



THE  
GEORGIAN  
GROUP

---

Suzanne Phillips Galloway ‘Mr Eginton’s  
“Great Experiment” at Magdalen College  
Chapel, Oxford’, *The Georgian Group Journal*,  
Vol. XXVI, 2018, pp. 179–190

# MR EGINTON'S 'GREAT EXPERIMENT' AT MAGDALEN COLLEGE CHAPEL, OXFORD

SUZANNE PHILLIPS GALLOWAY

The eighteenth century has been described as a 'lean' period for the creation of British architectural stained and painted glass, and much work produced during this period has subsequently been regarded by many critics as of little value. Sarah Brown contends that 'Many writers have denigrated this period of glass-painting, describing it only in terms of decline and poor standards.<sup>1</sup> Academic studies are relatively limited. Lewis Day, writing in 1897, said of the glass of the preceding century that it was 'not of sufficient account' for him to classify in terms of style and quality.<sup>2</sup> None the less, the period is arguably of great importance for three reasons. First, irrespective of its merits, it forms part of a vital continuum between mediaeval and Renaissance stained glass art and the architectural glass which was produced from the start of the Gothic Revival. Secondly, as mediaeval glass came to be imported into England around this time, it prompted English glass artists to rediscover or learn anew the skills and techniques aligned with mosaic glass making, staining and painting, and develop rudimentary conservation techniques. Finally, there is a persuasive argument for appraising the pieces of architectural painted glass from this period as works of art in their own right, and to examine the lives of the artists who produced them and the world in which they moved. The general disparagement of Georgian painted glass led to much of it being lost or destroyed, especially in the nineteenth, and during most of the twentieth, centuries. But

now its worth and significance is beginning to be reappraised. In 1993, Martin Harrison wrote that, given the level of interest in Georgian architecture, painting and sculpture, 'it is hard to account for the prolonged ... neglect of Georgian glass-painting.'<sup>3</sup> 2017 saw the twentieth anniversary of the restoration of Francis Eginton's 'Last Judgement' in the West Window of Magdalen College Antechapel, Oxford, believed to be lost until the early 1990s. This article examines the history of this important commission and assesses its significance (Figure 1 shows a view of the Antechapel, with the Last Judgement window visible to the right).<sup>4</sup>

The English Reformation resulted in the destruction of a great deal of traditional medieval stained and painted mosaic glass as the buildings that contained them were slighted and demolished. The religious and political upheavals of the period were not conducive to the installation of new stained glass into buildings and over time the skills and techniques needed to conserve the remaining medieval glass and to create new works were largely lost.<sup>5</sup> In the seventeenth century, under King Charles I, the tide turned to a degree, and the high-church views of clergymen such as Archbishop Laud led to the restoration of and re-introduction of religious imagery, including stained and painted glass, a tendency that was resisted by the Puritans. Laud was Bishop of London and on the way to becoming Archbishop of Canterbury in the early 1630s, when Magdalen College Oxford commissioned a grisaille

window for its Chapel. It was created by Richard Greenbury, a glass painter, portraitist and copyist of paintings patronised by the King. He based the window on a copy of Michelangelo's Last Judgement for the Sistine Chapel in Rome, as sketched by Caspar & Christopher Schwarz in around 1590. Greenbury did not try to make an exact copy of the original or, more properly, the Schwarz sketch, but he altered the design to suit the building and the configuration of the window, described as an example of 'well-meaning Carolean efforts to make good Puritanical depredations.'<sup>6</sup> Greenbury was paid 4s, 6d for every foot of painted glass, according to his agreement with the College dated 23 June 1637. Later,



Fig. 1. Antechapel, Magdalen College.  
(photo: John Gibbon)

when Cromwell's troops pulled down the coloured glass in the College Chapel windows and smashed it under their horses' feet, they left the West Window whole, and *in situ*. Peter Popham speculated that 'perhaps the subdued shades were more acceptable to Puritans who could not abide the flashy greens and scarlets elsewhere; or perhaps the Last Judgment theme kept them at a respectful distance.'<sup>7</sup>

Alex Koller described what he regarded as Greenbury's West Window as 'a unique specimen of monumental monochrome windows that are a bold testimony to the determination of artists and patrons alike to adopt the art form to the principles of the European renaissance,' claiming that 'Greenbury's glass for Magdalen is the earliest surviving example of a complete emancipation of the picture window from its roots in stained glass.' Koller also considered that Greenbury was entirely successful in meeting the 'doubly difficult' objectives of interpreting Michelangelo's composition as a design for execution on glass and also fitting it into the extant window frame.<sup>8</sup>

