

**THE PARISH CHURCH OF  
SS PETER AND PAUL  
UPPINGHAM**

**THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS**



In memory of the late  
**Audrey Day**  
who first drew my attention  
to the Ascension Window  
and asked what is known of its history.



## Introduction

The Church is largely 14<sup>th</sup> century construction, subsequently undergoing considerable rebuilding in 1860-1 with further re-ordering and up-dating earlier this century. There is no ancient stained glass, nor record of any existing in the past<sup>1</sup>. The Visitation of 1619 noted that many of the Church's windows were stopped up. Had there been any coloured glass then or later it is unlikely it could have survived either the puritanical zeal of the likes of Anthony Fawkenor churchwarden and George Green parish clerk at the time of the Commonwealth, or the years of neglect that necessitated the Victorian restoration. Instead, for the oldest coloured glass found in the town, one has to seek elsewhere in the Uppingham Bookshop's window above the archway overlooking Mercers Yard.

Of the seven stained glass windows present in the Church, the oldest dates from 1892 with the most recent installed in 1955.

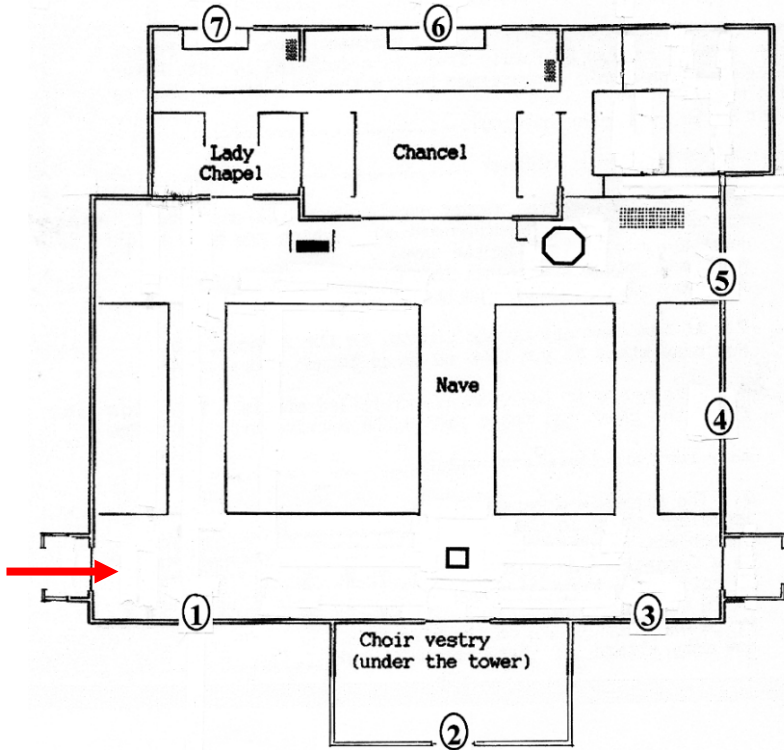
For too long it has been the fashion to be critical of Victorian stained glass because it is Victorian and because it reflects the style and ideas of its period. Fortunately, this attitude is passing so that the work of designers such as T. F. Curtis, E. H. Jewitt and Sir Ninian Comper have come to be recognised as worthy of admiration. Examples of the work of all three are found in the Church. And as Diana Hunt points out, Victorian designers and craftsmen worked at a disadvantage compared with their medieval predecessors. Many of their windows were ordered piecemeal and positioned alongside earlier stained glass or installed as memorials in situations chosen arbitrarily. Seldom was the Victorian designer given a chance to conceive the glass for the church as a whole and so was more exposed to the donor's whim.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless mention of 'Mr Digbie's window' in Edward Burton's 1576 Will can be accepted as evidence. The nearby Church of St Mary at Ayston does have coloured glass from this period and earlier.

It is urged therefore, that each window be considered on its own merits, for its artistic statement and as an example of its time – reflecting those whom it commemorates and those relatives, friends or admirers who collectively made possible its creation.

