

Significant Stained Glass in Dover and its Environs

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Stained glass is an important yet often neglected branch of the applied arts, perhaps because it is seen largely as outmoded church decoration. But in fact stained glass windows can be seen as works of art in their own right, and Dover and its immediate vicinity has very good and significant examples which deserve a close look.

The Maison Dieu Hall

Inevitably, the Maison Dieu Hall should be referred to at the outset because the glass here is so impressive, and is unique. It is among the best of the stained glass in a municipal setting that survives in this country. The principal windows (in the Stone Hall) were designed by one of the country's leading artists of the nineteenth century, Edward Poynter, who was knighted and became President of the Royal Academy. The sketches for his six large windows, which depict in stunning detail key points in the history of Dover, were produced in 1860 by Poynter at an early stage in his career before his high reputation as an artist was established. The windows were subsequently made as memorials between 1860 and 1873 by two different firms. The first two were produced by William Wailes of Newcastle who had previously made the notable figurative window above the entrance to the Hall in 1858.

It would seem that Poynter had a

hand in drawing out the full-scale cartoons for the two first windows in the Stone Hall, but this is highly unlikely to be the case for the subsequent four windows, which were made by the firm of Heaton, Butler & Bayne of London.

Details of these windows and their subject matter are recounted elsewhere¹. However, two comments are useful here.

Poynter was well-known for his meticulous research and attention to detail in the subject

matter of his art. It would be fascinating to learn of the sources he used for the designs for these windows. One source, however, is clear. The first window in the series depicts the Embarkation of Henry VIII in 1520 for the Field of the Cloth of Gold, and elements of the design are clearly derived from the painting of around 1550 showing this event which is on display at Hampton Court Palace.

The second point of interest is that the Stained Glass Museum at Ely holds the full-scale cartoon for one light of the final window that was made, that showing the Embarkation of Edward III in 1359. This window was made in 1873 and the cartoon must have been drawn close to that date. It is the section depicting the Black Prince holding a banner, with knights and seamen below. An article written about this



*Maison Dieu Cartoon 1873
Embarkation of Edward III
© Ely Stained Glass
Museum*

cartoonⁱⁱ describes how the cartoon, although closely based on Poynter's original sketch (which we do not have) is not a directly scaled-up and accurate version of it, but has evidence of being a work in progress, modifying the design in parts for translation into glass. These modifications were carried out by someone other than Poynter, hence the figure work being less convincing than in the earlier windows.

There are other stained glass windows at the Maison Dieu which are very competently designed and executed, if not as exciting in subject matter as the Poynter windows.

There are three windows in the Council Chamber depicting royal figures. The central window dates from 1884 and the outer two windows from 1892. In the Connaught Hall are a further seven figure windows depicting seventeen Constables of Dover Castle and installed between 1884 and 1908.

Plans for the restoration of the Stone Hall were drawn up by Ambrose Poynter, then taken over by William Burges and carried out in 1860-61. Burges later drew up plans for further work including the Mayor's Parlour and what was to become the Connaught Hall. On his untimely death in 1881 the work was continued by Burges' partner RP Pullan, and his office manager John Chapple. The Hall was completed in 1883.

All the glass in the Council Chamber and the Connaught Hall was designed by Horatio Walter Lonsdale and made by Heaton, Butler & Bayne. Lonsdale had been Burges' chief designer and worked with him on many outstanding windows, such as some of those at St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork, and Cardiff Castle. At one point Burges had in fact sent Lonsdale to EJ Poynter for lessons in figure drawing. After Burges' death, Lonsdale worked independently and as well as designing outstanding windows for churches

(such as St Michael's Brighton), he carried out secular designs such as those for Dover. His other major work on stained glass in a Town Hall was for Croydon, 1896.

The original cartoons for the Lonsdale windows at Dover were discovered in an archive in 1982ⁱⁱⁱ. It would appear that Lonsdale produced the designs in two stages^{iv}. Firstly, in 1883, the central Finnis memorial window in the Council Chamber, and five windows for the Connaught Hall. Then a further four windows for the Connaught Hall (only two of which were carried out), instructions to make designs approved in early 1892 followed closely by the Dickeson and Adcock windows in the Council Chamber, approved in May 1892.

Stained Glass in Local Churches

The nearest example of medieval stained glass to Dover is at St Martin's Church at Cheriton, Folkestone^v. Here there is a small but very good representation of the Trinity in tracery from the early 14th century. This is relatively rare because this image was a target for the Puritans, and indeed here the head of God has been restored at some stage.

St Peter & St Paul Church in Temple Ewell has some impressive colourful 17th century Swiss stained glass, painted with enamel paints. The highlight is a wonderful depiction of the Flight Into Egypt, with Joseph carrying his woodworking tools and Mary on a donkey carrying the child Christ and wearing a fashionable hat.