But can the window we see today (Fig. 2) really be said to be Greenbury's? It was the subject of an intensive 'restoration' undertaken by Francis Eginton in 1793–94, after it had been damaged in the Great Storm of 1702. Eginton was by no means the first choice for the work. Letters and materials in the Magdalen College Archives show how the College came to ask him to carry out his 'great experiment' on the West Window; they also give some insight into the costs of restoration, or repainting. They show something of the dilemma the College faced in deciding who should carry out the restoration, whether the damaged window should be 'repaired' or 'restored', and whether the College should pay for a new one as strictly required by the original terms of the Cholmley Legacy (see below). In the absence of commission books for Eginton's painted glass, the correspondence is a valuable source for some of his methods of working, his fees for painted glass and the conduct of his business affairs.

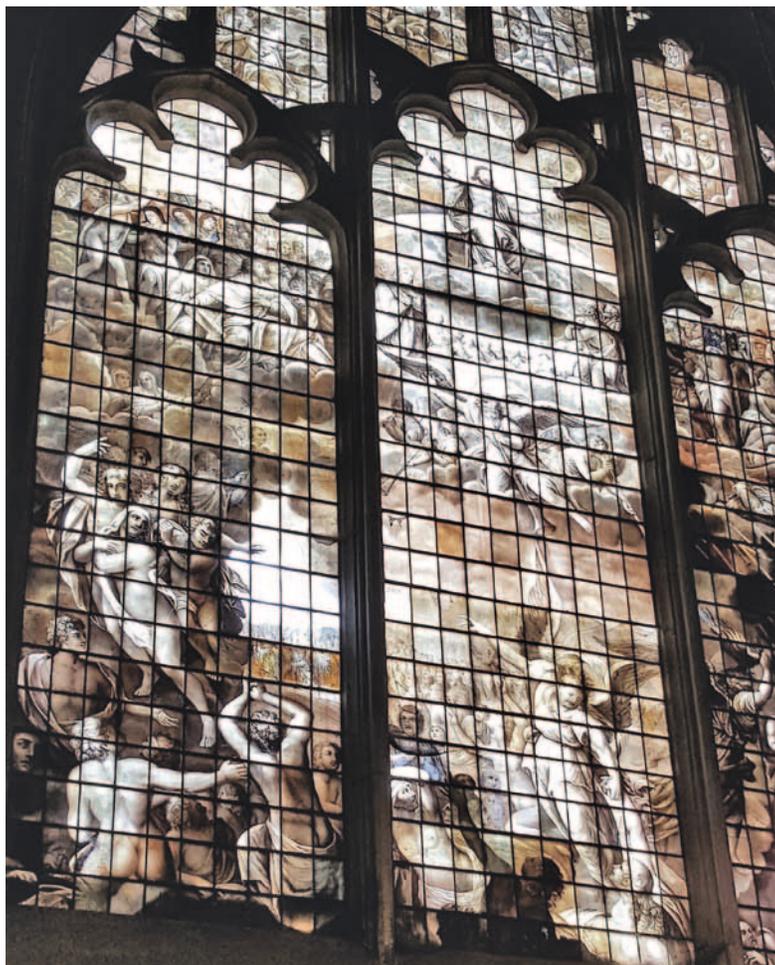


Fig. 2. Last Judgement Window. (*Magdalen College*)

The events that led to Eginton's being commissioned to restore the window began with a bequest to Magdalen College by Montague Cholmley, Rector of the parish Church of Saltfleet by All Saints, Saltfleetby in Lincolnshire. He was a Fellow of the College who died on 12 February 1785. This bequest was a sum of £300, to be used for 'adding a new West Window to the Chapel of the said College upon such a subject and in such manner as they shall approve.'<sup>9</sup> The bequest motivated the College to repair the existing West Window, rather

than commission a new one, but Eginton was not the first choice to carry out the work. Instead, the College decided to approach Thomas Jervais, who had recently painted the Seven Cardinal Virtues on glass, to designs by Joshua Reynolds, in the Chapel of New College, Oxford. This work had attracted attention, although not all the reaction was positive; Horace Walpole described the figures to Henry Seymour Conway as 'sir [sic] Joshua's washy virtues'.<sup>10</sup> Jervais would have been better known in Oxford than Eginton, who at that time had been

working on architectural glass painting for only a few years at best. On 2 February 1789 therefore it was decided that 'Mr Shaw [a Fellow of Magdalen] be desired to write to Mr Jervais and inform him that it is the request of the Society [i.e. the College], if he finds himself at liberty, to undertake the repair of the Western Window, and if he should not be at leisure, to know whether he has any objection to Mr Pearson being employed.' Eginton was not, therefore, even the second choice, the College apparently preferring the more celebrated James Pearson. Pearson and his wife, the aristocratically-connected Eglington Margaret Pearson, exhibited together frequently in London to great fashionable acclaim, and in 1781 James had completed the 'Brazen Serpent in the Wilderness' for the east window of Salisbury Cathedral. There is, however, no evidence that the College ever approached Pearson.