Each window is considered in turn, commencing at the entrance by the north door and moving anti-clockwise around the Church.



Location of windows in Uppingham Parish Church.

- |                            |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. The Dorcas Window       | 2. The Tower Window     |
| 3. The Children's Window   | 4. The Joseph Window    |
| 5. The Comper Window       | 6. The Ascension Window |
| 7. The Peter White Window. |                         |

## The “Dorcas” Window

Entering the Church the window is located immediately at the right hand. Here in the wall at the west end of the north aisle is an excellent example of an Early English three light window, with pierced spandrels, filled with stained glass. The subject is the Raising to Life of Dorcas by the Apostle Peter.

The window portrays seven episodes from the life of Dorcas. At the top left hand light St Peter is seen seated writing as the two men from Joppa enter and beg him to go to the house of Dorcas. The subject at the top of the right hand light is St Peter blessing Dorcas’ house before entering. In the base of the centre light, Dorcas lies at the point of death surrounded by her sorrowing friends. At the bottom left hand, St Peter prays over her dead body and in the right he views garments she has made. At the middle of the centre light is the delivery of Dorcas alive by St Peter to her friends and above Dorcas is seen sitting at work with an angel at either side.

The figures are richly coloured and diapered. The subjects are surrounded by canopies of the perpendicular order of white and gold upon ruby backgrounds, while at the bottom of the window are bases of the same character. Flowing scrolls run through the canopies with texts bearing on the subjects -

- “ Thou sent desiring him that he would not  
delay to come to them. ”
- “ When he was come they brought him into  
the upper chamber. ”
- “ In those days she was sick and died. ”
- “ Peter kneeled down and prayed. ”
- “ He gave her his hand and lifted her up alive. ”
- “ This woman was full of good works and alms – deeds. ”
- “ He shall give his angels charge concerning them. ”

In the three upper canopies are shields with symbols of the virtues (heart, anchor and cross), the emblems (left to right) of Charity, Hope and Faith. On a blue background in the small piece of tracery are scrolls with the text –

“ Now abideth Faith, Hope and Charity,  
but the greatest of these is Charity. ”

On a scroll at the base of each of the side-lights, is the dedication -

“ To the Glory of God and in loving memory of  
Sarah Ann White, died 1879; Mary Ann White,  
died 1886; and Ann Severin Tatem, died 1890. ”

The glass was designed and executed by T. F. Curtis of the famous Victorian firm Ward & Hughes of Frith Street, Soho Square in London. It dates to August 1898.

The window was the gift of Mrs Mary Compton of Compton House at 68 High Street East, the widow of William Compton who served as Churchwarden for forty years. The three ladies commemorated and their relationship to Mary Compton, are -

- Sarah Ann White her mother;
- Mary Ann White her sister; and,
- Ann Severin Tatem her aunt (mother's sister).

It is likely Mary Compton associated each virtue with a particular relative but discreetly perhaps, gives us no clue to her thinking.

William, his wife Mary (recorded on the gravestone as Sarah Maria) and her aunt Ann Severin Tatem lie buried in the lower churchyard below Southview.

Although no Faculty authorising the placing of this glass seems to exist (or to have been issued by the Bishop), a description of the window was published in the Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury at the time it was dedicated.



**The Dorcas Window**  
North Aisle, West wall





**The Tower Window**

West wall

## **The Tower Window**

In the wall of the late 14<sup>th</sup> century tower set above the closed west door is a two light window containing representations in stained glass of St. Catherine (left) and St. Cecilia (right).

According to legend, Catherine of Alexandria saint and martyr, lived in the fourth century. She brought Imperial displeasure upon herself by publicly protesting to Emperor Maxentius against the worship of idols. After having confounded the arguments of fifty philosophers (who were put to death for their failure), she refused to deny her faith and marry the Emperor. Beaten and imprisoned, she was fed by a dove and during her incarceration Christ appeared to her in a vision. While being tortured on a spiked wheel, it fell to pieces killing many spectators yet miraculously leaving her unharmed. Her constancy brought about the conversion of two hundred soldiers – who were promptly beheaded. Catherine too was beheaded. Her body was carried by angels to the top of Mount Sinai and now rests in the monastery at its foot named after her. Her emblem in art is the wheel.

