

The story of Allithwaite Church's War Memorial Windows and Tablet



In 1922 a stone tablet with the names of the soldiers who died was placed on the outside east wall of Allithwaite church and a stained glass window was placed in the east window to commemorate the soldiers of the village who died in the First World War. After the Second World War a second stained glass window was commissioned and the existing memorial stone tablet was replaced with a larger one adding the names of the fallen soldiers in the 1939-1945 War and the wording was amended to World Wars and there were now two windows.

No information about the memorial stone or stained glass window was found in the Church council minutes after the Great War, just an acknowledgement in 1922 that the work was complete and the subcommittee had completed their task. However after the Second World War the minutes recorded the progress of the new memorials in great detail. However I have now found information about the commissioning of the Great War window and its installation. A bundle of letters kept in the Church safe held the forgotten or untold story of the window and also contained a letter about the stone memorial tablet. Initially the vicar did not copy his letters and so there are only letters from Morris and Co of Merton Abbey, Surrey, answering the vicar's questions.

The Great War Memorial Window

In April 1919, at the Easter Vestry meeting, a question was asked about raising a memorial to those from the parish who had fallen in the war. The Vicar advised the meeting to wait a short while before taking any action. The first letter from Morris and Co is dated 20 October 1919 and attempts to address the question of how much a stained glass window would cost. They suggested a couple of designs and said it would cost about £230 but it depended on the size of the window and they invited the vicar to send a template of the window.

The next letter from Morris and Co dated 19 January 1920 produced a design at a cost of £230 exclusive of fitting. However the design must have been rejected because the next letter dated 16 February 1920 refers to including a rough sketch of a revised design. March 15th 1920 Morris and Co agreed to prepare a revised cartoon of the window based on the rough sketch and assured the Vicar *that the cost would not be increased in consequence of the revision of the design.*

A report about the project appeared in the Westmorland Gazette on 20 March 1920:

War Memorials - Allithwaite

A copy of the design for a stained glass window for the church in memory of the village boys who fell in the war has been forwarded for inspection by Messrs. Morris and Sons, London, who are entrusted with the work. It represents Christ in the centre light as victor over death. In the two side and lesser lights are the figures of St Alban and St George. The work is to proceed with as little delay as possible. It will cost £230, and this sum has already been raised. Fixing and protecting the glass, however, will entail an additional expense of £50. As subscribers to a memorial fund were given to understand that they could withdraw their subscription if they did not approve of a stained glass window, one subscriber of £5 and another of 2s have applied for their money.

At the Vestry meeting on 7 April 1920 Mr Lamb moved 'That sanction be given to take out the present East Window of the Church and substitute a Stained Glass Window to take the form of a memorial and also the names of the fallen to be inserted in stone on the South wall of the Church and that the faculty be applied for.' Mr Mitchell seconded it and the motion was carried unanimously.

Further letters were exchanged and finally in May 1921 the window was delivered. It would appear from the content of Morris and Co's subsequent letters that the Vicar and the Committee rejected the window because it was not what they had agreed to. Apparently on receipt of the design they liked, the cartoon had been sent to the Registrar to obtain a faculty instead of being returned to Morris and Co who would have provided a copy for the faculty application. The Registrar kept the cartoon. Morris and Co produced a window based on the only cartoon in the file, the rejected design, as that was all that had been sent back to them.

Morris and Co's letter dated 24 May 1921 hoped *your committee will see their way to acceptance of the window we have made for the Church with so much strenuous effort, under great difficulties to supply you with an exceptionally beautiful one.* It

was also pointed out that *on going into the cost of this window I find it is, in consequence of the great rise in costs since it was estimated a very unremunerative business, and has cost myself more than we hoped. It could not be purchased now for anything like the sum in the same way.*

From this point the vicar started to keep copies of his letters and on 31 May 1921 he wrote on behalf of the committee to formally reject the window as *they did not accept the design...the subject is an unsuitable one to be erected over the altar.* The objection was to the inclusion of the devil. It was confirmed that the agreed cartoon had been sent to Carlisle to the Registrar rather than being returned to Morris and Co.

1 June 1921 Morris and Co offered to replace the central window. *I now propose to offer to substitute the figure of Our Lord as the symbol of Supreme Sacrifice in the centre light it would come very beautifully there and if this would reconcile you + your committee to the window in other respects then I think the difficulty would be over-come.*

10 June 1921 Morris and Co sent *a revised sketch showing the figure of our Lord as the Supreme Sacrifice.* On 17 June the Vicar confirmed that the Committee approved the design provided it was no more expensive than previously agreed and that they could obtain a faculty. The vicar pointed out the committee preferred the central light in the St Alban window.

