

St Thomas à Becket Church

A Guide to the Chancel & Sanctuary Windows

Sanctuary

Stained and painted glass, lead. 1893.
James Powell, Whitefriars, London.
A window of three lights and eight tracery lights

Each of the three figures stands on triangulated paving supported by a carved stone capital and pilaster, the figure of Christ raised slightly higher than the other two. Each light is bordered by a heraldic style strip with emblems relevant to each figure. At the base of each pilaster is entwined a scroll bordered in yellow stain, painted in black gothic capitals.

Christ, the central figure, is represented as the principal figure of all three lights, 'Christ the King' wearing a diadem or royal crown. His feet and hands are pierced. From his right hand, raised in blessing, emanate dazzling rays of light. He wears a red cloak over gold and white robes, and the rays on his pearly three-rayed nimbus are painted with stylised lilies in black. The entwined scroll at the base of the pilaster reads: "I AM HE THAT LIVETH AND WAS DEAD". The heraldic strip border bears crowns, looped crosses and oak leaves, with two royal crowns and the monogram IHC at the apex.

Thomas Canterbury, on the left, stands dressed in his Archbishop's robes and the mitre he would wear for Pontifical Mass 'the pretiosa', the jewelled one of the first order. Over his robes he wears a cloak of darkest green, which may allude to his membership of the Benedictine Order. In his right arm he carries a cudgel, his right hand rests on the point of a reversed sword, both objects the emblems of his martyrdom. He holds a crozier in his left hand, his badge of office as an Archbishop, and wears embroidered gloves. He wears a blue nimbus decorated with pearls. Above his head are the arms of the Province of Canterbury, taken from part of earlier arms of St Augustine, who played such a large part in the revitalisation of Christianity in the south of England. The arms on a red ground are encircled with oak and vine stock and each of their fruit entwined, and two tudor roses.

The arms: an azure shield strewn with paler quatrefoils; on this is set a white pallium with four black crosses fitchy, surmounted by a cross patee. The heraldic border bears the letters S and T, an oak leaf, a mitre, and a looped cross. The scroll says 'THOMAS A BECKET'.

Bishop William of Wykeham, on the right, stands dressed in his bishop's robes and mitre, 'the pretiosa' he would wear for Pontifical Mass. He wears blue tasselled dalmatic over rich gold and white robes. In his right hand he holds a crozier, his badge of office, its crook decorated with two kneeling angels; in his left hand he holds a vellum book richly ornamented in red and white with gold clasps. Above his head are the arms of the Bishopric of Winchester, a red shield strewn with quatrefoils on a blue ground and encircled as with Thomas Canterbury.

The arms: two keys, their wards opposed, one silver, one gold, crossed (saltire) with a silver sword. The keys denote the Papal state. His heraldic strip shows the letters S, W, and O in gothic capitals, looped crosses and oak leaves. The entwined scroll at the base of the pilaster has the words: BISHOP WILLIAM OF WYKEHAM.

Sanctuary South Wall

Madonna & St John

Stained and painted glass, lead. 1903.
James Powell, Whitefriars, London
A window of two lights and four tracery lights

The Blessed Virgin, on the left, stands facing us, holding the Christ Child in her arms. Her robe is dark blue and covered by a cloak richly patterned in white and gold. Her white nimbus is decorated with roses (the rose is one of her emblems). There are two doves, the symbol of peace, on stands at her feet, the other alights. Above her head is a scroll which reads 'B. V. MARY IHS'. The Christ Child has a three-rayed nimbus (reserved for persons of the Trinity).

St John the Evangelist, on the right, stands holding a large book in his arms, representing

his Gospel. In his right hand he holds a goose-quill pen and in his left hand an inkhorn. A golden eagle, his personal emblem, stands in profile at his feet. His white nimbus is decorated with cone and scallop shells, the last being an emblem of pilgrimage. Above his head is a scroll that reads 'S JOHN EVANGELIST'.

Both scenes extend to the width of the lights. Each figure stands in front of a background of leaves and fruit, under an arbour of olive branches, the stems of which are planted in a carpet of spring flowers.

Sanctuary South Wall

St Francis

Stained and painted glass, lead. 1983. Carl Johannes Edwardes, G Maile Studios, Canterbury

A window of one light (originally circular and now cinquefoil). The window was given in 1983 by Margaret Wells in memory of her family.

St Francis kneels in a rocky landscape, dressed in the brown robes of a Franciscan Friar. His hands, feet and breast are pierced by shafts of light emanating from a source in the upper left of the light. This source is in the shape of the sun, decorated in a ray and ripple pattern of gold and blue. Two cherubim with red wings attend St Francis (the second choir of angels). Behind St Francis is a modest chapel, set against an azure sky. He has a gold patterned nimbus. There is no record of any painted glass prior to 1983.

Chancel South Wall

St Paul

Stained and painted glass, lead. Last quarter of the c19th. Designed/cartooned by George Daniels.

A window of one lancet. This window was moved from the North side of the Chancel when the organ chamber was built in 1893. It replaced a much older window. George Daniels was considered to be Clayton & Bell's leading cartoonist at the turn of the century and this is very typical of his style.

St Paul stands facing in the centre of the light, under an elaborate architectural canopy of pierced stonework, - large yellow and white

crockets terminating in a foliated finial. Above his head are tudor roses. In his left hand he holds a sword, and in his right a decorated book symbolising his Epistles. Above his head is a scroll with the words 'St. Paulus AP'. St Paul stands on a mossy mound above a crenellated wall. At his feet is an inscription on a rectangular base in black painted c19th gothic lettering. He is dressed in a purple robe and red cloak. His dark blue nimbus is edged with pearls.

Chancel South Wall

Mary Magdalene & The Virgin Mary

Stained and painted glass, lead. 1903. James Powell, Whitefriars, London

A window of two lights. This window was given by Mrs Campbell, Eastney Barracks, Portsmouth, wife of General Sir William Campbell. Their son, John William Ronald Campbell was killed in the First World War and is commemorated in a brass plaque in the Chancel.

The main lights are set within pale painted fillets of banded glass, which serve as a slender stem for the arbour of olive branches underneath which the figures stand. Each has a carpet of wild flowers and in the lower half of both lights is a panel of stylised lilies and olive branches.

An angel with red wings, dressed in blue robes and holding a palm branch stands pointing to a scroll above his head, bearing the message 'He.is.risen'. A stony landscape is in the background.

Mary Magdalene stands dressed in red and white robes, she has a blue flowered nimbus. In her hands she holds her attribute, a casket of perfume (with which she washed Christ's feet).

The Virgin Mary in a blue robe and gold and white cloak kneels in profile at her feet. Both figures face towards light. She has a gold halo decorated with her emblem of roses. In the background is part of the city of Jerusalem and an olive tree. At Mary's feet yellow aconites grow, the emblem of spring and new life. Above the heads of the figures is a scroll bearing the word 'Alleluia'.