On the left in the upper light St. Catherine is seen robed, with crown and halo; a spiked wheel in the background. Below, the predella is of her mystical marriage to Christ – St. Catherine kneels in prayer while Christ stands before her.

Of her companion saint, history relates at some unknown date a lady of patrician birth named Cecilia founded a church in the Trastevere quarter of Rome and was buried in the cemetery of St. Callistus. By the year 545 AD she is called both saint and martyr. Legend has it that on her wedding day she informed her husband she had consecrated her virginity to God, winning him over to respect her vow and to be baptised. Eventually, he and others of her followers were put to death as obstinate Christians. Cecilia also died for her faith after an ineffective beheading, the sentence that she be stifled by steam and heat in her own bathroom having failed to suffocate her.

Since the sixteenth century she has been regarded as the patroness of musicians. An organ is often shown as her emblem.

To the right the upper light shows St. Cecilia holding a small organ. In the lower part she kneels while a male figure in 17<sup>th</sup> century costume, stands holding a sword above her head. The background is an urban scene with a rising (or setting ?) sun.

The window also is the work of T. F. Curtis from Ward and Hughes. The predominant colours are deep red, greens, yellow, gold and white.

The dedication reads –

“ To the Glory of God dedicated by W.  
M. Compton Churchwarden 1904. ”

The glass was the gift of William Maydwell Compton who served as the Rector's Churchwarden for forty years from 1857 to 1896. A wine merchant, Compton was associated with The Vaults in the Market Place then a liquor warehouse and offices. He and his wife Mary lived at Compton House, No 68 High Street East which he rebuilt. A generous benefactor of the Church, the window is not his only memorial. In 1871, at their joint expense, he and the Rector William Wales paid for the restoration of the Church's communion plate at a cost of £33.14s.0d. Again, when in 1892 the church's organ was rebuilt and enlarged by Nicholson of Worcester then moved it to its present position in the south aisle, it was Compton who met the full cost of nearly £400.

For no obvious reason, when viewed from inside the Church the position of the window is off-set to the north. Yet seen from the outside, it is located central to the tower's west wall. The glass is best seen from the ringing chamber above the choir vestry in the tower arch. Unfortunately, this structure obscures almost completely the view from the floor of the nave. As access to the ringing chamber is normally kept locked, the alternative is a more distant view from the Chancel steps.

Compton died on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1896 aged 74 or 75. The window dates to 1904 so likely to have been a bequest in his Will. Neither a Faculty nor a maker's description has been discovered. If dedication there was, a report of the ceremony has not been traced.

St. Cecilia's association with church organs and her patronage of musicians is a reminder of Compton's generosity meeting the cost of the Nicholson organ and explains her selection as one of the subjects for the window. A reason for the inclusion of St. Catherine is less clear. Perhaps the closeness in the dates of the saints' feast days – respectively 25<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> November – may have a connection with Compton's birthday.

Although now only just over a hundred years old, it is feared that much information about the window is already lost.

## **The “Children’s” Window**

Near to the Church’s south entrance at the end of the south aisle, the three light window set high in the west wall is called the Children’s Window. The cost of £120 was raised largely by subscriptions week on week from Sunday School scholars. From Churchwarden’s records, Sunday School used to take place in the afternoon and lasted somewhat longer than is the custom today.

The glass was installed in 1900. It is the work of the Victorian firm of Shrigley & Hunt of Lancaster, but the name of its designer is not known. Of all the stained glass in the Church, this window shows the widest range and most delicate use of colours – reds, purple, blues and gold predominate against paler shades picked out with greys, brown and black.

