Germany.
5. Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery, Castle Meadow, Norwich NR1 3JU.
6. Devlin Plummer Stained Glass Limited, Orchard Farm, Old Road, Great Moulton, Norwich NR15 2HA

The King Archive:

7. The County Archivist, Norfolk Record Office
8. Principal Archivist, Norfolk Record Office
9. See also: www.archives.norfolk.gov.uk/view/NCC099321 for the archive