This church has an east window depicting the crucifixion of Christ by one of the masters of stained glass of the first half of the 20th century, Martin Travers. The window has a simple beauty. Travers' drawings for this window are dated 20 July 1948, just five days before he died. The window was subsequently made by his principal assistant, Lawrence Lee, and installed in the church in 1950.

The unexpected death of Martin Travers also affected work for St Andrew's church in Buckland. As at Temple Ewell, the east end had suffered war damage and Travers had been asked to design a new east window. His drawings for this were made in 1947. After his death, this became another project taken up by Lawrence Lee, and he completed the window which was installed in 1949. It was made at the prestigious studios of Lowndes & Drury in Fulham, London. The window depicts Christ flanked by St Augustine of Canterbury and St Andrew, who is holding a model of the church.

Lawrence Lee (1909-2011) became the foremost stained glass artist in the country in the second half of the 20th century. He succeeded Travers as head of the stained glass school at the Royal College of Art, and led the team that made the stained glass for Coventry Cathedral. He has a further early association with Dover because while working for Travers he completed one of his first two independent

designs for glass, for a window depicting St Bartholomew, made for St Bartholomew's church in Dover. This was designed in October 1946, and the window was dedicated in December 1948^{vi}. The church was later demolished and in 1974 the figure of St Bartholomew was re-set in the south transept of the church of St Peter & St Paul, Charlton, along with other figures.



*Dover St Andrews Buckland
East Window St Andrew
Holding Model of the Church
Martin Travers 1947*

The church at Charlton contains some interesting glass, the most striking of which is the high three-light east window depicting the Ascension of Christ with alongside St Peter and St Paul with angels behind; and also the east window of the Lady Chapel which shows the Annunciation with an angel with enormous wings. Both windows date from 1952 and were designed by the architect responsible for the war damage repairs, Kenneth Lindy^{vii}. They were made by Joan Carter at her studio in Canterbury. The windows are arresting and very colourful. The Ascension window is successful, but the Annunciation window, which is overly dramatic, rather less so.

The Catholic church of St Paul dates from 1868. It was victim to an arson attack in 1987 but fortunately most of its stained glass survived. It contains several excellent Victorian windows including some figures re-set after wartime damage. But the highlight is a beautiful window at the east end of the south aisle, a rose consisting of six intersecting circles and depicting the Virgin Mary and Christ. It was designed by John Trinick in around 1950. Trinick was an exceptional designer working in a late Arts & Crafts mode who originated in Australia but trained in England and lived for a time after the war in Cliftonville^{viii}. Unfortunately the west rose window, also by Trinick, was lost in the arson attack.

There is a variety of interesting stained glass in St Mary-the-Virgin Parish Church, of which the best is post-war^{ix}. The east window is a large three-light window with a separate additional light on either side. It depicts the ascended Christ surrounded by saints linked with the town, and local coats of arms. At its base are nicely painted views of the Maison Dieu, Dover Castle, St Mary's, the Old St James' church, and the White Cliffs. The window dates from 1955 and is by the studios of AK Nicholson of London.

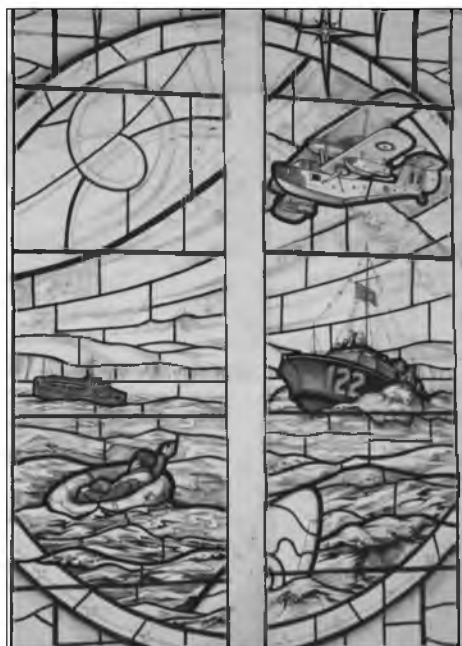
There are two other Nicholson windows, both from 1958. In the Lady Chapel is a two-light window (designed by GER Smith) depicting King Alfred the Great, patron saint of learning, and Hubert de Burgh, Constable of Dover Castle and benefactor of the Maison Dieu hostelry for pilgrims. Again, at the base is the Nicholson trademark of related scenes using just paint and stain on clear glass, and here showing a scene of early education under the Market Hall, and a scene of monks tending the sick in the Maison Dieu.

The other window is the single-light Sea Farers window in the south chancel with a marvellous depiction of the TSS Invicta.

