GLASGOW’S
STAINED GLASS
Colour and Light

Glasgow City Heritage Trust
Stained Glass: A Brief Introduction

The name “stained” glass, is a misnomer which refers to a process originating in 14th century Britain. Previously, Silver Nitrate was used on glass as a yellow pigment. Unlike other colours, when applied it soaked right into the glass itself, thereby creating a permanent yellow stain.

All stained glass featured in this exhibition dates mainly from the 19th and 20th centuries onwards. Unfortunately, earlier examples of this fragile art form are rare. Most windows dating from the 16th century and before were destroyed through Reformation violence, or by centuries of Scottish weather and neglect. Colourful glass had no place in the newly reformed Scottish Kirk, so it was not until the 19th century that the art of Stained Glass in Scotland once again began to flourish. Stained glass windows added an authentic medieval touch to buildings being designed in the fashionable new Gothic Revival style, but over the decades various art movements have provided inspiration for stained glass artists. Post-war, memorial windows dominated, but after 1918 the exploration of personal and contemporary style became predominant. Artists like Douglas Strachan and Crear McCartney emerged, proving that this ancient art form was both modern and relevant. Now that we are paying closer attention to our built heritage than ever before, we should not neglect our stained glass. Its inclusion in a building is transformative, and it has a magical quality which makes it deserving of our attention.

The Project

This exhibition celebrates not only Glasgow’s stained glass, but our attempt to preserve it digitally. An ambitious three month project to create an online database of stained glass began in September 2014, in conjunction with RCAHMS and the Scottish Stained Glass Trust. This database, though small, will grow over time, providing researchers, artists, and students all over the world with a wonderful new resource. One day, we hope that all of Scotland’s stained glass will be catalogued, and we see this project as the beginning of this journey.

Find the database at: www.stainedglasstrustscotland.org.uk
**Title:** The Praise Windows  
**Artist:** Norman Macdougall  
**Date:** 1921  
**Location:** Kingsborough Porch, Hyndland Parish Church, 81 Hyndland Road.

This window is part of a pair which were the first windows to be installed in Hyndland Church. They were commissioned by renowned stained glass artists John and William Guthrie in memory of their father, also a stained glass artist named John Guthrie. The windows were designed by the notable Norman MacDougall (1852-1939), who at one point in his career was a freelance designer for the Guthrie family studio.

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**Title:** The Forrest  
**Artist:** Susan Laidler  
**Date:** 1984  
**Location:** West Wall of Renfield St Stephen’s Church, 260 Bath Street.

This striking window is unusual in its abstract design given the ecclesiastical setting. A plaque beneath the window states; “To the Glory of God in fond memory of Sheila Turner (1937-1984) By friends of this congregation and beyond. ‘And from the ground there blossoms red life that shall endless be.’” This quote was taken from a hymn entitled “O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go”. It was written by George Matheson, and first appeared in the Church of Scotland magazine Life and Work, in January 1882.
These windows were designed by Keith New (1952-2012). They are a part of Douglas Strachan's (1875-1950) 8 light window scheme for the chapel which celebrated the subjects studied at the University of Glasgow. Unfortunately, Strachan designed and constructed only 4 out of the 8 windows before his death, and in this instance left no designs, only the titles of the windows, 'Philosophy and Science'. New's windows are very different to the other lights in this scheme, but they are nevertheless sympathetic to both the architecture of the building and the linear style of the other windows.

Title: The Apse Windows  Artist: Unknown, but possibly William Cairney & Sons  Date: 1859  Location: The Apse of St. Andrews Cathedral, 90 Dunlop Street.

The Apse of St. Andrews contains three beautiful windows which were installed in 1859, this is the central window of the scheme. The style has taken a great deal of inspiration from ecclesiastical medieval windows. They were cleaned and restored in 2011 by Stained Glass Design Partnership, making their colours jewel bright.
Title: Round Windows  Artist: J B Bennet and Sons  Date: 1879  Location: Upper Gallery of East Wall, Garnethill Synagogue, 129 Hill Street.

These stunning floral windows are of exceptional quality and condition given their age, as they were installed the year Garnethill Synagogue was built. This window is part of an identical pair which flank the east walls of the upper gallery. The window below/above features two roundels of glass, made up of clear, pale blue, and red glass. These dimpled circular pieces were hand crafted and would have taken great skill to produce. They also feature in other stained glass within the synagogue, emphasising the quality of the workmanship, whilst adding a three-dimensional point of interest.

Title: Literature & Art and History  Artist: Gordon Webster  Date: c. 1950s  Location: University of Glasgow, Memorial Chapel, Gilmorehill Building.

These windows were designed by Douglas Strachan (1875-1950), but were created and installed after his death by his pupil and artist in his own right, Gordon Webster (1908-1987). They form part of a larger scheme within the chapel, celebrating the subjects taught at the University of Glasgow and the symbols of the zodiac.
**Introductory Glossary**

**Apse:** a domed or vaulted semicircular or polygonal recess, especially at the east end of a church.

**Chancel:** the part of a church near the altar, reserved for the clergy and choir, and typically separated from the nave by steps or a screen.

**Gothic:** A style of architecture prevalent in western Europe in the 12th-16th centuries (and revived in the mid 18th to early 20th centuries), characterized by pointed arches, rib vaults, and flying buttresses, together with large windows and elaborate tracery. English Gothic architecture is divided into Early English, Decorated, and Perpendicular.

**Gothic Revival:** The renewed popularity of the Gothic style of architecture towards the middle of the 19th century. In stained glass this translates to the use of bold colour, a focus on clothing texture and produces a highly decorative and elegant window.

**Medieval Foliate Windows:** A style directly inspired by the original medieval windows found in Canterbury Cathedral and York Minster. Recognisable for its incredibly bright and intricate decorative borders and use of classical or medieval figures within.

**Mullion:** A vertical bar between the panes of glass in a window.

**Rose window:** a circular window with mullions or tracery radiating in a form suggestive of a rose.

**Quatrefoils:** An ornamental design of four lobes or leaves as used in architectural tracery, resembling a flower or clover leaf.

**Tracery:** Ornamental stone openwork, typically in the upper part of a Gothic window.

**Trefolios:** An ornamental design of three rounded lobes like a clover leaf, used typically in architectural tracery.

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**Further Reading**

Michael Donnelly’s books Scotland’s Stained Glass: Making the colours Sing, and Glasgow Stained Glass are great resources. There is a PDF of the second title available for download on Donnelly’s website [www.scotstainedglass.com](http://www.scotstainedglass.com).

Most of the places of worship I visited had produced their own pamphlets on the history of the building itself, and sometimes even on the stained glass they contain. These are very handy guides to pick up on a visit.

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**Photography Tips**

- A camera with adjustable ISO levels is a must, this setting allows you to control how much light the camera takes in, correcting the exposure and allowing you to capture.
- Use a tripod to reduce blurring, especially in dark churches.
- A good zoom and a wide angle lens can be useful for larger windows.
- To further reduce blurring, set your camera to self-timer.
- Always ask permission to photograph before you start snapping away!

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Window by Gordon Webster, Hyndland Parish church