

## HISTORY

Zeebrugge memorial window at St Mary's Dover.



## CONSERVATION

The Stained Glass Studio, Canterbury Cathedral.



## DESIGN

Alexandra Le Rossignol.

## NEW COMMISSIONS

The window at Staple created by Buffy Tucker.

# COLOUR TO OUR CHURCHES

A feature dedicated to stained glass windows across our Diocese

The Diocese of Canterbury has some of the finest historical stained glass windows in the country as well as a wealth of new designs that are easy to visit and view.

In this feature we look at some of the history of our church windows; we meet the Cathedral design and restoration team and look at how you go about commissioning a stained glass window for your church.

# Commissioning window art in your church

**Ian Dodd, Secretary to the Diocesan Advisory Committee, discusses commissioning new stained glass.**

**The DAC encourages church communities to introduce works of art into their churches, be these sculptures, statues or stained glass. But when you consider how our churches are a repository of religious art over the ages, I am surprised by how few faculty applications we receive for stained glass windows or other art installations.**

During the Reformation, nearly all stained glass was removed from medieval churches. At the time, some people tried to preserve the glass by hiding it within the community or on the church site and a few churches have fragments of medieval stained glass, often found at the top of otherwise clear glass windows. St Mary's, Nackington is rare in that it has a complete early 13th century medieval window, traditionally said to have come from Canterbury Cathedral. Most stained glass in the Diocese is therefore late Georgian, Victorian or later. Following the Oxford movement, Victorian glass was seen as an opportunity for teaching the faith or adorning our church buildings and most Victorian glass tells Biblical stories or shows Biblical or later religious figures.

To commission a new stained glass window, a church must have in mind a suitable window to use, most likely with non-historic clear glazing. As with all faculty applications, parishes will need to draft a statement of need, which outlines why the church is proposing a change along with the details of how

this will be achieved; we would be happy to advise on this.

It is expected that a newly commissioned stained glass window would have some religious purpose, as well as being a work of art. A good example of this is the window at Staple, created by Buffy Tucker, one of the team at Canterbury Cathedral. This striking window depicts ascending souls and includes prismatic glass; it is a sight to behold. A window at Ash by John Corley, shown above, focusses on the life of St Francis and is a richly coloured depiction of the created world.

There are examples of modern windows that commemorate significant events in a local community. One example is the window at St Mary's, Dover which commemorates the Zeebrugge disaster of 1987.

The church at Lower Halstow has a window that commemorates WW1 in memory of local people affected by the war, and was installed shortly afterwards.



The large window at Boughton Aluph, pictured above, created by Léonie Selinger, celebrates Alfred Deller, the singer, and the



John Corley's window at St Nicholas Ash.

musical heritage of the village. It is a fine window with an intricate design that does not give up its secrets quickly.

Several churches in the Diocese commissioned millennium windows. Upchurch houses a window that was designed by local school children. Deal artist John Corley created the millennium window at Bethersden. Local artist Graham Clarke designed a fascinating interior window for the millennium at Boughton Monchelsea, which includes a snake in the shape of 2000.

Windows can commemorate an individual who was significant in a community (such as the Rossetti window at Birchington). Grieving families sometimes wish to commission a window in memory of a loved one. It would be unusual for such a window to actually depict the individual concerned.

Churches considering commissioning a stained glass window will also need to have an artist in mind. We are fortunate to have a number of outstanding stained glass artists in this Diocese, although it is possible to work with an artist whose medium is not glass. Their designs can sometimes be developed in collaboration with a stained glass artist and technician.

Finding the right artist is important and I would urge

church communities to work with the artist in harmony with their manner and not expect them to produce something in a different style.

The aesthetic impact of the window must also be considered. How the light falls through the window and across the church is part of this. Despite predictions, until the window is installed, you can never really be sure of how it will look. Some windows look duller than expected, others are more beautiful and radiating than you would expect.

In summary, I would urge church communities considering commissioning a stained glass window to contact me as soon as they can in the process. We like to work in partnership with churches before the faculty is submitted, providing advice and support along the way.



# The stained glass work of Alex Le Rossignol

With an initial training in Theatre Design and a background that includes working as an art teacher, Alexandra Le Rossignol's work can be seen in churches across the diocese.

Whilst Alex has designed windows for secular buildings, including a window near Calais at the end of the cross-channel electrical link, and windows at an Ashford hospice, two hospitals and a library, the majority of Alex's commissions have been for churches and Christian buildings, including a Romanian hospice chapel and Diocesan churches including Smeeth, Westwell, Sellindge, Barham, and Milstead.

Alex, who is married to Richard, Rector of the A20 Benefice, sees her work as an opportunity to share her faith through glass. "Prayer is important in the process of creating a window and people remark that God is in my work. Hopefully people see things in my windows that help them reflect on His Glory."