Eginton did not exhibit in London, and accordingly lacked a fashionable following. College Notes dated 24 April 1789 indicate that 'Mr Jervais will undertake the window for 420 guineas – may be less – will not be more.'<sup>11</sup> This fee was to be 'exclusive of expenses already incurred – money must be advanced on account.' The note also reveals two other points of continuing negotiation. First, Jervais warned that he would take 'no responsibility for the effect' and that the results might not answer the College's requirements; and secondly, that the cost, if he were to make a *new* window, would be 500 guineas if two figures, including the 'Virgin', were in the design. College Orders of the same date formalise the appointment, recording that 'Mr Jervais undertake the West Window in the Chapel for a sum not exceeding 420 guineas and that £100 be advanced to him on account, when he demands it and the remainder be advanced as occasion requires.' The College decided that the figure of the Virgin Mary should be omitted, but otherwise were content for the design to be left to Jervais's judgement. In Michelangelo's *Last Judgement* Mary sits to the left of Christ in Majesty. There are various

possible explanations for the decision to omit her. She was probably not included in Greenbury's original window; the religious sensibilities of that time may have resulted in an understandable desire to avoid accusations of Marian idolatry. The same sensibilities may have militated against her inclusion or re-insertion in 1789. But the College may simply have taken the decision in order to save money, given that Jervais would have charged more for her inclusion; Eginton did not insert the Virgin into his re-working of the design either, declaring that he had restored 'all lost figures' for his repainting.<sup>12</sup>

By 15 June 1789, less than two months after the appointment, Jervais was beginning to have doubts about working successfully on the window. He wrote candidly to the College to say that after inspecting panes of the Greenbury glass he had found 'many parts much injured by time [...] that the *menstruum* [cleaning solvent] powerfull enough to dissolve the incrustation on the surface takes off all part of the colour with it, so that I cannot (with comfort to myself) recommend such an expensive reparation.' The College Orders of 22 July 1789 recorded that:

'As Mr Jervais deems the repair of the West Window impracticable and declines undertaking the painting of a new one, it is agreed to apply to Mr Cholmley for his consent to for the application of the Legacy to the new glazing of the remaining windows in the antechapel, something like those of All Souls, and also for filling up the middle compartment of the West Window with a new painting.'

Mr Shaw was to write to Jervais and inform him of the intention of the College. Jervais finally withdrew from the project on 10 August 1789, possibly because of ill health, which led in 1790 to his effective retirement. His flair for showmanship was waning, and he had ceased to exhibit in London, or to take part in the spectacular shows that had helped bring him fame such as those in the fashionable Pantheon in Oxford Street, London.<sup>13</sup> After thanking Mr Shaw for the 'draught for £20' for the work done, he wrote: 'I have not the courage to undertake a work of such

magnitude as the [...] part of it would be equal to the large works that I have done.<sup>14</sup> He went on to offer some final advice, should the College decide to proceed with the project without him: 'If you mean to do it in ornamental bordering in one colour, I do not know anybody so well calculated as Mr Picket of York;<sup>15</sup> if in a more scientific manner Mr Eginton near Birmingham.'

The Jervais recommendation was followed up, and on 1 February 1791 it was agreed that 'Mr Eginton<sup>16</sup> be applied to on Mr Wyatt's recommendation to make his *experiments* on the West Window of the Chapel.' Two things are apparent here. First, that Eginton's name had been put forward both by Jervais and by the architect James Wyatt; and secondly that the College was persuaded that dealing with the window was a major exercise that required the objective and methodical experimental techniques aligned to science and reason, as much as the skills or showmanship of a gifted society glass-painter or craftsman. The Wyatt connexion is especially significant. By this time Wyatt had been appointed Architect of the Ordnance and had been elected to the Royal Academy. He had already worked at New College, Balliol and Merton Colleges and was 'first called to Magdalen to advise on stained glass (recommending his relation, Francis Egginton [sic]) and repairs to the roof of the chapel, the state of which was causing anxiety.'<sup>17</sup> Eginton's relationships with members of the Wyatt family were both professional and familial and were crucial to the spread of his work. He was introduced to the Wyatts through Matthew Boulton, who had employed members of the Wyatt family for building and other work at the Soho Manufactory, near Birmingham, where Eginton worked as a supervisor on decorative and fine art pieces, and latterly as Boulton's partner in the short-lived mechanical painting business. Eginton's second wife was Maria Wyatt, a cousin of James and Samuel Wyatt, and his first major architectural glass painting was based on Benjamin West's 'Conversion of St Paul' for St Paul's Church,

