

St Mary de Haura Stained Glass Windows

By the Revd Victor Standing

Nave South Wall (adjacent to the entrance to the church)

Baron de Braose

Designer: Diana M Smart, 1955
Manufacturer: Goddard & Gibbs, 1955

The Norman Barons de Braose were Lords of the 'Rape of Bramber', one of the administrative subdivisions of Sussex. Their territory included Shoreham, one of the most important ports on the English Channel coast for crossings to and from Normandy at the time. The first Baron, William de Braose, from Briouze in Normandy, fought alongside William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings in 1066.

His son, Philip de Braose, was away in Jerusalem during the years 1096-1103: either before he set out or upon his return he founded this church of St Mary de Haura. Towards the end of the 12th century the 4th Lord of Bramber, another William de Braose, greatly enlarged and beautified the church. At the top of the window we see Bramber Castle (*now a ruin*), the seat of the Barons de Braose. The Baron is dressed in armour, and stands in front of St Mary's Church as it may have looked in its early years at the beginning of the 12th century before the tremendous rebuilding and extension which was undertaken later.

North Transept (St George's Chapel)

'The Children's Window' (north wall)

Manufacturer: Cox & Sons, 1877

This non-pictorial 'grisaille' window '*In memory of the infants who sleep in Jesus*' was subscribed for by the parents of 40 Shoreham children who had died in infancy over a number of years and whose names are commemorated in the decorative borders.

The Risen Christ and Mary Magdalene (east wall)

Manufacturer: Kempe & Co, circa 1922

This touching scene depicts the story of Mary Magdalene's encounter with Jesus on the morning of the first Easter Day in *St John's Gospel*, chapter 20. Mary stood weeping outside the tomb where his body had been laid following his crucifixion on Good Friday, after discovering that his body was missing. She saw a figure in the garden who she thought was the gardener, but he said to her 'Mary', and, recognising him as Jesus, risen from the dead, she turned to him and said 'Rabbouni!', which means 'Teacher'.

Jesus' Birth, Death and Resurrection (east wall)

Manufacturer: Willement, 1858, inspired by medieval glass at Canterbury Cathedral

These three windows, one above the other, depict the principal events of the story of Jesus. The lowest roundel shows his birth in the stable in Bethlehem at Christmas, with the animals watching on. In the middle window we see his crucifixion on Good Friday, with his mother Mary at the foot of the cross, and also the 'disciple whom he loved', traditionally identified as the apostle St John. In the uppermost roundel the risen Jesus bursts from his tomb on Easter Day, with the guards who had been keeping watch 'becoming like dead men', as recorded in *St Matthew's Gospel* chapter 28.

North Aisle

‘Hope’

Manufacturer: Heaton, Butler & Bayne, circa 1873-1877

‘Hope’ is a ‘key’ word in the Bible, especially in the New Testament. Like *faith* and *love*, it is one of the three things which St Paul says ‘last for ever’ in *The First Letter to the Corinthians* chapter 13.

In this window, ‘hope’ is personified as a beautiful young woman holding an anchor. The top of the anchor is in the form of a cross – a reminder that the Christian hope of salvation and eternal life arises out of what Jesus has accomplished by his death and resurrection. The anchor itself is an ancient symbol for eternal life: in the early Church the Christian life was thought of in terms of a sea voyage, with all its perils, at the end of which the vessel reaches the ‘safe haven’ of heaven and ‘drops anchor’.

‘The Resurrection and the Life’

Manufacturer: Heaton, Butler & Bayne, circa 1873-1877

In *St John’s Gospel* chapter 11, Jesus says ‘I am the Resurrection and the Life’. This window illustrates the truth of this claim by depicting the story of Jesus raising the dead son of a widow at the gate of the town of Nain, recorded in *St Luke’s Gospel* chapter 7.

‘Faith’

Manufacturer: Heaton, Butler & Bayne, circa 1873-1877

This is a companion to the ‘Hope’ window, and once again features a beautiful young woman, as the personification of ‘faith’, and a cross, the central symbol of Christianity. The heading ‘By faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ’ is a quotation from St Paul’s *Letter to the Romans*.

Like *hope* and *love*, faith is one of the three things which St Paul says ‘last for ever’ in *The First Letter to the Corinthians* chapter 13. In chapter 11 of the *Letter to the Hebrews*, faith is said to be ‘the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen’.

Jesus Blessing Little Children

Manufacturer: Heaton, Butler & Bayne, circa 1873-1877

This window depicts a tender incident in Jesus’ ministry, recorded in *St Mark’s Gospel*, chapter 10, where he told his disciples to ‘let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of God belongs’. He then ‘took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them’.

The East Windows (behind the High Altar)

Acts of Mercy, and the Good Samaritan (*three upper windows*)

Manufacturer: Stylistic attribution to Heaton, Butler & Bayne, circa 1874

These fine windows with their striking themes occupy pride of place among the church’s stained glass windows.

The windows to the *right* and *left* of the central panel illustrate various scenes from a Parable in *St Mathew’s Gospel*, chapter 25. In this story Jesus tells his hearers that when he ‘comes in his glory’ and sits on his throne ‘all the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats’. The ‘sheep’ are the ‘righteous’ people who have followed Jesus’ teaching in their earthly lives by serving him through their care for others, while the ‘goats’ are the ‘accursed’, who have not done so. And he gives examples of their ‘acts of mercy’, or the lack of them.