Looking to the natural world for inspiration, many of Alex's windows feature local wildlife.

"In our unchurched society, traditional Christian symbols are not always known. I find that reflecting the environment in which the windows are placed seems to draw people in to discuss and enjoy spiritual truths."

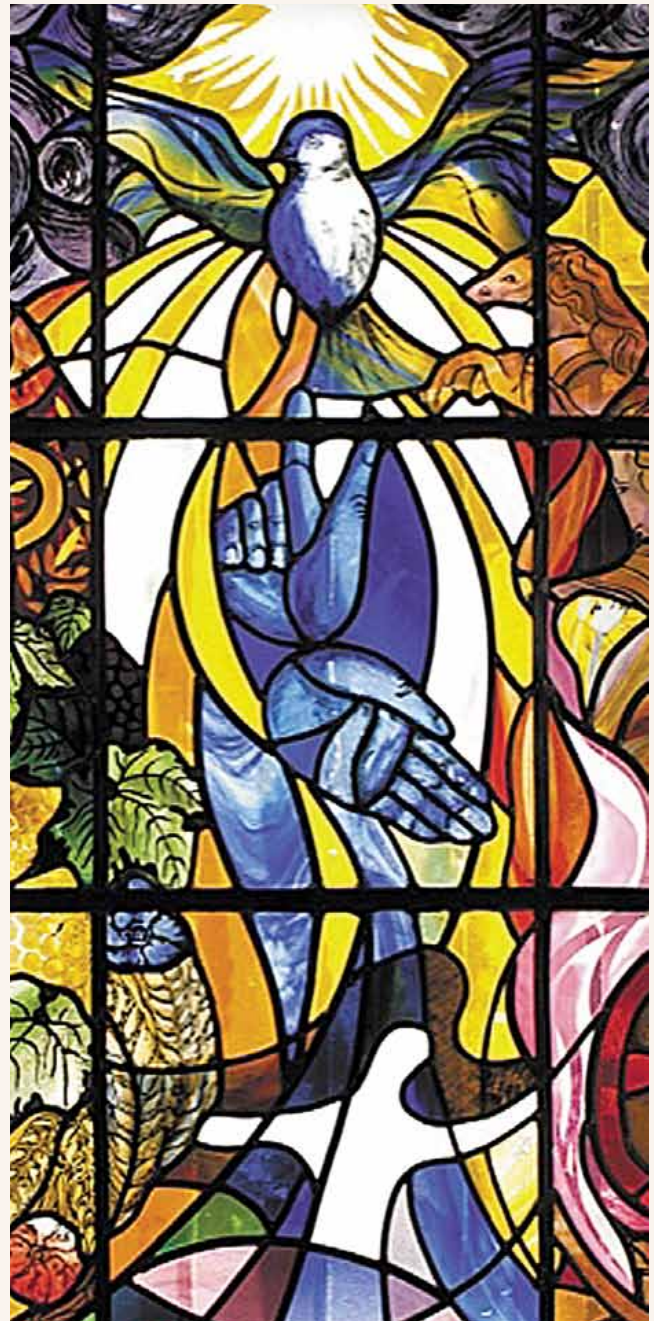
Her millennium window at St Mary's, Westwell, features dragonflies, their wings as intricate as lace, their faces human and sombre. In contrast, Alex's window on the bell tower at St Mary's, Sellindge, portrays a web of lilies and butterflies.

"The first book I bought as a child was a nature book and I am inspired by the parables I see of Christian life in the natural world. Living in a rural benefice, I look to the natural world to provide me with direct reference for drawing which helps me, together with reading to get into the design process."

Hands also feature heavily in Alex's work, an example being a window designed and created by Alex and a group of Art Scholars from Ashford School for the Holy

Land Institute for the Deaf in Salt Jordan. The window was designed to reflect the importance of the Baptism area in Jordan which Jews, Christians and Muslims all recognise as a place where God has spoken.

"Hands bring in the human dimension, symbols of care, protection and sacrifice and are conveniently at the end of my arms for reference! Working with The Holy Land Institute of The Deaf in Jordan underlined how hands can communicate across cultures and languages. The hands on their window spell 'Allah Kariem' - God provides - which is recognised across the faiths."



*Alex's window at the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf.*

Alex's current projects include two windows for Ashurst Church near Tonbridge and she will be exhibiting with Ashford Visual Artists in their Crossing Places exhibition at The Horsebridge Whitstable in September. She runs occasional stained glass workshops at her home in Smeeth.



# Shedding light on window conservation

Léonie Seliger is director of Stained Glass Conservation at Canterbury Cathedral. Here she gives an insight into the Studio's work and also reveals the history behind some of the great cathedral windows.

