The background of the image shows a series of tall, narrow stained glass windows set within a stone archway. The windows are filled with intricate designs, including a central panel depicting a religious scene with figures, and various heraldic crests and symbols. The lighting is soft, highlighting the colors of the glass.

The Stained Glass of All Saints

Diane Johnson

The fabric of our beautiful parish church, has been altered and extended several times since it was built on its present site in the 12th century, and these alterations are explained for us in the various editions of the “Church Guide”. However, expert opinion on the subject matter, symbolism and quality of the stained glass is not easily available and searches through church logs, restoration minute books and books on church furnishings have not yielded the detailed information I had hoped for. Readers must remember too that some of the older glass may have been re-set once or even twice in its history as the church was extended and the position of windows changed.



The oldest coloured glass is to be found in the most easterly window in the south wall of the Lady Chapel. The glass is very dark in colour so it is difficult to distinguish that the re-set fragments, dating from the 15th century, are the arms of the Constables of Flamborough. In 1464 King Edward IV granted to Sir Robert Constable of Flamborough “the manor and Lordship of Hessel with the ferry and passage there.” Although the fragments of glass are 15th century, church records show that the shield was inserted in 1911 by William Pope of Leeds, under the direction of Dr. John Bilson, F.S.A. of Hessele.

Set high up in one of the south aisle clerestory windows is the crest of Legard of Anlaby. Sir Robert Legard was the Lord of Hessele in the 17th century and the stained glass is of that period. The crest has a yellow greyhound as its dominant feature.



Most of the stained glass in the church is Victorian, put in place in the late 19th century, during major alterations. Minutes of the restoration committee dated 19th March 1869 show that the committee “resolved to have a baptismal window to be erected by subscription of parties who have been baptized in the church, cost not to exceed £43.” The result is the window in the south wall of the baptistry dated 1877, which consists of three lights. In the central light are the figures of St. John the Baptist and Christ in the River Jordan. On looking closely at St. John’s right hand it is apparent that he is using a scallop shell — just like the ones used in our baptism ceremonies — to pour the water over the figure of Christ. In his left hand he holds a tall staff with cross piece, making the staff resemble a cross. Could this sym-

bol be a portent of Christ's crucifixion, as the cross would not have been used as a Christian symbol before that event? Above Christ's head is a dove, symbolising the Holy Spirit. To the right of the central light are two figures, an old man and a young boy shown replacing their garments after being baptised by John, and representing the many baptisms he had conducted prior to that of Christ. In the left-hand light two angels are waiting to replace Christ's cloak when the baptism is over. In the tracery above the main sections of the window are four angels unfurling scrolls on which are inscribed the words, "He was bruised for our iniquities. He was wounded for our transgressions"



Moving across to the west window of the baptistry we find a smaller window of two lights, dedicated to the memory of Henry Newmarch, B.A., vicar of the parish for 46 years, who died in 1883. He was responsible for the major extensions to the church. The subjects of the windows are obvious but it is quite interesting to note some of the details. The portrayal of the Virgin Mary holding the Infant Jesus is a regal one. She is richly clothed in a pale green tunic and a cloak of the blue we have come to associate with Mary; but this cloak is trimmed with ermine, a reference perhaps to Mary Queen of Heaven. In her right hand she is holding a lily, a symbol associated with the Virgin, and at her feet is what appears to be an apple. This emblem is sometimes linked with Mary but is less common than others. I was puzzled as to why St. John the Evangelist is paired with Mary in the window, until Kenith reminded me that it is only in St. John's version of the crucifixion that before he dies Christ commends John to Mary as her son and places Mary in John's hands with the words "Behold thy mother".

Now let us look at some of the windows that have the Easter theme. The main set are those in the south aisle, to the left of the south porch, all designed and executed by John Hardman and Co., Birmingham, in the late 1870's.