Considering each light in turn, that on the left portrays Christ as the Good Shepherd. Beneath, the scroll containing the words -

“ The Lord whom he seek shall  
suddenly come to His Temple. ”

relates to the lower panel which is of the Presentation in the Temple. In 1904 the scene was described as of The Purification.

In the upper part of the centre light is seen The Virgin and Child and below, the Nativity. The two are divided by a scroll bearing the words –

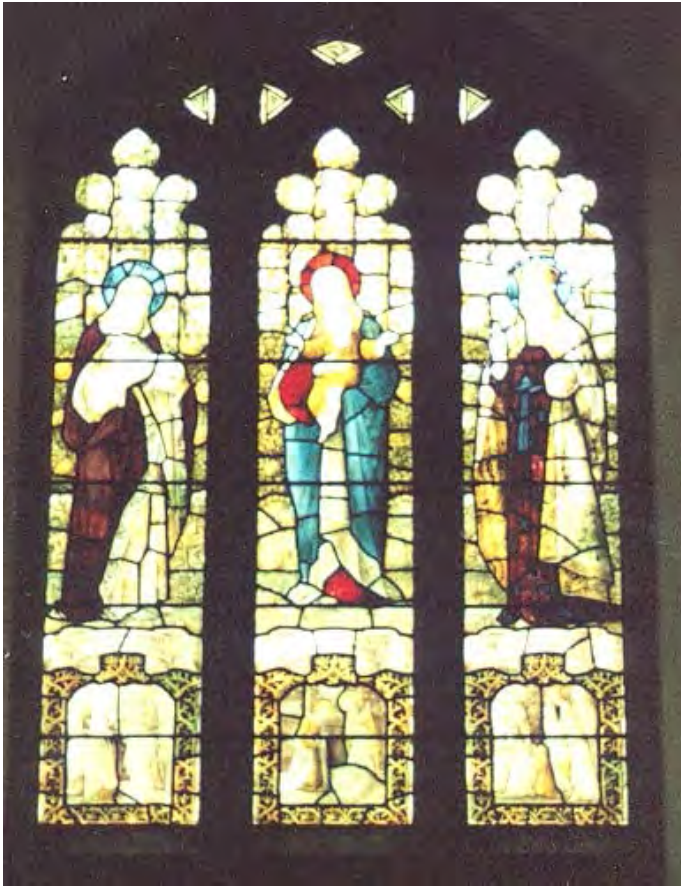
“ The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us. ”

At the right is depicted Christ the King, crowned in majesty, carrying an orb in His left hand. Below Christ is seen blessing the little children, under the words –

“ Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. ”

No Faculty for the window has been traced. A report and brief description appears in the Peterborough Diocesan Calendar.

The same theme is treated in the window “Caritas” found in Uppingham School’s Old School Room.



**The Children's Window**

South aisle, West wall



**The Joseph Window**  
South aisle, Centre window

## The “Joseph” Window

Proceeding along the south aisle towards the organ, the next stained glass is set in a four light window dated to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It is dedicated –

“ To the Glory of God, a thanksgiving for mercies received by William Southwell, now at rest AD 1904. ”

Born into a well known and numerous Uppingham family, William Southwell was a prominent tradesman in the town, carrying on the business of greengrocer and fruiterer for 29 years from No 2 High Street East. This is the island shop at the corner of the Market Place that continued to be a greengrocer’s until 2009. It is now an oriental rug shop. Southwell died on 28<sup>th</sup> January 1904, leaving an estate worth £11,262.16s.10d gross and £3,623.7s.4d net. How much the window cost is unknown.

There is no identification on the window of the artist, the designer or the maker’s name. In fact, it is by the well known firm of stained glass designers Shrigley & Hunt of Lancaster and is typical of work from their best period. It dates from 1904. The predominant colours are green, red, orange and golden yellow. Characteristic stone canopies and shafting divide the four larger Old Testament scenes from the four smaller subjects below. The theme of each of the upper scenes is carried into that of the lower – for example Joseph feeding his brethren and Christ the five thousand.