Birmingham, where Samuel Wyatt acted as building advisor.<sup>18</sup> The association with the Wyatts, especially James, brought Eginton so many commissions as a glass-painter that he perhaps did not need to trouble himself with London shows, or the direct solicitation of fashionable clients.<sup>19</sup>

Eginton's 'experimental' approach clearly impressed the Magdalen Fellows, although there is no documentary evidence to show exactly what was so experimental about his efforts to repair the Greenbury window. It is possible that he was trading on his scientific reputation, given his ingenious invention of mechanical painting and his association with Matthew Boulton and, through him, the scientific thinkers associated with the Birmingham Lunar Society. The Magdalen window also demonstrates Eginton's development of the *chiaroscuro* technique of glass painting. There is also a Neo-classical nod to the *tenebroso* effect, reflecting the use to which this effect was put in some of the painted glass spectaculars exhibited in the London Pantheon, designed by Wyatt at the age of only twenty-three. By 26 July 1793 the College had resolved that 'Mr Eginton be desired to proceed to finish the West Window in the Antechapel.'<sup>20</sup>

Eginton's fee came to £477 15s, od. or 455 guineas. Initially he had said that his costs would not exceed 430 guineas, but because some of his time was lost 'in arranging the figures and making the sketch conformable to Mr Wyatt's plans', then 25 guineas more 'would indemnify me to my entire satisfaction.'<sup>21</sup> On the back of a later letter, presumably in the hand of a College official, there is an undated calculation referring to his fee and to 'making up' the costs of the other craftsmen involved. It reads:

Eginton	£477	15s,	od.
Smith	£5	18s,	10½d.
Glazier <sup>22</sup>	£55	14s,	9d.
Mason	£5	13s,	od.
less Cholmley.			

Payment terms for Eginton's fee were tackled in a letter from him to the President of the College, Dr Routh,<sup>23</sup> dated 22 November 1793:

'I must now beg you to pardon a liberty I am going to take which is to observe that the mode in which I have hitherto been paid for works of such magnitude by His Grace the Duke of Norfolk, the Bishop of Durham ... and others [h]as been of three different times that is one third when the work is as far advanced as yours now is, the second when it is about two thirds finished and the last when compleat – and if it be perfectly agreeable to you to adopt the same I should be greatly obliged and convenienced thereby, but I by no means wish to solicit this favour if it be in the least disagreeable, any security you please to wish, for my punctuality is the performance of the business I shall with pleasure give and am, Revd. Sirs, Your much obliged and obedient servant.'<sup>24</sup>

On the surface, this letter shows a man used to commerce, concerned for his cash-flow, who has a method of billing and is used to dealing with high-ranking clients in the form of language expected, and with a consistent approach to asking his clients for money. This, however, belies the fact that Eginton did not have a particularly strong head for running a going concern, although on the face of it he was known as a successful glass-painter, entrepreneur and toy-maker. He had difficulties in keeping his Prospect Hill manufactory and studio profitable and solvent, and, when he died in 1805 with debts amounting to some thousands of pounds, his son had to appeal to Matthew Boulton and James Wyatt to help settle them.<sup>25</sup> There is a suggestion that Eginton's wife Maria may have had a hand in Eginton's day-to-day correspondence when he was dealing with fees; Martin Ellis has remarked that she had a better head for business than her husband, although 'not by much'.<sup>26</sup>

Eginton's letter about his fees and phased payments worked. On 6 December 1793 the College ordered 'that £225 be paid to Mr Eginton in part payment for repairing the painted West Window in the Antechapel.' Eginton had reported to the College

on 22 November 1793, that he had made 'a compleat model of your window and drawn correct cartoons of every compartment the full size of the glass with all lost figures restored according to the original designs which now it is altogether I think one of the grandest compositions I ever saw.' This suggests that he had seen Greenbury's original drawings, and that the window's serious state of disrepair had led to the deterioration of much of Greenbury's painting, so that repainting of effectively the whole of the window would be necessary. In an article published in 1997 John Guy suggested that Eginton had to 'recreate many sections' of the window, 'basing them on Greenbury's design,'<sup>27</sup> but the conservation records from the restoration of the window in the same year suggest that the 'many sections' referred to the majority of the window. It appears therefore that Eginton did not regard his remit as simply to conserve what remained of Greenbury's window, as a modern professional conservator might well do, but to deliver the window fully realised, supplying his own extensive recreations and re-paintings where the original work could not be satisfactorily restored or conserved and repaired.