In the window immediately to the left of the door the subject is the Garden of Gethsemane and not, as was originally proposed for this window, our Lord's entry into Jerusalem. It is full of fine detail, particularly in the stylised flora of the garden and the decoration and texture of the costumes. The background of medieval, turreted walls owes more to Victorian Romanticism than historical accuracy, but provides a theatrical setting for the drama unfolding in the main part of the window. Christ's figure is in the central light, slightly apart from the other figures, but with the angel that St. Luke's Gospel records appeared "unto him from heaven, strengthening him." There may be subtle significance in the fact that Jesus is wearing a red robe as red was the colour of sovereign power among the Romans, and it is also the Church's colour for martyred saints. The sleeping figures of Peter (with the sword), James and John are easily recognisable, and in the right hand light we see the prominent figure of Judas holding on firmly to his purse of silver, followed by priests, Malchus the servant of the high priest, soldiers and citizens. I like this window because it is so decorative and there is always something new to be discovered in the detail, particularly in the faces of the jostling crowd.

The Crucifixion is the theme of the next window and again typically Victorian in its interpretation of the figures and background, and as in so many religious illustrations of the period, the people are pale-skinned and fair-haired Europeans. As one would expect from the different Gospel reports of the Crucifixion, women appear more prominently in this picture. The group on the left consists of the Virgin Mary (presumably the figure in the mantle of blue we associate with her) and two companions, one of whom is probably her sister (St. John 19:25) and the other Mary mother of St. James the Less. Inconsolable at the foot of the cross is the distraught figure of Mary Magdalene. The female composition on the left is balanced by three male figures to the right. The dignified figure at the back is Joseph of Arimathea who was influential in recovering Christ's body after the crucifixion, and with him is St. John. Completing the group is the kneeling figure of the centurion with his sword and spear who, after witnessing the crucifixion, became convinced of Christ's divinity and in Christian tradition became known as St. Longinus. If you look carefully at this window on a bright day you will see in the central light, just above the cross and to the left, a very stylised sun, and to the right a moon. In his book,



Signs and Symbols in Christian Art, George Ferguson records that “The sun and the moon are often represented in scenes of the Crucifixion to indicate the sorrow of all creation at the death of Christ.” Note too in this window the terrible sadness drawn on all the faces, reflecting the pathos of the words which appear in the tracery above — “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?”



The third window in the set depicts the Resurrection. Christ is in the central light and the wounds from the nails are clearly visible in the hands and feet. His right hand is raised in blessing and in his left he holds a banner with a red cross. In Christian art the Lamb of God bearing such a banner symbolises victory over death by the martyrdom of Christ, but Christ himself carries a banner only when rising from the grave, in the Descent into Hell, and in appearances on earth after the Resurrection and before the Ascension. The window is similar in composition to the previous one. The female figures on the left are probably the young girl Salome, Mary the mother of James the Less and Mary Magdalene (St. Mark 16:1). The two Mary’s are holding vessels containing spices they had brought to anoint the body of Jesus. The dress of these three figures is interesting. Salome and Mary are wearing the styles we traditionally associate with Biblical times, yet Mary Magdalene’s dress belongs more to the medieval period, another example of Victorian Romanticism. I assume that the two figures on the right of the window are those of John and Peter, the only two disciples to be named in any of the Gospels as visitors to the empty sepulchre (St. John 20:3). St. John’s Gospel conveys the emotional turmoil the discovery of the empty tomb caused. These conflicting emotions are skilfully portrayed in the

bewildered faces of the characters represented in the Resurrection window.

The fine east window in the chancel is in the perpendicular style and 15th century in origin, although it was rebuilt in its present position in the 1870’s when the church was so extensively extended. It was during this period that the coloured glass was installed. A letter from J. Hardman and Co., dated 6th March 1869, submitting designs and estimates for the new stained glass states... “The East window is very elaborate in character. The subject shows Our Lord seated in majesty surrounded by saints and angels. This design, if carried out in the richest possible manner, will be £250 00s. 00d.” They went on to say that the cost could be cut by reducing the number of saints and cherubims, but cautioned against this economy. “We should advise that this window, being the most important in the church, should be made as handsome as possible.”

