

THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS
OF

BRECHIN CATHEDRAL

&

STRACATHRO PARISH CHURCH

Foreword

While sitting at one of our Fabric Committee meetings the question of the Stained Glass Windows came up and the need for a photographic record. I thought to myself, I could do that ... what an opportunity to do something for our Kirk!!

Little did I know what I was letting myself into.

The only references I can find in the bible to the words “stain” and “opportunity” are:

Isaiah 23. vs. 9 “The Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to **stain** the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.”

Isaiah 63 vs. 3. “I have trodden the winepress alone: and of the people there was none for me: for I will tread them in my anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will **stain** all my raiment.”

St Matthew 26 vs. 16 “And from that time he sought **opportunity** to betray him”

Galatians 6 vs. 10 “As we have therefore **opportunity**, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

A booklet entitled “Brechins Stained Glass Windows” published in 1956 by the late David Boath Thoms, Esq., M.A. gave me much more information as to the stories portrayed in each window. It is to his memory that I have expanded upon this work.

I then set about the task of finding the biblical reference to each of these stories and with the aid of the concordance in my family bible was able to find the appropriate verse pertaining to each part of the window.

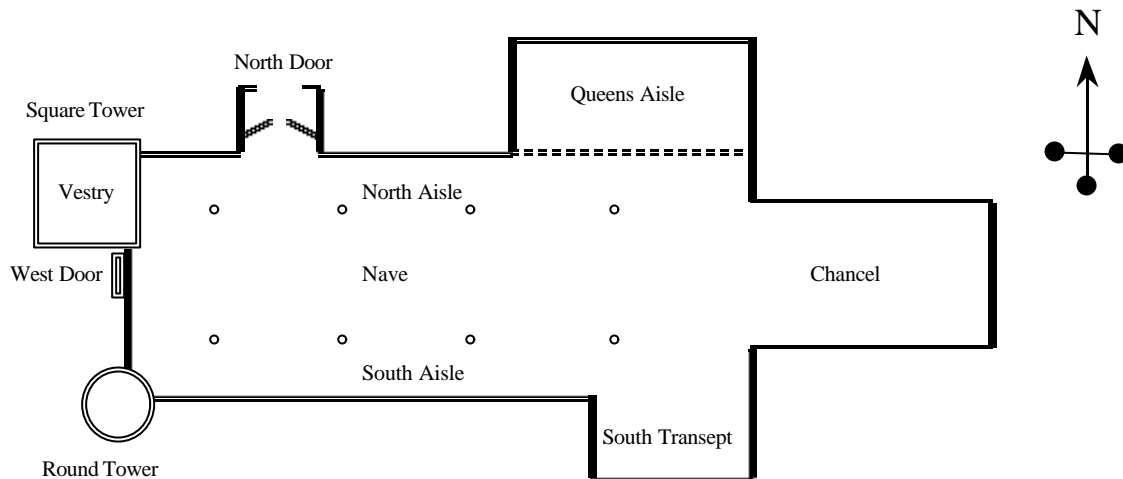
This publication is therefore an update of DB Thom’s original text with the added details as researched.

Where I had to admit defeat then the Rev. Scott Rennie was able to give me the missing pieces and at last I had the stories for all the windows. Others who have helped, may I convey my thanks to them for their valued assistance.

Archie Milne ©

Introduction

It was a common custom in the Middle Ages to install stained glass in church windows according to a particular scheme illustrating the pattern of the Church's services throughout the Christian year.



From the west end of the church, the windows in the North Aisle portray the Prophets and Heroes of the Old Testament and those in the South Aisle the Apostles and Evangelists of the New Testament.

At the east end of the church the windows culminate in the presentation of the birth, ministry, death and resurrection of Our Lord.

It was this old tradition which the Rev. A. D. Tait Hutchison, (minister of the Second Charge 1893-1942), had in mind when he prepared his scheme of stained glass for the restored Cathedral.

The fulfillment of this scheme took almost 80 years, but three distinct phases can be discerned:

1901-1902

Fourteen Chancel Windows and a window on each side of the Chancel Arch were completed at the end of the restoration.

1907-1932

During this time two windows were completed, the south window of the South Transept and the middle window in the South Aisle were filled.

1949-1961

The scheme was resumed under the direction of the Rev. James Anderson (minister 1942-1964); eight large windows and eleven small windows were presented by the congregation, its members and its organizations, along with a number of well-wishers.

The completion of the stained glass window programme came in 1978 when the west windows of both the Queens Aisle and the South Aisle were converted.

It is suggested that visitors interested in the stained glass windows of the Cathedral should begin their tour near the Vestry door and proceed along the North Aisle to the Queen's Aisle and the Chancel, then return by the South Transept and the South Aisle to the West Window.

The Clerestory and Vestry windows may be examined independently and it is in that order that the windows have been described in this guide.

A separate page has been prepared on the stained glass window at Stracathro Parish Church which is linked with Brechin Cathedral.

The individual pages indicate the subject, the name of the donor, the name of the artist and the year of presentation.

Also detailed are verses from the bible(KJ5) which can be consulted for additional reference and Hymns from the Church Hymnary, Revised Edition.

The Artists

Henry Holiday (1839-1927)

He studied at the Royal Academy Schools from 1854 and was closely associated with the pre-Raphaelite circle. In 1861 he followed Burne-Jones as chief designer at James Powell & Sons, Whitefriars, and worked there until 1891 when he established his own workshop in London.

His designs, also used by other major firms, were distinguished by their strong classical lines and relationship with the surrounding architecture.

