

The 2010 autumn conference took place in Winchester, the ancient seat of Saxon regal power. On Thursday evening after supper, we were introduced to guides Chris Masse and Julie Adams, who gave us a wealth of details about the history of the New Forest churches that we were to visit the following day.

**FRIDAY** After some fiendishly clever colour-coding by Sue Ashworth to divide us into groups, we loaded into buses for the New Forest tour, setting off in different directions; mine stopped first at St John the Baptist in Boldre. This church, high on a hill away from the village, is home to the memorial to HMS Hood (sunk by the Bismarck in 1941), which was the flagship of Boldre resident Admiral Holland, who died on board. As well as the Hood memorial window in the porch depicting St Nicholas (the patron saint of sailors) and a Cornish chuff (the Hood's emblem), there is an early 1967 Alan Younger East window in memory of the Sub-Lieutenant and Captain, showing Christ reigning from the cross (below).



A later (1980) more abstract Younger window is a memorial to the County Girl Guides Commissioner, with deep blue ground and 12 gold circles for the Apostles, 3 vertical shafts depicting the Trinity, and a central rose core for the Creator. Other windows of note here include a delicately etched Tracey Sheppard window of a grazing deer (symbolizing the heart) in front of the church, amongst abundant forest life including trout, thistles, butterflies, strawberries and a large oak tree. The west window by Ward & Hughes was installed in 1864 in memory of Charles Winston. In the north aisle are 3 Francis Skeat windows including one to the artist Cresswell Desmond complete with a superb snarling puma!

On to Lyndhurst, administrative centre of the New Forest, to partake of coffee at the Crown Hotel, followed by a leisurely look at St Michael and All Angels, a 1858 church designed by William White (nephew of the naturalist Gilbert) at a cost of £9000, three times the price of the average Victorian church. In the churchyard is buried Alice (nee Liddell, of *Alice in Wonderland* fame), who lived near. The interior is a treasure-house of Arts & Crafts style, and the windows include some of the earliest from the William Morris workshop (top right). In the east window (The New Jerusalem 1862), Burne Jones' angelic figures and Philip Webb's foliage backgrounds became almost a trademark of Morris & Co designs for the next 40 years. In the 1863 'Answers to Prayers' in the south transept, amongst Burne Jones' saintly

figures of Stephen, Peter, Elijah, and Joshua is a bearded man being grabbed by the scruff of his collar – said to be Morris himself put in as a joke by his friend! The angels are by Rossetti. To the north is the Clayton & Bell 'Te Deum' window with ranks of apostles, prophets and martyrs in bright blues and reds.



The 1903 west window of the archangels Gabriel, Michael (right), Raphael and Uriel – by Charles Kempe – is a late window and amongst his best, I think, with dramatic use of deep golds and pinky-purple and delicately painted lively faces. Here we can see the impact of the fresh new Art Nouveau style and Arts & Crafts at the close of the Victorian age.

On the south side there are some angels by Harry James Powell, and those in the north aisle depicting six biblical mothers, including Mary, are by James Cotton Powell, youngest son of James. As well as the windows there is a 15C gesso panel of St Martin of Tours, a fresco by Leighton, paintings by John Hungerford Pollen, a tomb by G E Street, a lecturn by Gilbert Seale and life-sized angel musicians in the roof space – truly a place to linger! Finally, however, with hunger beckoning, in ones and twos we gradually drifted back to meet at the Crown for lunch.

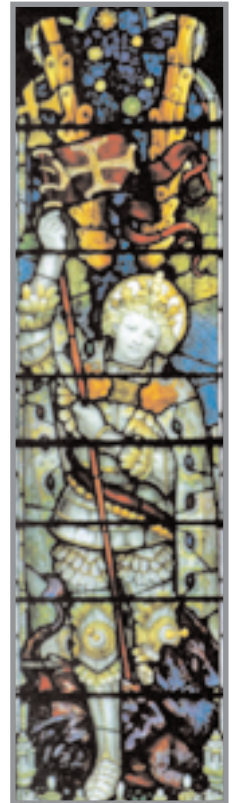
The first afternoon call was the 19C church of St John in the village of Rownhams, built on a rough common used by revellers near Rownhams House – an 18C mansion that stood on the site of a farm owned by the Knights of St John – but now demolished, replaced by a

housing estate ... such is progress. The church was built by its then owner Major Colt to thank God on his recovery from a serious illness, and it contains an east window by G E R Smith. Its main interest, though, is a gem of a collection of 53 roundels – mainly 16–17C Netherlandish, although a few are Victorian – set in groups into a framework of floral diamond quarries. Here the detailed guide by William Cole proved invaluable, as we clustered



around each window in turn trying to discern the theme and the tiny details within the scene. Some, like the Good Samaritan, readily yielded this up; others, such as the 18C enamel-painted 'Abraham and the angels' (left), at first glance appeared to me to be a Georgian drinking scene, as the figures all had highly coloured cheeks, and only on spotting their wings did the light dawn! Others again remain to date mysterious, and are listed merely as 'subject unknown'.