Through the ages people working with stained glass have always done their best. However, what is considered to be best changes with history. Today, there needs to be a principle of reversibility.

Great care must be taken before removing anything. Something that appears old-fashioned or awkward now may in fact be able to contribute something important to our historic understanding, or be seen to add flavour and colour by future generations. I would always argue for the retention of the ferramenta (the supporting metalwork) when commissioning a new window. As an artist you need to remember you are a late tenant in a building.

It is your job to create something beautiful and contemporary, but in my opinion, you mustn't interrupt the story of the building; that

has to have right of way. In the 1950s, 800 year old ferramenta was removed from the South East transept of Canterbury Cathedral to make way for the Bossanyi windows. Although the windows are magnificent, commissioned following bomb damage in the Second World War, it is an example of people doing their best in the moment, but something we would never even consider doing now.

## Medieval glass - an organised destruction

One of the most surprising things about stained glass in the cathedral is how much medieval glass still exists. It is a wonder that 3mm thin pieces of glass survived the Reformation and the age of Puritanical reforms, they survived being moved and re-shaped; they survived disinterest, neglect, vandalism and even war.

The Reformation was the first kick in the teeth for the cathedral glass. Art relating to Thomas Becket was removed along with anything that could be sold or melted down to contribute to the King's coffers.

## 17th century Puritan reforms

There followed another period of organised destruction in the 17th century as part of the Puritan reforms. We know exactly what happened during this period because the gang leader, Richard Culmer, kept an account of the destruction. He was one of the Six Preachers of the cathedral and was instructed by parliament to cleanse the building of idolatrous images. This meant that images of saints, the Trinity, the crucifix, the Virgin Mary and even Christ were removed. We know from records that the citizens of Canterbury were in revolt against the destruction.

The Chapter were also distressed and tried to hide a window of the crucifixion in the Chapter House behind a false wall. But Culmer was not to be fooled and he ripped down the wall and the window.

An image of Thomas Becket in the Great North Window, which had only survived the Reformation because it was so high up, was also not beyond Richard Culmer's reach. He acquired the town's great ladder and hammered out the window remarking that he 'rattled down proud Becket's glassy bones'. An investigation by parliament afterwards found that Culmer had been so single-minded in his remit to remove images relating to Christ, that in one window, he bashed out the glass that depicted Christ and the Crucifix, but left an image of the devil (the original window portrayed Christ leading people away from idol worship). Windows that showed ordinary people – not



'Salvation' by Ervin Bossanyi, located in the south eastern transept of the Cathedral.



Dedicated to Allan Willett, a Cathedral benefactor, this window, designed by Cathedral glass conservator, Alison Eaton, was added to the West walk of the Great Cloister in the summer of 2014.

## “One of the most surprising things about stained glass in the cathedral is how much medieval glass still exists”



The stained glass studio team fitting a ferramenta window frame at the Cathedral.



Fake medieval Thomas Becket pane created by Samuel Caldwell

those sainted - also survived, so most of the Miracle Windows and the Ancestors of Christ windows survived Culmer's purge.

### Early restoration

There followed a period of repairing, reglazing and patching up. People did their best mending small holes with fragments of glass stuffed into the wrong places; windows that were completely destroyed were glazed with clear glass. However, for a good century and a half, people were simply not interested in stained glass.

The Reformation had tainted it as an aid to faith; people wanted the clear light of reason and not to be distracted by imagery. Around this time there was also a shift away from 'seeing' to listening/reading the word, which coincided with the Bible being printed in English and increasing levels of literacy.

The Georgians, with their re-emerging love of the gothic and appreciation of aesthetics, moved some of the surviving stained glass to lower parts of the cathedral where worshippers could see it better. These actions led to

the Ancestors of Christ windows being re-located to various places in the cathedral, in the process their progression looking forward to Jesus was lost. Out of 86 original figures that comprised the Ancestors of Christ, only 8 figures remain in their original home. Mary, Joseph and Christ were certainly destroyed, another 40 were probably simply lost by neglect and 35 were moved to the Great South and West windows.

### Fraudulent Victorians

The nineteenth century saw a more scholarly approach and restoration became the focus. Between 1819-1952, four members of the same family (Austin/Caldwell) led the restorations. These craftsmen also created a number of replicas, including inventing the missing 43 ancestors.

Samuel Caldwell junior, the last of the Austin/Caldwell dynasty, became so good at replicating medieval glass that he could not resist passing off a window of a seated Thomas Becket that he created as an original medieval work. He used a few small panes of medieval

glass, including a face, and treated the other panes to look convincingly medieval. It was an audacious act and can still be seen in the North Trinity Chapel Ambulatory.