There are three other windows related to the sea in the church, and it is instructive to compare the different ways in which the difficult technique of depicting the sea in glass is achieved.

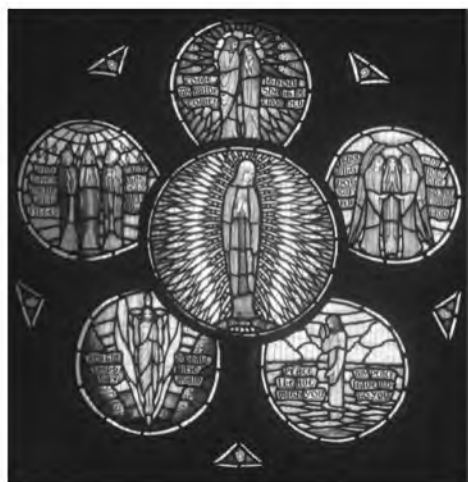
The Cinque Ports Pilots' window, commemorating mariners who guide ships in the Dover Strait, dates from around 1888.

The two-light Air Sea Rescue window is a



Dover St Marys Air Sea Rescue Window Goddard & Gibbs 1980

Second World War memorial to those members of the Air Sea Rescue and Marine Craft Sections of the RAF who died in the



Dover St Pauls South Aisle East Window John Trinick c1950



Dover St Marys East Window AK Nicholson 1955

conflict. Its central section is full of colour, life and movement, and is an excellent example (dating from 1980) of the work of the London firm of Goddard & Gibbs, which sadly ceased trading in 2006.

Finally, the two-light Zeebrugge window is a memorial to the 193 people who lost their lives when the Townsend Thoresen (now P&O) ferry 'Herald of Free Enterprise' capsized off Zeebrugge in March 1987. The window was unveiled exactly a year later^x and was designed by the eminent stained glass artist Frederick Cole who at the time lived in Shepherdswell. The main image in the window is Christ Stilling the Waves, but there is also below an accurate depiction of the ferry involved in the tragedy.

The Zeebrugge disaster is also commemorated by a stained glass window at the church of St Margaret of Antioch at St Margaret-at-Cliffe near Dover, where an annual service of commemoration is held. The striking three-light window was designed by John Lawson of Goddard & Gibbs who made it in 1988^{xi}. The window is a tribute in particular to three men from the village who died in the tragedy, Robert Crone, Bryan Eades and Graham Evans. The Kent Invicta symbol is included, as well as the badges of the Merchant Navy and the Kent Fire Brigade.

The church also contains three single-light windows by Goddard & Gibbs, which are all very attractive. The Emden memorial depicting Dorcas (1956) replaces a window destroyed in the war: the Jewell memorial

shows St Cecilia (1960), and finally a window showing Christ with children (1962).

Other good glass in this church includes a window in 13th century style by the eminent artist Eddie Nuttgens, which is an early work of his of 1927 carried out for Powells of Whitefriars, and depicting a scene from the life of St Margaret.

Finally, a brief mention of glass at St Martin of Tours, Guston. Here there is an unusual window, a one-light depiction of the Good Samaritan in memory of Alderman FW Prescott who was killed in Whitehall in London in 1919^{xii}. It was designed by Miss Olive Langley, a relative of his who had been an art student, and was made in 1922 at the London studios of Lowndes & Drury. It is a minor example of arts & crafts work which has clearly been repaired in places over the years, but it has a nice representation of a city in the background.

This has been an account of some of the most interesting stained glass in Dover and immediate vicinity. There were other significant windows in the area which have regrettably been lost over the years: for example good James Powell windows in the Dining Room at Waterloo Crescent and in the Royal Victoria Hospital, and a large window of 1864 by Heaton, Butler & Bayne made for St James' Church (badly damaged in the war and later demolished) and which had been exhibited at the South Kensington Museum (now the V&A). However, there is much glass remaining in the Dover area that is well worth studying.

i For example in 'Maison Dieu Dover: A History of Dover Town Hall' by Derek Leach: The Dover Society 2013

ii 'Cartoon by Sir EJ Poynter' in the Stained Glass Friends Newsletter, Summer 2010, by Kate Lycett

iii Dover Express June 25, 1982

iv Dover Express 2nd Feb 1883, 13th

July 1883, 23rd Feb 1892 and 13th May 1892

v Folkestone, Hythe, Sandgate & Cheriton Herald 8th Sept 1923

vi Dover Express 10th Dec 1948

vii The Builder 19th October 1951

viii 'John Trinick (1890-1974)- Master of Stained Glass' by Stefan Reynolds in the

Journal of Stained Glass Vol XXII, 1998

ix 'Welcome to St Mary's: visitor's guide to the church

x The Guardian 7th March 1988

xi Church Building magazine winter/spring 1988

xii Dover Express 8th Dec 1922