Into the buses again, and we set off into the Southampton outskirts to the Church of the Ascension at Bitterne Park, our last stop. Although built only in 1926, it contains items from one of the five original churches of the city that had been declared redundant. Designed by Sir Charles Nicholson, brother of A K Nicholson, most of the windows are by the latter. His east rose window is in memory of Sir Henry Milner-White, one of the







founders and benefactors whose son Eric, the late Dean of York, planned the sequence of windows. The scheme is of grand scope, with the series on the south side depicting the works of the ascended Lord in heaven and those on the north his works on earth. The subjects include St John of Patmos and the 7 churches, the New Jerusalem, the apocalypse, the conversion of St Paul, the council of Nicea, the conversion of England, the authorization of the English bible by King James I at Hampton Court, and the work of missionaries in spreading the faith worldwide. Among the subjects are bishops canoeing down Canadian rapids, being martyred by Solomon Isles natives, slaves in chains in Zanzibar, the Holy Grail at Glastonbury, saints sailing up creeks and Henry V's ship (by G E R Smith). Henry built his navy at Southampton, and the docks themselves appear in one of the scenes, complete with ocean liner! My favourites, though, are the four horsemen of the apocalypse, gothically depicted in small lights at the base of one of the large windows (detail above), and the gates of the New Jerusalem, complete with peacocks, parrots, and fountain with deer and charming Art Nouveau-style angels (detail below).



**SATURDAY** was devoted to Winchester – first the Cathedral and then after lunch a stroll through back streets to Winchester College. The cathedral glass ranges in scope from medieval fragments (from c1330), through the great mid 14C west window, reassembled after the Civil War and lately reled by Chapel Studios, the Victorian studio windows by Gibbs, Clayton & Bell, James Powell, Kempe and the Arts & Crafts movement, and into the modern period with Hugh Easton, Alf Fisher and Tracey Sheppard – there is something



here for everyone. I really cannot add to the excellent guide produced by Mary Calle. Spoilt by choice, as an A&C fan I found myself returning more than once to enjoy at leisure the Morris & Co. panels (made reusing Burne Jones' cartoons for Castle Howard) in the small epiphany chapel, where in its darkness the intense colours are dramatic and vibrant. Here also is a classic St George by Christopher Whall in memory of a soldier who fell at Gallipoli.

Back in the sunshine, the afternoon offered a gentle

tour of the College grounds, the old schoolroom with its high lectern and wooden pupil benches, and a teatowel denoting the pupils' argot. The original chapel windows by Thomas of Oxford had been sent to Betton & Evans for 'cleaning and repair' – who made a set of copies that the Warden and the local press thought marvelous, as they 'looked like new!' Stephen Clare had spoken the previous evening on the restoration work at Winchester, and Michael Kerney, who gave a talk in the chapel, evidently held a different view of this act of 'restoration', the latter pointing out that the glass was judged badly corroded, beyond the means of the restoration techniques of the time. By the 1950s, then, only two original panels remained when Sir Kenneth Clarke, a former pupil, gifted funds to find and return the displaced panels, some of which had gone to the USA. Dennis King restored the panels so recovered; also, three pieces bought earlier and recently restored by the V & A are now on view at the museum.

Back at base, the conference dinner ensued, of which the highlight was the Chairman pronouncing Steve Clare a Fellow of the Society whilst brandishing aloft the huge BSMGP Seal – quite some feat, which she hopes will not have to be performed yearly!

**SUNDAY** After members' slides, with a moving tribute by Hilary Davies to her husband Lewis, it was on board the bus again for a 1-mile trip past water meadows where John Keats wrote the *Ode to Autumn* to the Hospital of St Cross. This ancient almshouse has offered the Wayfarer's Dole for over 800 years, and walkers can still claim a free bite and a pint, it seems. The medieval kitchens have



some heraldic glass and some ancient windows remain in the chapel (detail above). Most, however, dates back to the restoration begun by the architect Butterfield in 1858, who after the building and interior then commissioned windows from William Wailes. There are also 20C windows by Hugh Easton and others. The earliest windows by Wailes, at the western end, are in 13C medallion style; the Jesse window has an Adam and Eve based on a Florentine fresco. This is my favourite piece below: a detail at the bottom of a memorial to a soldier who died on the Somme.



So, back to the bus, weary but satiated – many thanks to Sue, Mary, Michael, Steve and the guides for a great tour! *Chris Wyard*

... AND FROM THE STUDENT DELEGATES: We were given a space each from the Glaziers Trust and the BSMGP via the University of Sunderland where we are currently studying our BA in Glass and Ceramics. Arriving, and not knowing what to expect or do, Sue promptly welcomed us with our timetable and encouraging words to help us mingle with the group. When we went down on the first night, everyone was so welcoming and made time for us. A special hello to June with her excitable hand gestures, and to the very passionate Tony, kind enough to pass on magazines and knowledge. To the very considerate Eleanor John and to our evening partners Ken and Sylvia, who made the evenings eventful: 'My Babies!' Lastly Karen and Helen who invited us for studio visits and all the information we could ask for.

The day trips were really good for us, as we've never been to a stained glass tour, and it's great to see them in site. Listening to the guides and turning to see everyone binoculars up made us giggle, but after a morning looking around we decided next time we'd need some too. We particularly enjoyed the Alan Younger and Tracey Sheppard windows, Tony will be glad to hear. Thank you all for a great 4 days and big thanks to Steve Clare who made this possible for us.

*Jenna Barcroft and Emma Hollins*