The Glasgow Typographical Society

The Glasgow Typographical Society was formed in 1817 by the letter-press printers of Glasgow, to represent the kindred workers in the industry of printing. It was one of the earliest trade unions in Britain, campaigning for workers’ rights and providing their members with some welfare benefits. It became the ‘Glasgow Branch’ of the Scottish Typographical Association, ever since its formation in 1853. However, it kept its original name at least until 1946 (University of Strathclyde, T-GTS1/1/13). From that year onwards it continued as the ‘Glasgow Branch’ of the STA, up to their renaming as the Scottish Graphical Association (SGA) in 1973.


Iconography of the banner

The design was based on the first version of the STA’s emblem, originally drawn by John D. Carmichael of Edinburgh in December 1882, after a sketch supplied by the Association’s Secretary. It includes features requested by the Executive of the STA, like the Scotch Thistle, the Rose of England, the Shamrock of Ireland, a Composing-Room and a Machine-Room. It also contains symbols related to Fraternal and Friendly Societies’ imagery.

Objectives - This research aims to contextualise and characterise the materials and degradation of five painted banners from Glasgow Museums, manufactured by George Kenning’s companies. The long-term objective is to fully understand the conservation requirements of their decorative layers, to advise accordingly on the best stabilisation proposal to apply. The research comprises three stages:

1. Historical contextualisation of the banners
2. Material characterisation of the banners
3. Reconstruction of their painting technique

A selection of the results from Stage 1 of the Glasgow Typographical Society banner is presented as follows:

Next steps:

A thorough inspection of each banner will be conducted, selecting areas for sampling and further technical analysis, needed for the identification of the materials used in their making. The results will be used to recreate the banners’ technique, through the making of historically accurate reconstructions.

References