



# The Minerva Newsletter

Spring 2010



## Tyntesfield Estate

Work continues apace with lots of nice carving of grotesques and creatures. Dieter's badger among ferns is inspired by the high quality of the existing carved work and is seen below newly fixed to a string moulding by the main entrance.





## Roman Baths

We are currently working at the Roman Baths in er...Bath. We are conserving and re-arranging many Roman stone artefacts within the galleries (including re-fixing and conserving the famous 'Gorgon Pediment' *left*). It's a bit of a career highlight to be caring for the objects that inspired our name and logo.

Fixing fragment of cornice, *below* (previously undisplayed).



## Mosaic conservation



This small part of a mosaic from the Roman Bath museum shows mythical sea creatures on a background of white lias limestone. A dolphin is seen swimming with two hippocamps (animals with the front of a horse but the tail of a fish). The *tessarae* which form these creatures are small pieces of locally-sourced stone and ceramic tile.

Here ammonium carbonate is added to an acid-free paper pulp poultice to gently remove grubby fingermarks and other deposits. This method is often employed to remove carbon deposits from limestone. The ammonium carbonate added to this poultice mix chemically dissolves the soiling. The cleaning agent and the dirt are then removed with the paper pulp.



This mosaic was then poulticed again with a drier mix without any chemical agent to further draw out any dirt and chemical residues.

## The 'Flavian Lady'

We removed this bust from an unusual Victorian marble plinth originally constructed to display a bust of Jane Austen. The bust was probably from a rather grand tomb to a lady and came from the area of Bath known as Walcot Street (Walcot means 'Cottages of the Britons' in Old English) where one of the main Roman cemeteries stood outside the main city walls.



Her hairstyle of curls and tight bun at the back were fashionable during the Flavian period (AD 69-96). It is interesting to contrast this figure with one from the same period (AD 90) carved in Carrara marble on display in the Museo Capitolini, Rome.



## More Tyntesfield

We were asked to remove, conserve and re-fix the clay ridge tiles from the chapel. These we repaired with micropins and a colour-matched NHL5 based mortar. We are in the process of re-fixing them which this has proved to be one of the most challenging projects at Tyntesfield.



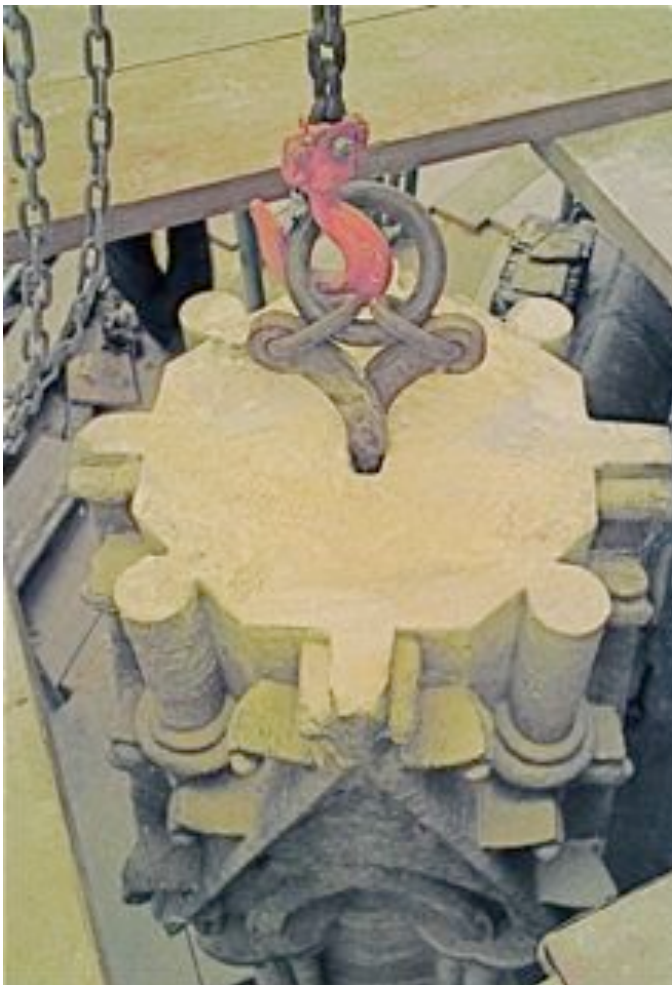
Left: before.



And after repair and conservation.



This section of stonework was taken out to remove the corroding ringbeam and replaced. The work was undertaken during the cold snap that we had in January. We could only re-fix and undertake limework once a tell-tale cup of water that we had left in the opened up area had thawed (it took 2 weeks, we did have a thermometer as well). Again we used a NHL 5 based mix which performed very well in this challenging environment.



*(left)*

Re-fixing a pinnacle base on the Chapel.





## MINERVA

Stonemasonry & Carving

Stone Façade Cleaning & Repair

Lime Pointing & Traditional Plastering

Traditional Building,

Roofing & Leadwork Conservation.

Contact Andrew at

[andyz@minervaconservation.com](mailto:andyz@minervaconservation.com)

or

T 01225 862386

A Sharland 07774857015

A Ziminski 07876055045

[www.minervaconservation.com](http://www.minervaconservation.com)