Magdalen College Archives retains an Eginton sketch of his design for the West Window. (Fig. 3) It shows different tracery, with two lancets under a cusped oculus. The conservation records of the restoration by the Chapel Studio in the 1990s show that little of the Greenbury painting was left after Eginton's intervention. His design is not a slavish copy of the original 'Last Judgement', or rather the drawings of it; Michelangelo's painting clearly serves as the basis for the design, but the work has none of the 'religious ferocity' or Catholic certainty of the original. Not only is the Virgin Mary absent; the Saints are less obviously apparent and do not hold the instruments of their martyrdom.

Eginton carried out his restoration on time and to budget. In November 1793, he wrote that he was anxious to do the composition justice in the restoration, which 'if life and health permit, I have



Fig. 3. Eginton Design for window with altered lancets. (*Magdalen College*)

the greatest hope of accomplishing before this time next year.<sup>28</sup> He made that deadline, reporting to Dr Routh on 15 July 1794 that 'I have repainted every part and instead of the cold tint which pervaded the whole of this and every other window I have seen in *ciaro oscuro*, I have difus'd a general warm tint throughout, which gives harmony to the colouring and will produce a soft and pleasant light in the chapel.' Eginton's substitute colour scheme for Greenbury's grisaille may have formed part of his 'experiment.' In 1795 the College orders show that Eginton was paid a further £113 6s 6d. 'pro rep. fen. Occident. in capella' ['for the repair of the West Window in the chapel'].

The College's evident satisfaction with Eginton's work had resulted in another commission. On 14 November 1795 he was asked to send complete

drafts of eight different figures to replace the Greenbury painted glass windows in the side windows of the antechapel. Eginton obliged by 6 December 1795, apologising for not sending the sketch sooner. He would have done so had not 'the indisposition of which I complained a little at Oxford had not increased so much as to render one unfit for business for several days.'<sup>29</sup> This is evidence of the serious ill-health that Eginton suffered especially in the later part of his life, but also that it did not prevent him from travelling from Prospect Hill to Oxford in order to carry out site visits and meet his important clients. He quoted £350 for the glass of all eight windows – 'but if some slighter ornament – they would not be quite so much – they would come to about £40, or 40 guineas per window.'<sup>7</sup> On the back of this letter was the College Official's calculation of the payments made to Eginton and other craftsmen for the West Window, mentioned earlier. On 19 December 1795 Eginton wrote again: 'I shall with great pleasure make any alterations in the design [...] And if the arms should not be thought necessary I think that the canopy may be made equally elegant and as truly *Gothic* without them.'<sup>30</sup> He recommended that the eight windows be painted in a subdued tint, to complement the West Window. He was a conscious participant in the contemporary shift of architectural taste from the Neo-classical to the Gothic that would anticipate the re-introduction of leaded mosaic stained glass. On 2 February 1796 the College Orders show it was requested that 'Mr Eginton proceed to execute the plan agreed on by the Society for windows in the antechapel.'

The glass painting of the eight windows for the antechapel was carried out in Eginton's manufactory and studio at Prospect Hill, with the painted panes of best crown glass conveyed carefully to Oxford by carriage. The glass was delicate, and often 'Broak.' Following some breakages on one occasion Eginton sent replacements, carefully boxed for transit, together with a small glass cabinet piece. In the accompanying letter to Dr Routh, he wrote: 'In the

same box you will find a small design of Angelika Kauffman which, though not so perfect in all its parts in point of execution as I could wish is a tolerable likeness of the application of some of the colours.<sup>31</sup> His personality, as revealed in this letter, is one of apparent humility about his work; an understanding of the need to keep on the client's good side; and concern that his work might not always attain the standards he would wish. So, a small glass piece was donated to the College, or personally to the recipient of the letter, as a goodwill gesture.

This may be identified as a copy of 'Cordelia Crying Out for Help', from Shakespeare's *King Lear*. A copy of Christie's auction catalogue for the sale of Samuel Lowe's painted glass, dated Friday 19 July 1816, was sent by James Wyatt to Sir John Soane, an avid collector of architectural art glass. Lowe was Francis Eginton's son-in-law, and the catalogue includes by way of an introduction a 'List of Works in Vitreous Colours, painted on glass by Samuel Lowe, under the Instructions of the Late Mr Eginton.' On the list there is 'a small Cabinet Picture, *Cordelia*, in the possession of the Revd. Dr Routh of Magdalen College, Oxford.'<sup>32</sup>

Eginton's payments for the eight antechapel windows are recorded in the College Orders:

1797	Mr Egginton in part. bill pro 8 fenestr.	£586 7s. od. £400 os. od.
1798	Mr Egginton in part.	£59 9s. od.
1799	Mr Egginton in toto.	£126 18s. od.
1808 <sup>33</sup>	Mr Egginton pro fenestris [.] oct pictis	£27 10s. 6d.