Examples of work in and around London include St. Margaret's Westminster and Southwark Cathedral while more prominent windows are the Brunel Memorial Window in Westminster Abbey and the Great Rose Window at St George's in South London. Other examples can be found in American Churches, for example the Church of St Thomas, Washington DC, and the Memorial to General Lee in St Paul's, Richmond VA.

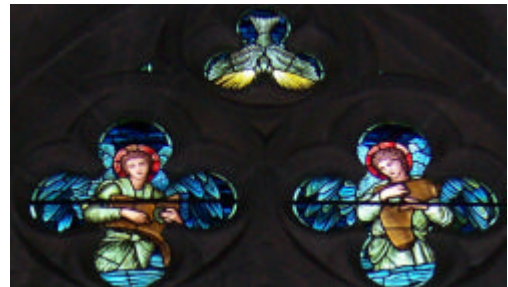
Many of his influences came from his visits to India and Egypt, he was also keen on astronomy and telescopes which sometimes appear in his works.



Henry Dearle (1860-1932)

He worked for the firm of Morris & Co and much of his work included ideas by Burne-Jones who was one of the earlier chief designers alongside William Morris.

He carried on the firm retaining the styles of Morris and Burne-Jones until the company wound up in 1940.



Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898)

It is worth mentioning Burne-Jones even though he is not fully credited with a window in our church but it has been said that some of his designs for angels were used in The Aldbar Window in the South Transept.

Both he and William Morris studied theology at Oxford and had at one time considered their future as clergymen but after meeting with Rossetti they decided upon art as their chosen careers.

David Gauld (1865-1936)

David Gauld was known as one of the Glasgow Boys.

These were a group of Glasgow Artists who rejuvenated the British Art scene and brought lasting credit to the City of Glasgow.

In this group were

Glasgow Boys

Joseph Crawhall (1861-1913)

David Gauld (1865-1936)

George Henry (1858-1943)

William Kennedy (1859-1918)

Sir John Lavery (1856-1941)

Stuart Park (1862-1933)

James Paterson (1854-1932)

Edward A. Walton (1860-1922)

Sir James Guthrie (1859-1930)

Alexander Roche (1861-1923)

Edward A. Hornel (1864-1933)

Arthur Melville (1855-1904)

Glasgow Girls

Stansmore Dean (1866-1944)

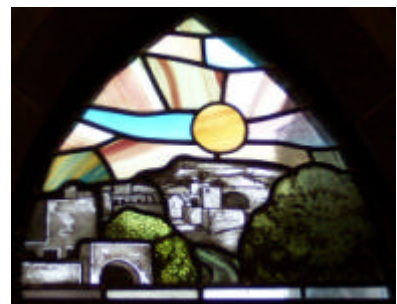
Lily Blatherwick (1854-1934)

Bessie MacNicol (1869-1904)

Frances MacDonald (1834-1921)

Constance Walton (1865-1933)

Katherine Cameron (1874-1968)



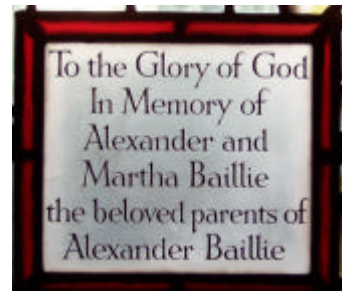
He worked as a free-lance designer and painter for the decorating firm of John and William Guthrie of Glasgow which in 1885 expanded to include stained glass and by 1890 his designs for stained glass windows showed great competence in style, in some contrast to his later landscape paintings.

The Artists



Hugh Easton

Hugh Easton's style of windows was to incorporate a clear background and this is clearly seen in his two windows, The Baillie Window and The Wright Window.



Douglas Strachan (1875-1950)

A founder of the crafts section of Edinburgh College of Art (1911), he was one of the finest of Scotland's stained glass artists.

He is best remembered for his glorious glazing schemes for the windows in the shrine of the Scottish National War Memorial in Edinburgh Castle and the "Alma Mater" window in the University of Glasgow.

Another of this group of artists was Herbert Hendrie who was exceptional both as a practitioner and teacher. His studios in Edinburgh College of Art, where he taught for 20 years, saw the construction of both his famous windows for Liverpool Cathedral.



Herbert Hendrie (1887-1947)

He followed Douglas Strachan who in 1908 set up Department of Stained Glass at Edinburgh Art College; he also had a large private practice.

Works can be seen at St. John's Perth, Glasgow Cathedral, Brechin Cathedral, Paisley Abbey, St. Michael's Linlithgow and also a famous series of windows at Liverpool Anglican Cathedral.

Noted in particular for small scintillating panes producing a jewel-like effect.

His brightly coloured works were regarded by William Wilson to be more successful than those of Douglas Strachan who tended to be extremely detailed while Hendrie kept his designs simple.

William Wilson (1905-1972)

Another of Scotland's great artists, a master of printmaking, painting and stained glass. Edinburgh based, his designs are in the "East Coast Tradition" of Strachan and Hendrie.

First inspired by Strachan's magnificent glass in the National War Memorial at Edinburgh Castle (1927), he went on to become one of the most prolific and best loved of all Scotland's artists before blindness caused by diabetes cut short his extraordinary career.

His windows of the 1950's are considered by many to be those of his best in particular by the Scottish Arts Club.

The Scottish Gallery had an exhibition of his work in 1982, containing "Design for Brechin Cathedral" 1952.



Gordon Webster (1908-1987)

When his father, Alf Webster, died in 1915 the firm of stained glass manufacture was run by his mother until 1929 when he took charge. During these years the management of the firm was handled by Douglas Hamilton who trained Gordon in the art of stained glass.

His early works were mistaken for that of his fathers but eventually he developed his own style and became one of Scotland's outstanding artists.

