

Aquafactors case study 5



Coventry Cathedral

The diversity of cleaning projects now associated with high level water fed poles means we never know what we may be asked to do next. Delta Cleaning, in Coventry, recently requested help in proving the systems worth in cleaning an unusual aspect of Coventry Cathedral. This turned out to be a challenging exercise.



Conceived in the late 50's, to replace the Luftwaffe destroyed St Michael's Cathedral, the new building is a masterpiece of 60's architecture. It is dominated by a soaring porch connecting the old Cathedral with the new. From here, the entire nave is open to view through an immense window known as the West Screen. This glass and bronze framework is approximately 21.6 metres (71') high by 13.7 metres (45') wide and comprises of 80 wheel engraved panels by the artist John Hutton. As part of the artistic integrity of the Cathedral it is priceless.

Due to the restrictions of access, cost and time using traditional cleaning methods, the window had not been

thoroughly cleaned for many years. The bronze framework had never been touched. Although we, at Aquafactors, were comfortable that favorable results could be guaranteed, based on the reputation of the system and the high quality and softness of the brushes, setting up a demonstration presented several hurdles including the requirement for special insurance clearance.

The complexity of the structure, involving outward metal supports, a wind funneling location and the need for a high degree of brush control, it was agreed that the upper glass panels would be reached using a pole from a cherry picker. The lower panels would be cleaned with a 14 and 9 meter pole respectively with completion with a Tucker® mini pole.

Knowing the diversity of the British climate it was fortunate the day of the demonstration was excellent, with little wind. The glass panels cleaned easily but the dirt and oxide residues from the framework proved hard to rinse away. It was necessary to go over some panels several times. Half the screen was tackled for the demonstration and it is anticipated that two more intense cleans will be necessary before this beautiful work of art can be viewed at its best.

Aquafactors feel greatly privileged to have been asked to undertake this project. It has been very successful to date. Our thanks must go to local contractor, Ian Thompson of Delta Cleaning. We also appreciated the support of Clements Plant & Tool Hire Ltd, of Coventry. Lastly, a big thank you must go to the management at the Cathedral for their faith in allowing us to use a cleaning system, which they knew very little about, on such a remarkable piece of design and craftsmanship.



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