

The Stained Glass  
&  
Screen Paintings  
in  
Holy Trinity Church,  
Torbryan.

EXTRACTS FROM THE TORBRYAN SUPPLEMENT TO IPPLEPEN PARISH MAGAZINE.

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OCTOBER 1930.

In nearly all the windows of Torbryan Church the ancient stained glass in the upper portions of the windows has survived. This is very exceptional, for very little stained glass survived the mad craze for destruction of the Cromwellian times. The Rev. Edward Goswell retained his position of Rector all through the times, and there is a tradition that he saved the glass by covering it with whitewash, just as the Ipplepen screens were preserved at the same time by a covering of black paint. It may be of interest to give a detailed description of the Torbryan glass and an explanation of the symbols. This glass is somewhat famous, and attracts visitors from all parts of the country. We commence this month with the East window, which contains the figures of eight Virgin Saints and two coats of arms. In the centre of the window in the most prominent position are shields with arms (1) the family of Brian, the distinguished family that were Lords of the Manor, and gave the present name to the parish. These arms have three piles in point. (2) The family of Wolston, the owners of Tornewton for upwards of 200 years and patrons of the living. These arms are six golden baskets. Apparently the glass of this last is not ancient, and it may date from 1860-1863, when the Rev. Christopher Wolston, the Rector, restored the chancel and carried out the general repair of the Church. Later generations have cause to be thankful to Mr. Wolston for the good work then done in preserving the Church without destroying its ancient character.

The eight Virgin Saints is the most interesting group, and their symbols which need a glass to see clearly are meant to teach how they gained their great reward. We simply give their names this month and will leave fuller description for next month. They are S. Martha, S. Catherine, S. Margaret, S. Anastasia, S. Appolonia, S. Bridget, S. Dorothy and S. Sidwell.

NOVEMBER 1930.

We continue the description of the Ancient glass in the East window. The figures in the top row from North to South are (1) S. Martha leading a dragon with a chain; (2) S. Catherine with sword and wheel; (3) S. Margaret with the cross in the dragon's mouth; (4) S. Anastasia with the tower; the symbol of S. Barbara.

1. The old legends always regard Mary Magdalen as identical with Mary of Bethany, and according to them it was Martha who guided her sinning sister to the feet of Christ. After the Ascension the family were driven in exile to France, where Martha is said to have bound a terrible dragon that ravaged the country.

2. S. Catherine of Alexandria, was martyred in 307. The story connected with her is that she was a woman of great wealth and learning, and that she resisted the heathen Emperor's Unholy Passion, and as a consequence she was ordered to be tortured by a wheel to which Knives were fastened. But the wheel was wrecked by lightening and then she was beheaded by a sword. The Crusaders brought back her legend from the East and she became more famous than any other martyr. More than fifty Churches were dedicated to her name in England.

3. S. Margaret of Antioch was martyred in 306. She is said to have been converted by her nurse and that the heathen governor of Antioch, whom she refused to marry, had her thrown

refused to marry, had her thrown into a dungeon, where Satan in the form of a terrible dragon came to tempt and alarm her, but when she held up the Cross that she always carried, he fled in confusion. 5,000 persons are said to have been converted by her example. The governor caused her to be beheaded.

DECEMBER 1930.

The fourth figure in the top row of the tracery of the East window has the name Anastasia alongside it, but as the symbol, the tower and palm is that of S. Barbara we give her legend. S. Barbara was martyred in the year 303. This is the legend connected with her. Her heathen father, fearing that he might lose her by marriage, hid her in a high tower. Here she devoted herself to study and meditation, and she became convinced that her father's gods were false. She wrote to a famous Christian teacher for instruction, and at length was baptised. She then ordered workmen to make a third window in her tower in addition to the two already there, because through the Holy Trinity came the true light. Her father was so enraged that he is said to have put her to death with his own hands.