Nothing, however, remains of them. The Greenbury originals, in stark monochrome tints, had not been destroyed or sold by the College, and so could be returned to their original position, where they are today, demonstrating the difference in style, design and technique between the seventeenth-century Greenbury and the eighteenth century Eginton.

Magdalen College was happy with the outcome

of Eginton's 'experiment', but his glass soon received criticism. It was called 'the worst in Oxford.' Harking back to the mediaeval principles that underpinned mosaic glass, John Chessell Buckler argued that anatomical truth was not expected in figurative work, nor light and shade to be dispersed in precise quantities. Truth to material, which medieval stained-glass artists had perfected, was greatly preferable. He concluded that 'painted glass should *never* resemble a picture on canvass.'<sup>34</sup> Buckler, described as 'that indefatigable controversialist',<sup>35</sup> was involved, as was his father John Buckler, with later restorations to Magdalen's fifteenth-century buildings and was forthright in denouncing the perceived shortcomings of architects involved in them earlier (such as Wyatt and his associates).

The College maintained the business relationship with the Eginton family after Francis's death in 1805. Glass-painting was carried on by his son William Raphael, who was paid £27 10s, 6d. for repairs in 1808. A letter in the College Archives shows a sad postscript to later relations between the remaining members of the Eginton glass-painting dynasty following the deaths of Francis in 1805 and his wife Maria in 1811. On 5 December 1812, Francis Eginton Jnr wrote to Dr Routh in a way that laid bare family jealousies and disorganisation around completing clients' commissions,<sup>36</sup> Francis Jnr was Eginton's nephew and helped out at his uncle's glass-painting studio. He stated with bitterness that William Raphael 'has so long enjoyed the reputation of my abilities. I have done everything for him since he has had the business, though he claims much of it.' Whatever the truth of the matter, his aim was to obtain any further repairs for Magdalen College himself, pointing out that the repair for 'St Andrew' from the College antechapel had not been touched in William Raphael's studio (by then in Newhall Street, Birmingham), despite an agent for the College calling in and enquiring after it and suggesting that future repairs should instead go directly to himself.

There is a letter from William Raphael Eginton,

Fig. 4. Detail, pre-conservation glass. (*Chapel Studio*)



Fig. 5. Detail, pre-conservation glass. (*Chapel Studio*)



dated 12 Jan 1827 in which he expressed his sorrow on hearing hear of an accident to the window in the antechapel, and agreeing to undertake its repair as soon as possible.<sup>37</sup> Francis Eginton Snr while still alive took advantage of the association with the College to gain another commission. 'A facsimile, in stained glass, of the celebrated altar-piece at Magdalen College Oxford' was subsequently installed in the parish church in Wanstead (London Borough of Redbridge). It is now lost.

The West Window was again damaged significantly when it was moved for its own protection during the Second World War in 1939–40. After the war it was believed lost. In 1990, Sarah Baylis wrote that Eginton's glass for Magdalen College Chapel had 'disappeared without trace.'<sup>38</sup> The story behind the twentieth-century restoration and reinstallation of the window, and the fund-raising required for it, has been rehearsed in a number of articles, not least in the *Magdalen College Record*.<sup>39</sup> In order to recreate authentic pre-war scenes in the Chapel for the filming of *Shadowlands* in the early 1990s, a representation of the painted window was erected in the chapel over the plain glazing. This in turn, led to Stuart Lever, a Magdalen

graduate and then Master of the Glaziers' Livery Company, to locate as much of the lost window and, if possible, have it reinstalled. Exhaustive searches of College grounds and properties eventually led to the discovery of parts and fragments of the missing window. Chapel Studio was retained to carry out the restoration,<sup>40</sup> and in doing so uncovered evidence to show the extent, durability and quality of, of Eginton's glass-painting.

Chapel Studio advised Caroline Grantham, corporate fundraiser in the Magdalen Development Office, that Eginton's work was effectively a replacement and not a restoration of Greenbury's window: 'All the glass examined to date is late eighteenth century and very different in texture to the seventeenth century 'broad glass' found in Greenbury's remaining windows.'<sup>41</sup> Chapel Studio noted the varied composition, 'style and tint' of the paint and vitreous enamel, in keeping with Eginton's period rather than Greenbury's, and also that most of the painting examined was in Eginton's 'warm brown shades', rather than the sombre grey/black of Greenbury's work (Figures 4 and 5 show detail of the Eginton 'rescued' glass, in its pre-conservation state). Chapel Studio found that Eginton's painted areas were generally very stable, with little flaking, contrasting markedly with Jervais's finding that the Greenbury paint was liable to be removed along with the dirt if threatened with cleaning.