The window illustrates parallel stories from the lives of Jesus and Joseph. Under canopies, the upper lights depict the scenes –

- Joseph’s brothers discussing his fate;
- Joseph sold into slavery;
- Joseph led away to Egypt;
- Joseph feeding his brethren.



In the lower panel are scenes from the life of Christ, two of which feature that other Joseph the carpenter and husband of Mary the Mother of Jesus. From left to right they are –

- The visit of the Magi;
- The Betrayal in Gethsemane  
(Peter is seen drawing his sword);
- The flight into Egypt;
- The miracle of the loaves and fishes at  
the feeding of the five thousand.

There can be no doubt that the choice of Shrigley & Hunt as designers is the result of the same firm's work already present in the Church's great East Window and the Children's window. Neither a Faculty, newspaper account nor report in the Diocesan Calendar has been found for the placing of the glass in this window.

## The “Comper” Window

The next window towards the organ, also in four lights, copies the shape of the Joseph window but dates from the Victorian reconstruction. The glass was the gift of Colour Sergeant Robert Love in memory of his wife Susan and her sister Kitty the wife of Thomas Robert Dalton who succeeded William Southwell at No 2 High Street East. Susan and Kitty were born Southwells though not daughters of the William of the Joseph window.

The predominant colours in the glass are reds, blue, green, yellow-gold and white. Like the window in the Lady Chapel it incorporates a high proportion of clear glass.

Erected in 1909, the glass is one of the earlier works of that great church designer and furnisher Sir Ninian Comper. His strawberry plant motif can be found at the bottom right corner of the window next the bugle of the regimental badge of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Oxfordshire Light Infantry – Love’s regiment.

The eight panels of the window depict the Crucifixion, Resurrection and Appearances of Christ – the Way of the Cross; Christ being nailed to the Cross; Christ taken down from the Cross; the Entombment; the Marys at the tomb; Christ appearing to Mary Magdalene; Christ revealing Himself to St. Thomas and Christ appearing to the Apostles at Lake Tiberius. In the last three panels featuring Christ’s appearances, the actual words spoken are incorporated into the glass.

Each of the subjects is identified by its own subscription. From left to right, starting with the upper panels, they read –

“ Jesus bearing his cross.  
Jesus is nailed to the cross.  
Jesus taken down from the cross.  
Jesus is lain in the Sepulchre. ”

And in the lower panel –

“ The Marys at the Tomb.  
Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene.  
Jesus appears to Thomas.  
Jesus shows himself at Tiberius Sea. ”

Although comparatively recent in date, the variations in spellings compared with the modern practice, lends charm to the impression created by the window.

Across the foot of the window is the dedication –

“ A : M : D : G: The Gift of Col'r Sgt Robt Love in  
Memory of his wife Susan and her sister Kitty  
Dalton, daughters of Thos. & Eliz'th Southwell. ”

As with other windows from this time, no Faculty seems to exist, but a report does appear in the Peterborough Diocesan Magazine.



## **The Comper Window**

South Aisle



**The Ascension Window.**

Chancel.

## The “Ascension” Window

“ So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into Heaven. ”  
( Mark, Ch 16 verse 19 ).

“ And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. ” ( Luke, Ch 24 verse 51 ).

The great five light window set above the high altar at the east end of the Chancel, depicts Our Lord’s Ascension. At the top the ascending Christ is seen blessing the eleven Apostles remaining behind at Bethany. But there is an enigma with the cloud of angels in red attending the risen Christ. The face at the extreme right is curiously different from all the others. Instead of stylised cherubic features, it is more like a man in his mature years, yet unlike any portrayal we have of Wales himself. Could this be the window’s designer ?

Below this scene and extending across the full width of the window is the inscription –

“ Thou hast ascended on high. Thou hast led captivity captive. Thou hast received gifts for men yea for the rebellious also that the Good God might dwell among them. ”  
( Psalm 68 verse 18 ).

meaning that Christ has taken His place on His throne; His acceptance of voluntary captivity in this world and His triumph over it by rising from the dead.