1 July the Chancellor confirmed that the revised design was accepted.

The light hearted letter from Morris and Co sent on Aug 23rd 1921 responded to the vicar's question of how long it would be before they received the window:

Dear Sir

The work is all painted ready to lead together this will be done as soon as the man who has it in hand will be kind enough! to come back from holiday. I shall hope to dispatch it to you sometime soon after next week

Yours faithfully

J H Dearle

Unfortunately a further problem arose and in a letter dated 1 Sept 1921 from Morris and Co which was not so light hearted more money was requested. The cost of the window was now £270 and not £230 as originally roughly estimated. The vicar did not reply until 3 November and his letter enclosed a cheque for the original amount explaining that was all that the committee had in the account. Morris and Co's reply of 4 November set out the reason for the increase *your letter of Oct 17th 1919 'asking for an ideas of the probable cost' of a window of which you sent photographs and gave us one or two measurements e.g. centre light 8 feet to top of Reredos and 9 feet as the height of the side lights; the size of the tracery not being given at all – we found the window about 10 feet longer than we were able to ascertain for the purpose of the approximate estimate – an absolute estimate of the cost was never asked for but we have endeavoured to execute the window at a cost near as possible to the sum approximately given and are as a matter of fact charging you less than we should have estimated had we known the precise area of the window – The cost in addition of the alteration to the central light consequent upon the correct sketch not being*

returned to us you know of + must realize that we are seriously at a loss on the transaction in any case.

Letters were exchanged quoting from each other's letters. The Vicar pointed out that several letters had referred to the cost not being increased on account of changes in design. Morris and Co asserted that the increased cost was entirely due to the window having a greater area than what they had based their estimate on. The vicar responded that they had supplied templates of the window before the cost of the window had been suggested. He also referred to several letters where he had emphasised that the committee were anxious about the cost. Finally on November 25 a further cheque of unspecified sum was sent to Morris and Co who had said they would accept £260 to settle the matter. The Vicar said *£230 is a large sum for this small parish to raise and had a larger sum been suggested at the commencement I think that the idea of a window would have been abandoned as hopeless.* There is no information about how the additional money was raised.

Information about the firm Morris & Co. (1861-1947)

The firm was set up by William Morris (1834-96) as Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co., originally with (among others) Edward Burne-Jones, Dante Gabriel Rossetti Ford Madox Brown and Philip Webb in 1861. From 1865 the workshops were in Bloomsbury, and when in 1875 the firm changed its name to Morris & Co., Burne-Jones became the principal designer. In 1881 the workshops moved again, to Merton Abbey. Morris & Co were 'revolutionary in its beginnings, and extremely influential in terms of design and quality'. The firm finally closed in 1947.
<http://stainedglass.llgc.org.uk/person/21> accessed 20/01/2015

The letters referred to above from Morris and Co were mostly signed by J H Dearle.

John Henry Dearle or **J. H. Dearle** (London 1859 – 15 January 1932) was a British textile and stained-glass designer trained by the artist and craftsman William Morris who was much influenced by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Dearle designed many of the later wallpapers and textiles released by Morris & Co., and contributed background and foliage patterns to tapestry designs featuring figures by Edward Burne-Jones and others. Beginning in his teens as a shop assistant and then design apprentice, Dearle rose to become Morris & Co.'s chief designer by 1890, creating designs for tapestries, embroidery, wallpapers, woven and printed textiles, stained glass, and carpets. Following Morris's death in 1896, Dearle was appointed Art Director of the firm, and became its principal stained glass designer on the death of Burne-Jones in 1898 [1].

Description of the window

The central light represents Christ as victor over death. In the two side and lesser lights are the figures of St Alban and St George. St Alban was the first recorded Christian martyr. St George another Christian martyr is regarded as one of the most prominent military saints.

The initial design suggested by Mr Dearle was *the Central light – The attainment of Paradise the side lights are to show The Valour and Charity of the Soldiers A less*

costly arrangement would be 3 single figures say St Michael in the centre with valour and fortitude in the side lights...

The first cartoon of the design submitted in January 1920 was described thus
The subject is intended to portray the valour of our soldiers on the one hand and on the other their generosity and sacrifice in the Central light St Michael is vanquishing the Devil to show Victory and in the tracery are praising angels.