### World War II

In World War II, all the medieval glass was removed and stored in the Crypt. Blast damage destroyed many of the Victorian windows, including many of the replicas of the Ancestors of Christ.

After the war, the ancient glass was re-installed but by the 1960s it was clear that the medieval glass was decaying by corrosion. Rain and condensation ate away at the surface of the glass; whilst you can never completely stop glass corrosion, you can create conditions in which the corrosion is slowed down to such an extent that the windows will last for many more centuries. In 1973 the stained glass conservation studio was created at the cathedral. Our team of nine highly trained conservators clean, consolidate, mend fractures and stabilise loose paint. We then install protective modern glazing on the outside. We monitor conditions and I am pleased to say that this approach is

working very well.

Along with the Bossanyi windows which represent peace and salvation, the cathedral has a number of other post war windows. There is the St Anselm Chapel window created by Harry Stammers in 1959 and just this summer we installed two new windows in the cloisters to recognise major contributions to the life and the conservation of the cathedral. The Cloisters were chosen because that space has a tradition of recognising the link between the cathedral and community. The numerous coats of arms on the ceiling of the north, east and west walk of the cloister were mounted in the fifteenth century in recognition of the support provided by some of the benefactors of the day. We hope these new windows contribute to that great story that is Canterbury Cathedral.

### Learn more about the history of Canterbury Cathedral.

Open Evening on Tuesday 7 October 2014. There will be displays running from 18:30 – 20:40 and the evening will finish with a special concert sung by the Cathedral choristers, followed by Compline at 21:00.

# Commissioning new windows at Holy Trinity



**Holy Trinity Church, Folkestone, recently installed a series of six modern stained glass windows in its south entrance porch which were dedicated by Bishop Trevor in July.**

Designed and created by Alison Eaton from the Cathedral Studios in Canterbury, the windows are based on the creation story in the Bible and enhance the newly cleaned south porch walls with their beauty.

The six panels are full of local detail, incorporating seagulls and a Martello tower to reflect the church's life within a coastal parish. A rainbow portrays the Folkestone Rainbow Centre, with which the church is closely linked.

Sarah Bristow, Chair of the Holy Trinity Legacy Committee explains the process the church went through to commission:

"The process started in 2010 on receipt of a legacy which specified 'a permanent memorial' to be created and we were tasked to find something that could enhance the building and be attributed to the donor family. A PCC member came up with the idea of the windows in the south porch, at which point we consulted Ian Dodd who, as ever, was very helpful and who worked with us throughout the process.

We consulted the Cathedral Studios quite early on and as we were impressed we invited them to submit designs. Four potential designers visited the church and three submitted designs, as did one other local designer.

The brief was:

- The need for modern glass, colour and brightness, also to complement the existing windows from the 19th and 20th centuries.
- Biblical context, but also to reflect Folkestone.

- Reflect the life of the donor and to be a memorial.

- No change to be made to the shape of the existing windows.

The Trustees of the donor's estate have been closely consulted throughout the process and were happy with our choice. I have sent them regular updates and photos and they attended the dedication and were really very happy with the result. They were also pleased with the cleaning of the porch (also from the legacy) and we are working with them on the use of the remaining part of the legacy.

The congregation have commented positively about the vibrant colours and the way they reflect on the floor of the porch in the sunshine. They also have commented on the detail within each window and the way the natural world is contained within the windows, not to mention intricate details that are specific to Folkestone and the 'story' it tells.

I hope future generations will look at the windows and wonder about the donor, the church's close link to the town (as it is today) and, not least, think about the story of creation, which is read at our Easter fire service each year.

Many people were involved in this process in many different ways, overseen by our Legacy Committee. It has been challenging and sometimes it felt as though it would never happen! We were trying to improve our welcome to Holy Trinity and the porch was very drab and boring, but I am pleased to say, it has now been transformed."

## INTERESTING WINDOWS IN THE DIOCESE



### SELLING, ST MARY THE VIRGIN

East window c. 1300.



### STOWTING, ST MARY THE VIRGIN

15th century glass in the south aisle window with pilgrim saints.



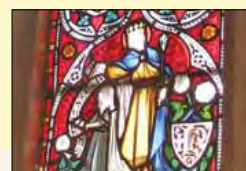
### WICKHAMBREAUX, ST ANDREW

The late 19th century east window designed by Arild Rosencrantz, made by LaFarge.



### PATRICXBOURNE, ST MARY

The Swiss 16th and 17th century glass in the east and south windows.



### RAMSGATE, ST AUGUSTINE

A complete set of mid-19th century windows designed by A.W. Pugin and made by Hardman.

### MARDEN, ST MICHAEL

The 20th century East window by Patrick Reyntiens.