The committee obviously heeded this advice and due to the generosity of Colonel Pease, All Saints’ has its full complement of saints and cherubims, as befits its dedication.

Christ’s figure in the central of five lights, dominates the window. His right hand is held in blessing and his left is holding an orb, or globe surmounted by a cross, which is an emblem of Christ’s sovereignty. He is surrounded by a host of Saints, so numerous that at first glance one might think that they are a random group of unidentifiable figures. On closer scrutiny however it is obvious that L. Powell, the artist who designed the window, intended his characters to be recognised by the worshippers at All Saints’. It is amazing that without words, and relying only on symbolism, the artist is able to illustrate so clearly who many of the figures in the window represent. As it would take too long to describe the figures that I, even with my limited knowledge, have been able to identify, I thought I would list a few

Saints with some of the emblems which are illustrative of events in their lives or the instruments of their martyrdom, and let you do some detective work of your own.



1. St. Catherine of Alexandria, near spiked wheel, carrying sword, wearing a crown.
2. St. Agnes, holding a lamb.
3. St. Mary Magdalene, with long hair and holding an alabaster box of ointment.
4. St. Cecilia, carrying a positive organ.
5. St. Andrew, with heavy wooden cross.
6. St. Matthew, with money bag.

7. St. Simon, with long serrated saw in hand.
8. St. John, chalice in hand.
9. St. Thomas, lance by his side.
10. St. George, in armour, bearing banner emblazoned with red cross.
11. St. Paul, with sword in hand.
12. St. James, with pilgrim's staff and gourd or water bottle.

Please do find time to study this window, which is so detailed in design and so informative in its symbolism.

The Ascension of our Lord is illustrated in the fourth window in the south aisle, which illustrates the event so clearly.

This window needs little explanation, as it is a straight forward pictorial representation of the event recorded in Acts 1. As one would expect, Christ's figure is central to the composition, his right hand raised in blessing. The eleven remaining disciples are grouped on either side, and in their midst is a female figure. I can find no reference in the Bible to a woman being present at this ceremony, so it is perhaps artistic licence which places a figure in blue, possibly that of the Virgin, in the tableau. The two figures in white and gold, at Christ's feet, are recorded in Acts 1:10 as being present and of having a clearer understanding of what is happening than the disciples. Look at the facial expressions of the characters. The disciples gaze steadfastly and with reverence at Christ; the two men in white look slightly disdainful, an expression of impatience with the disciples perhaps, borne out of their superior knowledge.

At the east end of the Lady Chapel there are two small windows, one above the other. This is because late in the 15th century, when this part of the south aisle was originally built, it had an upper and lower storey. The coloured glass is not so old, presented by Mrs. Whitaker of Cliff House in the late 19th century, when the whole of the east end of the church was extended.

These two windows continue the theme of Saints used in the large east window in the chancel. The two figures in the top lights portray St. Aidan, who founded the Lindisfarne Monastery on Holy Island, and St. Cuthbert who was consecrated Bishop of Lindisfarne in 685 AD. Presumably they are paired in this window because of their work in spreading Christianity in Northumbria in the 7th century.

St. Aidan's emblem of a stag rests on his right hand. The stag symbolises piety and religious aspiration, drawing upon a reference to Psalm 42:1 "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." Because it is an animal that seeks solitude in remote places, it also symbolises purity of life.



All appropriate attributes for a man driven by great fervour in the Christian cause.

At first glance the emblem which identifies St. Cuthbert seems inappropriate for a man of God, and looks rather macabre. Resting on his right hand is a crowned head. It does not denote any gruesome act of violence on St. Cuthbert's part, but refers to his close association with St. Oswald, King of Northumbria, in converting that part of the country to Christianity.

Both Aiden and Cuthbert wear mitres and carry croziers indicating the office of bishop which they both held before they died.