Figures of the Parish Church’s patron saints St. Peter and St. Paul appear in small panels in the lower part of the window positioned each side of the reredos.

A further inscription at the lower left hand corner reads –

“ To the Glory of God and in memory of  
William Wales MA Rector 1859-1879.  
Chancellor of the Diocese 1850-1888. ”

Nearby, a brass records –

“ The centre light of this window is the gift of the  
near relatives of Chancellor and Hon. Mrs Wales. ”

A graduate of St. Catherine’s Hall, Cambridge, William Wales was ordained priest in 1828. There followed appointments at Rochester, Northampton and at Peterborough, where in January 1850 he became Chancellor of the Diocese, an appointment he held for 38 years. On 21<sup>st</sup> December 1858 he was instituted Rector of Uppingham, serving as the incumbent for the next 29 years. He died aged 85 in August 1889.

On his arrival at Uppingham, Wales found the church building in a sorry condition and many parishioners attending the Congregational Church. A man of energy and an active member of the Diocesan Church Building Society, he immediately set about a much needed restoration and enlargement, which was carried out 1860-1861. It is fitting the great east window of Wales’ new chancel should be used to frame the stained glass memorial to his ministry here.

The window dates from 1892 and is the work of the well known firm of stained glass designers Shrigley & Hunt of Lancaster, at the time headed by Arthur William Hunt. It is possible that E. H. Jewitt, subsequently the firm’s chief artist, may have been involved with the design and choice of colours. Generally though, the window is judged not one of the firm’s best. Their Joseph window in the south aisle is considered a better example of this period and style of Victorian stained glass. In fairness, the designers had to make use as best they could of an existing east window with its heavy tracery.

No Faculty for the glass has been traced nor does one appear to have been issued by the Bishop. Its installation however is reported in the Peterborough Diocesan Calendar.

The window is seen at its best in the spring and autumn during the 8 o' clock Communion Service when the newly risen sun shines directly through the glass bringing all its colours to life as it illuminates the Church's high altar and spreads across the Chancel floor.

A happy coincidence attaches to the Ascension window. Some fifteen years after its creation, Arthur William Hunt's daughter Jane married R. H. Owen who, in 1916, became Headmaster of Uppingham School. Then some sixty five years later Diana M. Hunt, Arthur William's great-granddaughter, studied at Uppingham School as a pupil in the Sixth Form. Miss Hunt chose as the subject of her "A" level art thesis, her family's contribution to Victorian stained glass which she illustrates by reference to examples to be seen in windows of Rutland churches and surrounding areas, including discussion of both the Ascension and Joseph windows in the Parish Church at Uppingham.



## **The “Peter White” Window**

The last and most recent of the Church’s stained glass is to be found in the east wall of the north transept set in the window above the altar of the Lady Chapel. Here the altar, panelling and screen are the design of the late Leslie J. Moore of Grey’s Inn, London; who was responsible also for designing the screen across the base of the tower arch. There exists some disagreement as to the age of the Chapel window. The plan of the Church in the Victoria County History of Rutland dates it to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, whereas Dr. Cotton considers it to be from the next century. However an earlier church guide states it was newly made for the 1861 restoration and is not one of the medieval windows re-used in a new position.

The stained glass is the creation of Peter White of Canterbury in Kent and dates from 1955. It is believed to be his first work.

In the spring of 1954 the executors of the late Miss Evelyn Elizabeth Freer of Bournemouth informed the Rector that her will included a bequest for placing of a stained glass window in the Church in memory of her parents and family. The design and its position in the Lady Chapel was the choice of the P.C.C. Of the two designs submitted by Peter White, the one we see was selected for its appeal and for the practical advantage that it admits the maximum amount of light to the Chapel.. A montage of the other more traditional design submitted, similar in style to the other glass in the Church, is deposited at the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland.

