

THE YORK GLAZIERS TRUST

Church of St. Michael and All Angels,
THORNHILL, Dewsbury, Yorkshire.

North Aisle (Savile Chapel), 1st window from the East

Catalogue of the glass and a short report on the restoration.
The Catalogue is based on a full catalogue of the glass made by
Mr. L.S. Jones, B.Phil.

There are no tracery panels.

Main Lights

Left-hand light

Upper panel The Death of the Virgin

The Virgin, nimbed in blue, lies on a bed which extends across the whole scene. She holds a rod, instead of the usual lily. Behind the bed are two figures, the nearer of whom maybe intended to be John. In front of the bed is a figure seated on the floor reading a book, probably intended as Peter. In the border shafting there are two figures, on the left St. George with the Dragon, on the right St. Christopher with the Christ Child.

Centre panel The Annunciation

The angel stands on the left, robed in red and white. The Virgin stands on the left turning towards him. Between these figures there is a dove, representing the Holy Spirit. Above the angel there is a scroll with the inscription:-

AVE MARIA GRATIA P(LENA).

Lower panel Bishop Saint

A Bishop, nimbed sitting on wide throne turning to his left. In the borders crowns alternate with blue and red rectangles.

Centre light

Upper panel The Assumption of the Virgin

A vesica shaped golden mandorla containing the Virgin, who is robed in white with gold decoration. There are four half angels supporting the mandorla. In the border shaftings there are two figures; on the left St. John with the poisoned Chalice, on the right the figure is very blurred but it may be the figure of an Apostle.

Centre panel The Nativity

The Virgin with the Child in a stable, with an ox and ass before a wattle fence. In the foreground Joseph is crouched over a staff. In the Fowler tracing of this panel it would seem that the Virgin is suckling the Child. This is, however, no longer clear after the 1870's restoration.

Lower panel Bishop Saint

As for the lower panel of the left-hand light except that the Bishop faces forward. The glass is c19th.

Right-hand light

Upper panel Christ and the B.V.M. in Glory

The Virgin is on the left robed in white and blue. Christ is on the right. Both are crowned. Christ holds the Resurrection banner in his left hand whilst He blesses the Virgin with His right hand. In the border shaftings there are two figures; on the left is St. Lawrence with his grid-iron, on the right a newly-painted figure of St. Stephen.

Centre panel The Resurrection

Christ is emerging from the tomb, centre. Beneath are sleeping soldiers. One has awoken and is astonished. The figure of Christ is now very fragmentary, with little painted detail left. The head and nimbus had crumbled completely and have been replaced by a piece of c19th glass.

Lower panel Bishop Saint

As for the lower panel of the left-hand light except that the bishop is facing to his right. This glass is c19th.

It would seem likely that the stonework for this window was made during the extension of the Choir in 1493, as it differs from the stonework of the 2nd and 3rd windows from the East in the North Aisle. Again, it is possible that the glass found in this window is contemporary with this extension, the designer having been given a mandate to produce a window in keeping with the earlier glass in the 2nd window from the East. There are some design relationships between the two, especially in the decorative details, but this is not a reliable guide. Firm dating is not easy purely on the evidence of the glass alone whether it was originally designed for this position or not. On the evidence of the stonework extension, it would seem probable to date the glass as c.1493.

The left-hand light was closed in 1622, due to the erection of a monument to Sir George Savile. The light was re-opened during the major reconstruction of the Church in the 1870's. New glass, matching the style and iconography of the two existing lights, was painted for the newly-opened light by Burlinson and Gryll.

The present restoration has preserved the design of the glass as found. Due to the unstable character of some of the medieval glass, it was found necessary to 'triple plate' (i.e. sandwich the glass between two layers of clear sheet glass) these pieces. In some cases it was necessary to replace small pieces of medieval glass which were found to be beyond recovery. New insertions of toned c19th glass and modern antique were made to replace the lost glass. The paint on much of the c19th restoration glass was found to be unstable. This was therefore refired and some of the painted lines were reinforced with new paint, this being fired during the refiring process. The work was carried out by G. King & Son, Norwich, in conjunction with the same work required on the c19th glass of the 2nd window from the East. This work was carried out under a separate grant scheme and has already been reported on.

Christopher Wardale, B.A.(Fine Art)

19th March 1974