The three lights in the lower window depict three of the archangels, St. Raphael, St. Michael and St. Gabriel.



Their high status in the hierarchy of angels is certainly emphasised. They are shown richly dressed and with resplendent wings of finely-detailed, multi-coloured feathers.

St. Raphael, on the left, is holding a fish which represents an incident on his journey with Tobias. In his right hand he carries a staff with a gourd of water attached, as he is usually portrayed as protector of the weary pilgrim and traveller.

St. Michael holds the central position. This strong militant figure with shield and spear in hand, firmly pinning Satan (in the shape of a dragon) in place beneath his right foot, is an apt portrayal of the Captain General of the hosts of heaven.

The third figure is St. Gabriel, the Chief Messenger of God. As the Angel of the Annunciation he carries a sheaf of lilies, symbolising the purity of the Virgin.

Although the window is smaller in scale than most others in the church, when the morning sun illuminates the glass the shades of peacock blue, amber, burnt orange and turquoise are magnificent.

We turn to the North Aisle and the next window is again late Victorian, but very different in character from the others. Nikolaus Pevsner, the art historian, discussing All Saints' in his series "The Buildings of England" says, "there is an excellent North Aisle window by Morris and Co., 1899." The founder members of this company established in 1875 included William Morris, Burne-Jones and Rossetti. They aimed to produce stained glass, furniture, metalwork etc. of beautiful design and high quality craftsmanship, returning to a simpler style after the excesses of Victoriana. The appeal of the window lies in the elegance and simple beauty of the figures, and not in masses of detail. In fact, whether by design or accident, St. Luke does not have any toes, only the outline of his foot has been delineated.

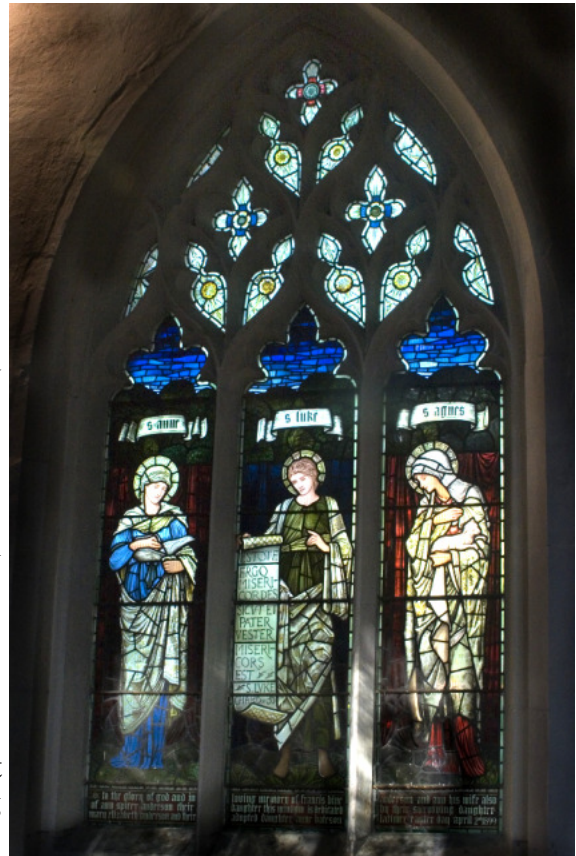
St. Anne, the mother of the Virgin Mary, is in the light on the left, depicted as she often is, holding a book. Perhaps she was chosen for this window because it is dedicated to two Ann's - Ann Anderson and her daughter Ann. St. Luke, in the centre, holds a scroll of the Gospel Book which is one of the attributes linked to him by Renaissance artists. The third figure, identified by a lamb as the symbol of purity,

is St. Agnes. She suffered indignity, torture, and finally martyrdom, in her determination to consecrate her life to Christ.