### CONCLUSION

Francis Eginton himself was extremely proud of his achievements at Magdalen, judging by his only known portrait, by James Millar,<sup>42</sup> showing him seated next to the Chapel's west window (Fig. 6). Jane Cottis, writing in 1993 after the discovery of the remains, underlined Eginton's skill as an architectural glass-painter of the Georgian period, asserting that now was 'the time for us to think about saving what remains of his work.'<sup>43</sup> That call is being



Fig. 6. Francis Eginton, portrait by James Millar. (Birmingham Museums Trust)

heeded. Since the late 1990s, for example, 'Faith' at St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury, and Eginton's copy of Raphael's 'School of Athens' at Stourhead have been the subject of major conservation work by Holy Well Glass Studio. The painted dome in the Yarborough Mausoleum at Brocklesby Park, Lincolnshire (the Mausoleum was designed by James Wyatt and the glass dome was the subject of a watercolour by J.M.W. Turner)<sup>44</sup> has been the object of work by MC Lead Glazing, and another fine Eginton architectural glass-painting – a memorial to Laetitia Weardon at St Peter and St Paul's Church in Aston, Birmingham – awaits conservation funding, so it is timely to celebrate the work of this important, though until recently largely forgotten, artist.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ben Taylor Assistant Archivist, and latterly Archivist Dr Charlotte Berry at Magdalen College Library, Oxford were enormously helpful with my research. Peter Archer AMGP, Laura Perry, Alfred Fisher FMGP, MBE and Robert Holloway AMGP, ACR from Chapel Studio; and Peter Campling AMGP, ACR from MC Lead Glaziers provided valuable insights and materials. I am grateful to Dr Michael Prodger and Professor John Adamson of the University of Buckingham for encouraging me in this research. Special thanks go to Martin Ellis, retired Curator, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery who is a long-time campaigner for greater recognition of Eginton and his architectural glass-painting.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 S. Brown, *Stained Glass: An Illustrated History* (London, 1994), p. 115.
- 2 L.F. Day, *Windows – A Book About Stained & Painted Glass* (London, 1897), Chapter XXVII.
- 3 M. Harrison, 'Monumental, spectacular and Gothic: Soane and Georgian Glass-painting', *Journal of Stained Glass*, 27 (2003), pp. 107–117.
- 4 Image: John Gibbon (Figure 1).
- 5 Numerous fuller treatments of the impact of the Reformation (and the Commonwealth) on English stained glass are available. For example, see R. Marks, *Stained Glass in England during the Middle Ages* (London, 1993) pp. 229–246; J. Cheshire, *Stained Glass and the Victorian Gothic Revival* (Manchester, 2004) Chapters One and Two, pp. 1–53; S. Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 113–115; P. Anderson: *Glass Painting Techniques in a Historical Context*. <http://www.buildingconservation.comand> [accessed 3 March 2017]; and also Sarah Baylis, *Glass Painting in Britain: c.1760–c.1840: a Revolution in Taste*, Doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge 1990.
- 6 R. White, *The Architectural Drawings of Magdalen College, Oxford. A Catalogue* (Oxford, 2001), p. xxxv.
- 7 P. Popham, 'The Resurrection at Magdalen College', *The Independent*, 20 February 1997, <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/the-resurrection-at-magdalen-college-1279624.html> [accessed 29 August, 2017].
- 8 A. Koller, 'One of the Greatest Compositions I ever saw: Richard Greenbury's Windows for the Chapel of Magdalen College, Oxford', *Journal of Stained Glass*, 22 (1998), pp. 1–16.
- 9 College Orders: MC FA16/1/IC/1 1.
- 10 W.S. Lewis, *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, 48 vols (New Haven, 1937–1983), Vol. XXXIX, p. 435 (6 October 1785).
- 11 Magdalen College Archives (hereafter MC), MC FA16/1/1C/1 2.
- 12 MC FA 16/1/1C/5.
- 13 J. Cobb, 'From Parrots to Princes: Exhibitions of Contemporary Stained Glass in Late Eighteenth-century London,' *Vidimus* issue number 53 (Aug 2011): <http://vidimus.org/issues/issue-53/feature/> [accessed 21 February 2017].
- 14 MC FA16/1/1C/1 3. The letter is partly torn, and a few words lost [...].
- 15 J.T. Brighton MA: 'The Enamel Glass-painters of York (Volume II: 1585 – 1795)', Doctoral thesis, University of York, Department of History 1978: [http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/9936/2/480023\\_vol2.pdf](http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/9936/2/480023_vol2.pdf). [accessed 26 February 2017] Regarding William Peckitt (1731–1795), Brighton notes that Peckitt's windows for New College Chapel in Oxford were deemed unsatisfactory through poor initial draftsmanship and never fully completed. Some were removed in less than twelve years to make way for the *Cardinal Virtues* painted by Jervais and designed by Joshua Reynolds. Later, in 1821 Francis Eginton's son, William Raphael Eginton, was paid £219.18.6 by New College to fill the blank lights left by Peckitt in the Chapel Choir with figures of St Paul and St Barnabas. Peckitt lived in York all his life and was also known for experimenting with glass painting and reinventing stained glass production techniques. William Peckitt patented a new method of composing stained glass in 1780 (Patent No: 1268).
- 16 College Orders variously refer to 'Eginton', 'Eginton' and 'Eggerton.' The man himself signed his name as 'Eginton.'
- 17 J.M. Robinson, *James Wyatt Architect to George III* (New Haven and London, 2011), pp. 212.

