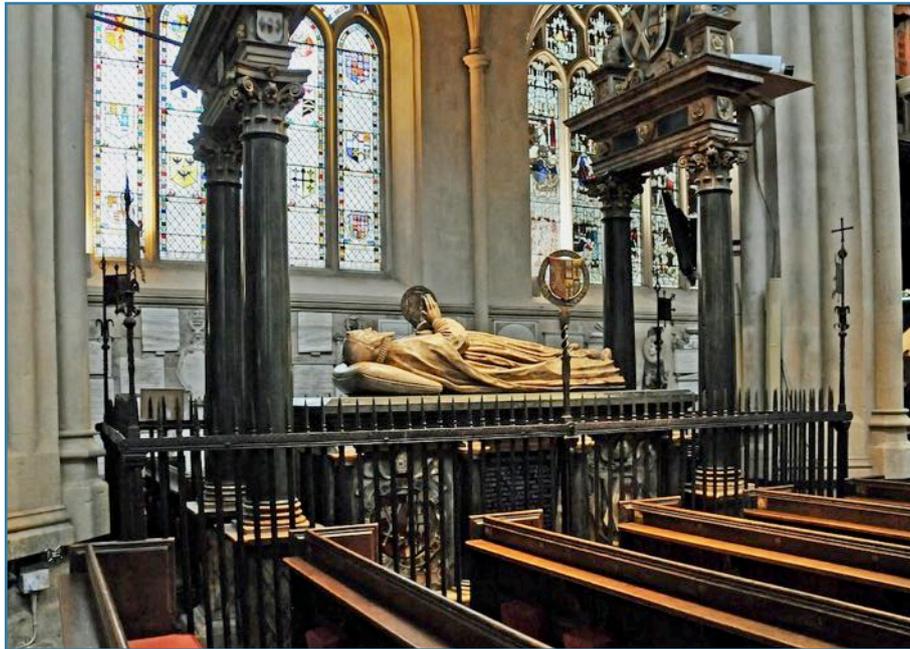


Fe4s²3d⁶

Iron

Montague Tomb Railings, Bath Abbey

Conservation Treatment Recommendations



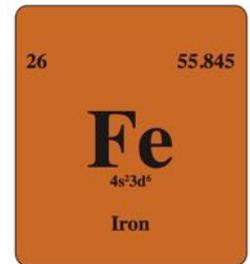
Introduction

The railings to the tomb of Bishop Montague from Bath Abbey, were removed and placed into storage to allow for works to the stone surrounding the tomb. With the stonework completed these railings are now to be re-instated.

Prior to installation a number of paint samples were taken to better understand the colour history of the railings as the initial proposal was to repaint them before fitting. Examination of the samples revealed that the surviving paint was the original and first paint system applied when the tomb was built in 1619. It was therefore recommended that at least part of the original paint finish be conserved.

The Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) supported the proposal to conserve the original paint layers as it may be a unique survivor of an early paint scheme.

Peter Meehan ACR, was approached by Frank Mowat, the Executive Director of Bath Abbey, to provide treatment recommendations to the appointed contractor for the works, Dorothea Restorations Limited.



Conservation Treatment Recommendations

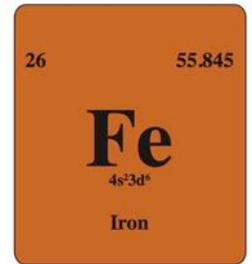
Peter Meehan ACR visited the workshops of Dorothea Restorations Limited on Wednesday 30 October 2024 to view the railing components and provide practical guidance on the conservation treatments to be carried. The following treatment was recommended:

- Initial clean of the railing components using soft brushes to remove loose dust and dirt layers
- Careful dry clean of the paint surfaces to remove remaining adhering dirt layers and other deposits by first using fine **3M Scotchbrite** hand pads (Light Grey, ref: 7448+)

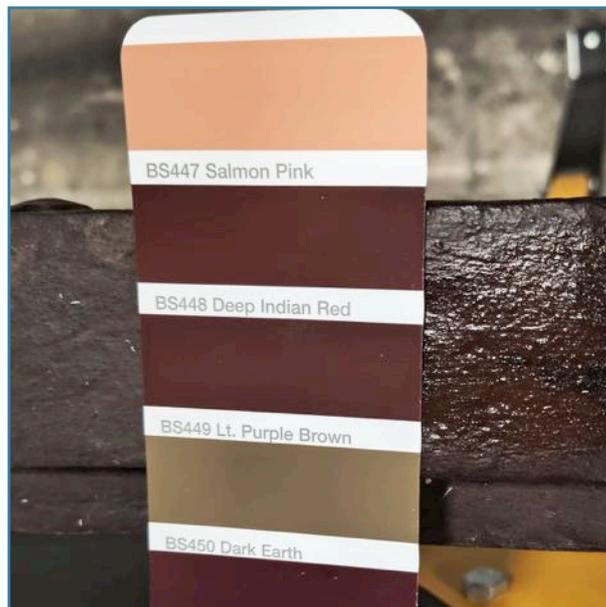


- De-dust the surface using very fine **3M Scotchbrite** hand pads (White, ref: 7441)
- Degrease the surface using white spirit applied on a lint-free cloth and leave to air dry
- Brush apply at least 2 no. coats of 5% **Paraloid B67** (an alkyd-compatible acrylic ester resin) in white spirit letting each coat dry before applying the next one
- Where possible repairs should be carried out using small riveted plates or a suitable, high quality acrylic resin adhesive (**Araldite 2021** or equivalent) to minimise damage to the paint finish. The use of hot techniques such as soldering or brazing is to be avoided
- After assembly, the railings should be protected with a coating of **Trewax Paste**, a high quality wax containing microcrystalline, carnauba and beeswax, applied with a soft brush or lint-free cloth. This should be left to dry before carefully buffing up with a soft cloth

This treatment process will consolidate and stabilise the surviving paint layers. It will also prevent further deterioration to the paint layers.



Closer examination of the base rail sections revealed that the paint finish to these was very heavily degraded, and was no longer adhering well to the iron surface. The rails were fairly dirty and the cleaning process was found to easily remove these layers. Consolidation would do little to re-secure these paint layers to the metal surface. As the paint contains lead-based materials, as well as lead putty around the fixing holes for the palings, it is recommended that these rails be cleaned back to bare metal before re-painting using a high quality alkyd oil-based paint system with the topcoat matching the original to the railings (BS448, Deep Indian Red).



Peter Meehan ACR
Metals Conservator
31 October 2024