Several of the Saints portrayed in the windows can also be found in the large Chancel window, identified in both locations by the symbols attributed to them. All you need are time and patience.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries All Saints had several very generous benefactors, members of the influential families' who lived in the grand houses which graced Hessle's social scene.

One of the names which recurs repeatedly in church records is that of the Pease family, who were associated with Hesslewood Hall. The large West Window in the nave is in memory of Edward Pease who died in 1883 at the very early age of twenty-four. Its subject is "The true vine", a direct reference to St. John 15, when Christ uplifts his disciples with the promise that whoever abides in Him shall live fruitful and fulfilling lives.



Central to this window is the figure of Christ, dressed in a blue robe and golden cloak. Blue in medieval religious paintings often symbolises Heaven and Heavenly love. It is also the colour of truth, because blue is revealed in the sky when clouds are dispelled, suggesting the unveiling of truth. The outward-facing position of the palm of Christ's right hand with the extension of his first and middle fingers, is an acknowledged sign in religious art that the hand is raised in blessing and not in judgement. In his left hand he holds a chalice, a symbol of the Christian faith.



In the panels on either side of Christ are four medallions which frame scenes, presumably with Biblical references. As I haven't found any details about the contents of the window in any records, I have no evidence to support my assumption about what I think the scenes represent. The top left-hand picture could be of Jesus meeting with the woman of Samaria when she came to draw water from the well (St. John 4). The picture below, of two angels burning branches, is perhaps a reference to St. John 15: 6, when Jesus warns that the withered branches of the vine would be gathered and cast into the fire.

The two scenes in the right-hand pane seem to depict the same three characters and probably illustrates the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, Matthew 20: 1-16. The top medallion shows the vineyard owner going into the market place to hire

his labourers, and in the lower one they are being paid the wages of their labour: The vine twists throughout all sections of this window, linking all the characters, even the four angels in the top tracery with the central figure of Christ, the True Vine. Its colours are vibrant, predominantly deep blues, reds and greens, but it needs to be seen with the afternoon or early evening sun shining through to show up its jewel-like richness to full advantage.



Contrast this richness with the slaty blues, dark reds and dull browns of the window on the west wall of the north aisle. Its subject is the blind man restored to sight (St. John 9) and the sombre colours certainly don't reflect what should have been a joyful event. Although sombre in colour the picture has been carefully composed with all the figures framed by a very detailed, decorative stone gateway or window. This delicate stone tracery is in itself worth a pause for study. The blind man is shown with his parents on the left and Christ and two of his disciples in the right pane. All the faces in the window exhibit typical Victorian sentimentality but the mother's expression has been drawn sympathetically showing some of the strain she must have experienced in the forty years since the birth of her blind son.

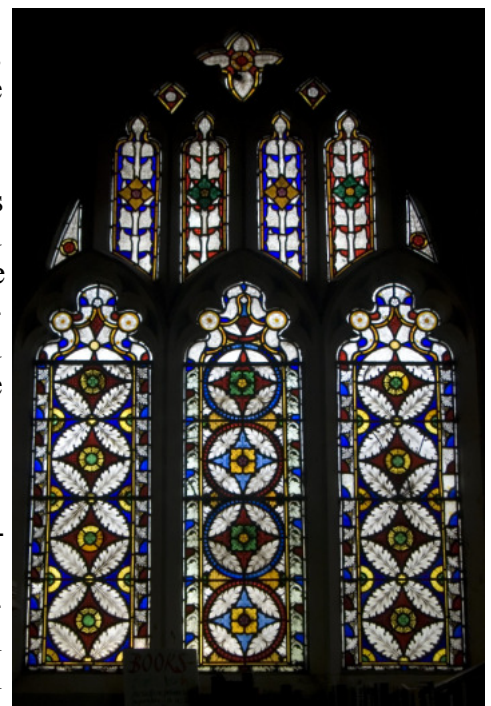
The next window is simply a geometric pattern in glowing blues, reds and golds. However, the comments about it in the *Journal "The Builder"* of 25th January 1845, are sufficiently interesting to report. This window "partly after the design of some in the Temple Church, London, has been very ably and satisfactorily executed by Mr. Barnett of College Street, York." The Temple Church, also known as St. Mary-le-Strand, was

designed by James Gibbs (1682-1754) who was the architect for St. Martin in the Fields, and the Radcliffe Camera, Oxford, so All Saints has excellent architectural connections.