- 18 In time, Francis and Maria Eginton would informally adopt the orphaned Henry Wyatt and encouraged his artistic sensibilities: J.M. Robinson, *The Wyatts: An Architectural Dynasty* (Oxford, 1979), p. 191.
- 19 Amongst many others, this includes Brocklesby Park Mausoleum and Fonthill Abbey.
- 20 MC FA16/1/1C/1/3.
- 21 MC FA16/1/1C/1/6.
- 22 The College's Glazier of choice was 'Mr Hickman': MC FA5/3/1/IC/4.
- 23 Revd Dr Martin Joseph Routh (1755–1854), by then President of Magdalen College. A daguerreotype exists of Routh, in old age.
- 24 MC FA 16/1/1C/5.
- 25 BAH MS 3782/1/33
- 26 M. Ellis, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery Friends' Annual Lecture: 'Francis Eginton,' Birmingham Council Chamber, 12 July 2017.
- 27 J. Guy, 'Magdalen College Chapel's West Window', *Stained Glass Magazine*, 1997 (issue 2), pp. 14–15.
- 28 MC FA16/1/1C/5.
- 29 MC FA16/1/1C/1 (6).
- 30 MC FA5/3/1/1C 7.
- 31 MC/FA16/1/1C/1/10. January 16, 1797.
- 32 Sir John Soane Museum and Library, ref 6617. There is no trace of the *Cordelia* cabinet piece in the Magdalen College Archives or Art Collection. If it was retained in the personal possession of Dr Routh, no one knows what happened to it after his death, and so it is believed lost.
- 33 Payment to William Raphael Eginton, for repairs after Francis Eginton's death in 1805.
- 34 John Chessell Buckler, *Observations on the Original Architecture of Saint Mary Magdalen College, Oxford, and on the Innovations Anciently or Recently Attempted* (London: John Nichols, 1823), p. 76.
- 35 T.S.R. Boase, 'An Oxford College and the Gothic Revival', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 18, no. 3–4 (1955), pp. 145–188.
- 36 MC/FA 16/1/1C/1 11.
- 37 MC:PR30/4/MS2/1.12.
- 38 Sarah Baylis, 'Glass Painting in Britain: c.1760–c.1840: a Revolution in Taste' (Doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge 1990), p. 153.
- 39 J. Guy, *Magdalen College Record* (1997), pp. 73–75; and J. Cottis, *Magdalen College Record* (1993), pp. 58–60, cited by R. White, *op. cit.* (2001).
- 40 <http://www.chapelstudio.co.uk/> [accessed 4 March 2017].
- 41 Chapel Studios to Ms Caroline Grantham, 6 December 1994 (unpublished). Part-copy with Chapel Studio.
- 42 Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, accession number 1912P24.
- 43 Cottis in *Magdalen College Record* (1993), pp. 58–60.
- 44 Turners' watercolour interior of the Dome of the Mausoleum at Brocklesby Park, painted around 1810, became 'Lecture Diagram 76' for Turner's Royal Academy Lecture on perspective: A. Frederickson, 'Lecture Diagram: Colour Circle No.1 c.1824–8 by Joseph Mallard William Turner, catalogue entry, January 2004, revised by D.B. Brown, January 2012, in D.B. Brown (ed.), *J.M.W. Turner: Sketchbooks, Drawings and Watercolours* (Tate Research Publication, December 2012).