This did not appeal to the committee so another design was produced by Mr Dearle
I now send you a rough sketch showing Christ in the central light of your East window and St Alban and St George in the side lights. The figure of Christ is to show victory over death. He is holding the Cross and the Chalice is at his feet and the angel is bearing the Crown. This arrangement necessarily makes a quite different kind of window but I am afraid it is in the only way I can see of bringing in the two side figures + I am not sure that it would not be a more effective arrangement than that originally proposed. I certainly like the idea of the figure of Christ as the central subject of an East window but thought your friends had some objection to it on the grounds that no one could draw such a subject properly: the cartoon I offer you is by Sir Edward Burne – Jones and is considered to be very beautiful.

This is the design that was finally installed. The inscription below the figures is obscured by the Reredos which was in place before the stained glass window. I think this must have occurred because of the way the measurements were provided to Morris and Co.

Canon David C Ellis in his Brief Guide to St Mary's Church, published in 2006 describes the window:

The picture is symbolic rather than biblical. It shows Jesus robed in red as captain of the host. His hand and feet are scarred with the marks of crucifixion indicating that he is risen and ascended Lord. He is surrounded by men in Roman armour, representing perhaps the soldiery of all ages. The flags are red for martyrdom together with St George's flag for England. The embroidered silk garments the soldiers wear over their armour suggests that their cause is holy, and maybe their weapons are intended to have the meaning suggested by Ephesians 6 – the sword of the Spirit, the shield of faith etc. Jesus upholds a cross of untrimmed timber, which, like Aaron's rod, is budding – a sign of the authority of the cross to silence all complaints against God (Numbers 17.8) He points to the chalice near his feet – a link with the Holy Communion table below the window. The implication is that the blood of his sacrifice becomes the wine of communion. Above and behind Jesus two angels bear the crown and sceptre of his Kingship. The soldiers are descending a rocky path from the mountains. These would seem more representative of the heights of the Lake District than the plains of France.



The bottom of the window is obscured by the oak screen reredos, but the screen took precedence because it was there ten years earlier. The inscription which foots the window reads: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends' (John 15.3). This text is illustrated in two ways: (a) Jesus himself has laid down his life: (b) to the right of the picture soldiers are stooping to give a drink to a dying friend.

The War Memorial Tablet

Amongst the letters was one from the Registrar dated 14 November 1921 about the War Memorial Tablet. The Church Council had decided they wanted to put the tablet outside of the Church on the east wall but the faculty dated 21 May 1920 had given permission for the tablet to be placed on the south wall. The letter confirmed agreement to the change and asked for the faculty to be returned for endorsement. The faculty had only given permission for the names of the men who had died to be endorsed on it. The Registrar asked if they intended to add anything further.

A report appeared in the Westmorland Gazette on 27 May 1922

Allithwaite War Memorial:

A memorial stone has been placed under the east window of the Parish Church in memory of the village boys who fell in the war. The work has been carried out by Mr Wm. Blair, and the inscription is as follows: To the glory of God and in memory of the men who fell in the Great War 1914-1918 - Thomas Akister, Alfred Huntress Arnold, Isaac Brocklebank, Frank Wood Chadwick, James Dickenson, William Drinkall, Joseph Hibbert, John Lambert, Joseph Martin, George Sedgwick.

In the Church Council minutes it was reported that on 7 July 1922 the Treasurer of the War Memorial Committee announced that the work was now complete, but the funds were insufficient to meet the cost to the extent of £16 12 3. On 1 August 1922 it was reported that the laying out of the ground in front of the East (Memorial) Window was to be done by Messrs. Greaves, Robinson and others.