Whether or not it generates the interest of the pictorial windows, this patterned glass certainly illuminates a dark corner of the church very cheerfully.

We know that almost all the stained glass in All Saints' Church is Victorian, but the fabric of the building has been altered and enlarged several times in its history, so the authenticity of the stonework of the windows is difficult to confirm. The four windows to the right of the door in the North Aisle are in the decorated style of the 14th Century, but only the first two are original, the other two being Victorian copies inserted when the church was enlarged in the 19th Century.

I should now like to comment on three of the North Aisle windows, starting with the Resurrection Window. The central light is dominated by the dignified, authoritative figure of the angel guarding the empty tomb. The feathers in his impressive wings are in deep blue and gold and his robe is decorated with a stylised design





of gold flowers. In the two adjacent panels are three of the women who returned to the sepulchre after the Sabbath day with their jars of prepared spices and ointments, only to be told, "He is not here. He is risen. Referring to St. Luke's Gospel, I assume that the older figure carrying the vessel is Mary, Mother of James, and with her is the younger woman named Joanna. Standing alone on the angel's left is Mary Magdalene, depicted as she often is, with her long hair uncovered.

In the next window, the story of the raising of Lazarus unfolds in its three panels. In the first light we see Christ in discussion with five of the disciples who, because of threatened danger from the Jews, were probably trying to dissuade him from returning to Bethany. The central light depicts Martha's meeting with Christ when she gently rebuked him for not having arrived in time to help Lazarus, but is consoled by Christ's presence and words of comfort. If you look carefully at the figure behind Mary you can identify Peter as he is holding his symbol

of the keys of Heaven. The most dramatic episode is conveyed in the third panel. The stone at the cave entrance has been removed and Jesus commands Lazarus to "Come forth". Martha and Mary kneel in awe, and two of the disciples look on in amazement as Lazarus emerges from the tomb.

The Resurrection and Lazarus windows are both dedicated to members of the Pease Family who died within four years of each other. These windows have so much in common, it would seem to me that they were designed by the same company, to be a pair. The colours used throughout both windows are rich and deep in tone, the figures well-defined, and the drapery and ornament of the costume is fine in its detail. Background details were often chosen from pattern books and not necessarily designed specifically by the artist for a particular client. In the case of these two windows, this practice does not detract from the overall quality. The decorative detail of the foliage behind and above the figures, and the intricacy of the design in the bordering patterns, is of a very high quality.



The last window, illustrating the parable of the Good Samaritan, needs little explanation, as it is so simply drawn and has no hidden symbolism. Do I detect a touch of humour in the artist who has drawn the Inn-keeper as a rotund, pantomime-like figure? Look also at the face peering out of the Inn's window. Is he just very bored with life, or has he sampled too much of the Inn's stock?



I was puzzled as to why the events in this window unfold from right to left, when normally we read from left to right. Then I realised that the written story in the panels at the bottom of the windows does not correspond with the pictures above. At some time during the renovation, the illustrative panels have been replaced in the wrong order!

Judith Haselhurst pointed out to me some months ago that a turret, missing from the Inn building, appears in the middle of the trees, two panels away. The reversed panels explain that puzzle. How did the workmen escape the consequences of such a glaring mistake?

Like many members of the congregation I was surprised when the removal of the panelling of the organ chamber, during the 2001 restoration, revealed a window which has been obscured since 1901. I was reminded that this article wouldn't be complete without some comment about this unfamiliar window.

Unless you have a knowledge of heraldry this window, perhaps, won't have much appeal, but its interest lies more in its history than in its presentation.