The cost of the glass was £382, for a plaque £15.15s with £48 for fixings, making a total of £445.15s. With the executors’ agreement, the unspent balance of the bequest was applied towards furnishings and fittings to the Chapel.



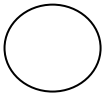
**The Peter White Window**

Lady Chapel, East Window

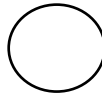


**The alternative Peter White design**

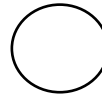
In the order of position, the subjects are –



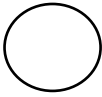
The Baptism in  
the river Jordan



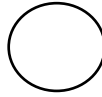
The Annunciation



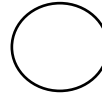
The Betrayal in  
The Garden



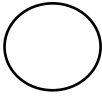
The Raising of  
Lazarus.



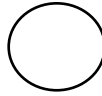
The Three Magi



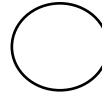
Via Dolorosa



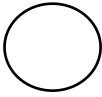
Palm Sunday  
Entry to Jerusalem



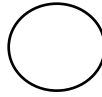
The Nativity  
(note the animals)



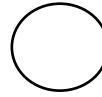
The Crucifixion



The Agony  
in the Garden



The Flight to Egypt



The Ascension

This is the only stained glass in the church that Pevsner considers worthy of mention. He describes it as twelve medallions with stories designed and told simply; the technique like that of some modern wood-engraved book illustration. Dr. Cotton's guide to the Church refers to twelve panels featuring roundels in imitation of the style of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Take a little time to compare scenes from this window, for example the Betrayal, the Magi, the Via Dolorosa, the Nativity and the Crucifixion, with their treatment in the Comper, the Joseph and the Children's windows of the south aisle. Also, contrast the two Ascension pictures. One can ponder whether Peter White had knowledge of these windows and set out to treat the subjects differently, or if his artistic expression worked in isolation. Perhaps his inspiration was influenced by the shape of the two 12<sup>th</sup> century Norman carved angel's heads that are set in the east wall either side of his window.

A brass memorial tablet is fixed to the wall at the left side of the altar. It records -

“ This window was presented by Evelyn Elizabeth Freer in memory of her Father and Mother Benjamin Freer and Elizabeth Freer and all other members of her family. Dedicated July 17<sup>th</sup> 1955. ”

Benjamin Freer was a veterinary surgeon, as well as a carriage proprietor and a victualler, who practices from the stables (now demolished) behind the White Hart Inn which he owned by virtue of his marriage to Elizabeth Askew daughter of the previous owner. Evelyn Elizabeth was their fourth child. She never married. Perhaps it was another of those numerous private tragedies from this time, with the name of whoever she might have married recorded instead on the war memorial at the left side of the tower arch.

Unusually for the Church's stained glass, a Faculty approving its installation was obtained. Copies are now deposited at both the Northamptonshire and Leicestershire Record Offices.

## **Conclusion**

During the past half century there has been no further addition to the Parish Church's stained glass, as much a reflection of changed fashion as of the escalation in the cost of such work and needs for charitable giving in aid of those in our world less fortunate than ourselves.

The pause allows for reappraisal of the merits of the glass we have inherited and of the artistic qualities of those who designed it. For opportunity to make this appreciation we are indebted to the survey and description of stained glass in Rutland's Churches and Chapels by Paul Sharpling.

P. N. Lane.

April 2014.



## Sources and Further Reading

- |                                      |  |      |
|--------------------------------------|--|------|
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| Diana M. Hunt                        | A View of 19 <sup>th</sup> Century British Stained<br>Glass : Based on the Family Firm of<br>Shrigley & Hunt of Lancaster<br>Uppingham School Archive. | 1981 |
| N. Pevsner<br>(ed. E.<br>Williamson) | The Buildings of England :<br>Leicestershire & Rutland (2 <sup>nd</sup> edition)<br>London.  | 1984 |
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