The *Centre* window illustrates the Parable of the Good Samaritan from *St Luke's Gospel*, chapter 10. When a Lawyer in a crowd asked Jesus for a definition of the word 'neighbour' he told the story of the man who 'fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead'. A Priest and then a Levite attached the Temple in Jerusalem came across the victim but, instead of helping him, 'passed by on the other side'. But 'a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two coins, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend"'. It adds to the impact of this story when we appreciate that in Jesus' time Jews and Samaritans detested each other and avoided contact with each other whenever possible. The point that Jesus is making is that anyone who is in need is our 'neighbour', regardless of who he or she is, and we are called by God to assist them.

The Crucified Christ, St Mary & St John (*three lower windows*)

Manufacturer: Kempe & Co, 1923

The scene depicted in these three panels is recorded in *St John's Gospel*, chapter 19. In the centre Jesus hangs on the cross. The letters *INRI* attached to the cross stand for the superscription (*in Latin*) 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews', placed there on the orders of the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, who sentenced Jesus to death. The Greek letters, on either side of his body, stand for 'Jesus Christ', that is Jesus the Messiah, the one 'anointed' by God. The city in the background is Jerusalem, Jesus having been crucified at Calvary, or Golgotha, outside the city walls.

The crucified Christ is flanked on his right (*our left, as we look at the windows*) by the Blessed Virgin Mary, here described (*in Latin*) by the ancient title 'Holy Mary, Mother of God', and dressed in the blue robe associated with her in Christian art. She is the Patron Saint of this church of St Mary de Haura.

On Christ's left (*our right*) is the 'disciple whom Jesus loved', who is mentioned many times in *St John's Gospel* and who has traditionally been identified (*as the Latin inscription states*) with Jesus' disciple St John, one of the fishermen who he called to follow him beside the Sea of Galilee at the beginning of his ministry. He holds a book, no doubt containing the Gospel according to St John.

Lady Chapel

The Annunciation (*east wall*)

Manufacturer and date unknown: late 19th century

This window depicts the story in *St Luke's Gospel* chapter 1 in which the angel Gabriel is sent to the Blessed Virgin Mary in Nazareth in Galilee to tell her she is to be the mother of Jesus.

Simeon (*south wall*)

Manufacturer: W G Taylor, 1884

In *St Luke's Gospel* chapter 2 we read how Joseph and Mary took the infant Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem to 'present' him to God. While they were there an old man named Simeon (to whom it had been revealed by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah) came into the Temple and took Jesus into his arms and blessed him.

David (*south wall*)

Manufacturer: W G Taylor, 1889

The great Israelite King David began life as a simple shepherd-boy in Bethlehem, who was called by God to 'shepherd' his people instead. The most famous of the stories told about him is the one in *The First Book of Samuel* chapter 17 when the young David, armed only with a sling and five pebbles and his faith

in God, was victorious over the Philistine champion Goliath, with his armour, sword and spear and great stature.

South Aisle

The Good Shepherd

Manufacturer: W G Taylor, circa 1871

In *St Luke's Gospel* chapter 15, Jesus tells his critics who complain that 'this fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them' the story of the shepherd who, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, leaves the ninety-nine in the wilderness and goes after the one that is lost until he finds it; and when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And Jesus says, 'Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance'.

Eunice teaching Timothy

Manufacturer: Stylistic attribution to Heaton, Butler & Bayne, circa 1883

Timothy was a companion of St Paul on his missionary journeys. Eunice is mentioned in the *Second Letter to Timothy* chapter 1 where we read 'I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you'.

Christ on the way to the Cross

Manufacturer unknown: 1891

The later Victorian stained glass manufacturers sometimes based their designs on the engravings of the great German Renaissance artist Albrecht Dürer, 1471-1528. This window can be traced back to two of his portrayals of Christ's Passion.

South Transept (behind the vestries)

The Blessed Virgin Mary (upper window)

Manufacturer and date unknown: late 19th century

This is another representation of the story of the Annunciation seen in the Lady Chapel. In this window the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus, holds lilies in her right hand and wears a blue robe, both features traditionally associated with her in Christian iconography.

'Come unto Me' – Christ the Consoler (three lower windows)

Manufacturer: Stylistic attribution to Heaton, Butler & Bayne, circa 1885

The inscription 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest' which runs across the bottom of all three windows is a quotation from some words of Jesus in *St Matthew's Gospel* chapter 11. The central panel depicts Jesus, 'seated on the clouds' in heavenly glory after his earthly life, death and resurrection. It is to Jesus, the 'King of Glory', that those in the side panels are drawn as if by the rays of heavenly light which spill over into those windows from the centre. Here we find a representative selection of the countless people who have found 'rest' in knowing Jesus and his healing love over the centuries.

The West Window (leaving the church)

Christ in the house of Mary and Martha

Manufacturer: Stylistic attribution to Heaton, Butler & Bayne, circa 1888

This window portrays a very 'domestic' story involving two sisters and their relationship with Jesus, from *St Luke's Gospel*, chapter 10. We may feel some sympathy for poor overworked Martha (*on the right, weighed down by her keys and her bag*), but Mary (*seated, on the left*) realised that it was more important to listen to Jesus' teaching in the time that he was with them than to attend to the household chores. These things mattered, of course, but they could be dealt with after Jesus had left them. It is just as important for us today to find time in our busy lives to seek God's presence through prayer and worship, or simply by 'being still'.