Second World War Memorials

At the Church Council meeting on 6 Dec 1947 Mrs Wiper, on behalf of the Mothers' Union, asked the Council's view as to adding the names of the Fallen of the 1939-1945 War to the existing tablet under the East Window but the Vicar doubted if the present inscription was suitable to which to make an addition. The Mothers' Union wished to bear the cost by their own efforts, but the Secretary expressed the view that any parishioner should be given the opportunity of contributing. The Vicar and Wardens were asked to consult Mr T Affleck, Ulverston, and obtain an estimate. At the next Church Council meeting on 31 January 1948 an estimate and drawing from Mr. Affleck was considered, and it was approved. It was announced at the Annual Vestry Meeting on 20 March 1948 that a Memorial to the fallen in 1939-1945 war had been considered by the Council and would be proceeded with in the coming year. At the Church Council meeting on 8 September 1948 it was recorded that the Mothers' Union had initiated a fund for the provision of a war memorial in memory of those who laid down their lives in the Second World war (1939-1945) and the Secretary reported on an interview he had had with Mr Singleton (Abbot and Co Lancaster), Stained Glass Artists. Mr Singleton had given tentative prices for erecting stained glass in the east window to the Lady Chapel, the west window of the Nave and the north window of the Sanctuary. Opinion was expressed that the most suitable memorial would be the east window of the Lady Chapel, and the Secretary reported that the estimate for erecting stained glass of the finest quality in this window would be £360, and the subject suggested was the Two Marys at the Empty Tomb - 'He is

not here. He is risen' - The names of the fallen would be embodied on the window and it was resolved that this estimate be accepted.

At the Church Council of 29 May 1949 the Vicar and wardens were authorised to make application to the Diocesan Consistory Court for the issue of a Faculty permitting the erection of stained glass in the East Window of the south aisle according to the design supplied by Messrs Abbot and Co Lancaster and containing the following inscription:

In thankful remembrance of those from the Parish who made the Supreme Sacrifice 1939-1945 Ralf Athelsie Pole Allserbrook, Austin Drinkall, John Edmund Heywood, Lawrence Long, Waller Eden Smith.

The Diocesan Advisory Committee suggested three amendments and it was noted that there was a correction in one name which should read Lawrence David Long. Messrs Abbott and Co., Lancaster were instructed to proceed with the work with a view to the Dedication taking place on Lady day 1950. The Vicar reported to the Church Council on 28 February 1950 that he had visited the studios of Messrs Abbott and Co., Lancaster, and had inspected the new memorial window in course of preparation.

The dedication of the memorials was reported in the Westmorland Gazette on 1 April 1950:

Allithwaite War memorial Unveiled

On Saturday afternoon, the memorial to the fallen in the 1939-1945 War, was unveiled and dedicated in St Mary's Church. The memorial took the form of a stained glass window in the Lady Chapel in the south aisle. On the foot of the window is the inscription and the names of the fallen -

The work has been carried out by Messrs. Abbot and Co., of Lancaster. The service was conducted by the Rev. J E Coleman, vicar and the lessons were read by Rev. H A Thompson, Rural dean. The unveiling and dedication were performed by the Bishop of Penrith.

Cannon Ellis's description of the stained glass window:

It was agreed that the theme of the window should be Resurrection, representing the hope of those who had given their lives and that, with the Mothers' Union interest in mind, the chosen scene should depict the women who first discovered the Resurrection. The text which was given to the stained glass artist s to illustrate was 'He is risen; he is not here, behold the place where they laid him' (Mark 16.6). The artists chose to include Mary the mother of Jesus in traditional royal blue and Mary Magdalen in turquoise. At their feet are the jars of spices and oils which they have brought to anoint the body f Jesus. With one hand the angel points to heaven and with the other indicates the empty tomb. He sits at the right side, dressed in white as St Mark records, but the tomb bears more resemblance to a vault in an English churchyard than to anything in an eastern garden. In the foreground are the discarded crowns of thorns and the arum lilies of Easter. A dramatic burst of light outshines the garden vegetation and invades heaven beyond. The biblical text has been replaced by the dedication of the window to the glory of God and the names of the servicemen who died. The window cost £360, requiring more fundraising efforts and it was dedicated on Lady Day, 25March 1950.



Information about the firm Abbot and Co firm making stained glass and church furnishings based in Lancaster and London. Abbott & Co. were established 1860 by the plumber and glazier William Abbott (died 1904). The business continued under his sons and grandsons. Their work was initially influenced by the stained glass artists of the Arts & Crafts Movement [2].



This current picture of the memorial stone is shown with an additional name added in 1999 to the 1914-1918 dead. Robert Thompson's parents would not have his name added to the memorial. However in 1999 remaining family members requested the addition and their request was agreed.

Pat Rowland v1 August 2015

References

1. ^{a b c} Waggoner, Diane: *The Beauty of Life: William Morris & the Art of Design*, Thames and Hudson, 2003, p. 99-107
https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._H._Dearle accessed 28 July 2015
2. <http://imagingthebible.llgc.org.uk/person/145> accessed 31 July 2015.