It is a three-lighted window, each light displaying heraldic shields of the Percy family of Northumberland. (The Percy Tomb, erected about 1340 in Beverley Minster to the memory of Lady Eleanor Percy, is reputed to have the finest Gothic carved canopy in the country.) The first light displays a blue rampant lion on a gold shield and five interlocking gold lozenge shapes on a blue shield. The second has three silver fish on a red shield and a trefoil design enclosed in two interlocking crescents. The third panel contains the principal armorial which brings together on a quartered shield all the symbols found in the other two window lights. According to the inscription in the window it was presented to the Church in 1862 by His Grace The Duke of Northumberland KG "and some of the resident gentlemen of the parish" in memory of Dame Ann Percy, wife of Sir Henry Percy. This Percy window is related to a commemorative brass plaque on the wall close by which in turn is dedicated to Dame Ann Percy (or Percehay) who died in 1511.

Unfortunately later research into the Annals of the House of Percy revealed that there were no known members of the Northumberland Percys to whom that name could refer, so the heraldic design of the window was attributed to the wrong family. Dame Ann is more likely to have been the wife of Sir Lyon Percehay Esquire (or Percye) who held lands in Hessle in 1510.



To add insult to injury, not only was the Percy heraldry incorrectly attributed, but it was also incorrectly represented. The five interlocking lozenge-shapes which appear on the shield in the first window and again on the quartered shield in the third panel are not the correct shape. They should be fusils (an elongated rhomboid) rather than lozenge-shapes. Not a detail to go unnoticed by an expert!

When the window was installed in 1862 it would have been the most westerly one in the north chancel aisle before the chancel was extended and rebuilt further east in the alterations of 1868—70. During the alterations the window and its glass would be moved to the corresponding position in the rebuilt chancel aisle. It was moved again, with the brass plaque, to the present position in the north wall of the organ chamber when the organ was built in 1901.

In the course of one of these moves the second and third lights were mistakenly transposed, placing the principal armorial shield in the third light instead of its more dominant position in the central panel.

The history of the window reveals several changes of position and a number of errors, all of which will be forgotten for at least another hundred years, when the refurbished organ is replaced later in the summer, and the window is lost to our view once again.



I now focus on a window which is very different from any other in the church.

The East window in the St. Barnabas Chapel is modern in design and symbolic rather than pictorial. It was made by L. C. Evetts of Newcastle, and installed during a general refurbishment of the chapel in 1971, by Colonel Rupert Alec Smith — in memory of Alexander and Ada Smith — although this particular window is dedicated to Joseph Robinson Pease who died in 1892.

To appreciate its detail you need to stand quite close to the window, preferably on bright and sunny morning. It has two main cinquefoil lights surmounted by tracery, which is important in the overall design of the window, which illustrates the parable of the wheat and tares. In the left light the tares are consumed by fire, depicted by segments of glass in red, yellow and orange. In the tracery above, blues, purples and reds are used effectively to convey the menace of storm and fire. The effect of the colours and shapes in this side of the window is one of discord, even foreboding.

In contrast, the panel on the right is bright with colour and more hopeful in message. The sheaf of corn is encompassed within the body of the church. A Dove, symbolising the Holy Spirit, hovers above the main panels.

In their contrasting colouring and mood the two tracery lights depict the division of light from darkness as told in the creation story.

The impact of this window is perhaps not as dramatic as the Victorian glass but it has a subtle, sensitive quality which becomes more apparent the longer you study it.

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When I offered to write this article I had no knowledge of stained glass, and although a member of the congregation for many years, had only ever looked carefully at the windows on "my side" of the church. My research has led me to the Beverley Archives Office, the Church Log Book, and several books about church furnishings and Christian art. It has been fascinating and a great pleasure to study at close proximity the beauty of Hessele All Saints' stained glass. I recommend the experience.

Diane Johnson



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Graham Marshall