Coming to the second row, the first figure on the North side is S. Appollo S. Appolonia. She is represented with her symbol of pincers with a tooth. She was the patron against toothache. She was martyred in the year 250. This is her legend. She grew up in heathenism, but when she grew up she came under the influence of Christianity and was baptised. She felt the call to teach and went to Alexandria and boldly preached the faith. She was soon arrested and bidden to worship an idol, and on her refusal she was

bound to a pillar. All her teeth were pulled out one by one and as she still remained steadfast in the faith she was burnt to death.

JANUARY 1931.

We have been a long time in finishing the description of the ancient stained glass figures in the East window. The three remaining are (1) S<sup>t</sup> Bridget (between S. Appolonia and the Arms of Brian) represented as clad in white monastic habit and holding a crozier. This saint was a Swedish princess. She founded the Monastic Order of the Brigittines. (2) S. Dorothy of Cappadocia, holding in her hand her symbol of a basket of roses. She was martyred A.D. 303. The legend connected with her was that when on her way to the execution a young man mocked her and asked to be sent some roses from the garden to which she was going. Just before her death a youth appeared with three roses, which she sent to the young man, saying she awaited him in the garden. He was so touched that it led to his conversion. (3) S. Sidwell, with her symbol of a scythe, because she was beheaded with a scythe. The name of this saint is familiar because of the well-known Church and street of S. Sidwells, Exeter. She was one of many "fountain" saints, the legend being that holy wells and springs burst forth at the place where they were put to death.

FEBRUARY 1932.

The outstanding event of 1931 was the visit of the Lord Bishop on February 14th to dedicate the stained glass window in memory of the late General Kelly. 1931 also saw almost continuous work since Easter on the renovation of the Church and the curing of the damp. A good deal of progress has been made, but things have been at a standstill for some little time. Since the last report the porch floor has been taken up and relaid with a slope so as to drain outward the rain drift that used



to drain into the Church. The lych gate is now being taken in hand. This work has been delayed through difficulty in securing suitable slates.  
MARCH 1932.

On St. Valentine's Day, February 14th, the Rector, instead of preaching an ordinary sermon, gave a talk on the lessons of the stained glass of the East window, that day being the anniversary of the dedication by the Bishop. He pointed out that (1) the central figure, Our Lord enthroned, set before them the glorious ending of a life on earth, issuing through death into the greater life of glory beyond. (2) That the rainbow surrounding the throne was to remind us of mercy, and that it is because of the mercy of God that it is possible to reach the blessed state. (3) The beings nearest the throne were the Angels depicted with happy, beautiful faces because they had never sinned. (4) Grouped behind the Angels were Saints, of various types of men and women who had rendered faithful service. There was S. George, the champion of right; S. Nicholas, the lover of children; S. Barbara, faithful unto death; S. Walstan, the land worker. The Rector pointed out to the congregation (alas! it was a very meagre one) how the faces of the saints all bore the marks of the struggles they had passed through. They were ordinary beings like themselves, and they had reached their blessedness through God's mercy, because they had been chivalrous, kind, persevering in good, and industrious.

JUNE 1933.

The Church restoration work has been progressing slowly during the last month. The dilapidated seating of the North and South aisles has been taken out. It was found that all the woodwork excepting the parts adjoining the passageways was rotten beyond repair. It is intended to make good the seating accommodation with chairs. The damp earth and

rotten wood to the depth of twelve inches beneath the old seating has been removed, and the ground floors have been covered with concrete. A number of ancient tiles have been dug up, and it is hoped to cover the new surface of the South aisle floor with wood blocks. An interesting and strange discovery was made during the removal of the old woodwork. It was found that the boards on which were painted the Creed and the Royal Arms some two hundred years ago had been taken for the floors of the seats. The boards and the gold paint are in quite good condition, and they have been carefully put away for possible restoration. The Royal Arms were ordered to be placed in all Churches after the Restoration of the Monarchy following the Cromwellian times. It was one way people were taught to honour the King. We are very glad that the path from the lych gate to the Church door has at last been finished.

Torbryan Church is dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and on Trinity Sunday the Rector in his sermon explained the symbols of the Holy Trinity depicted in the ancient glass in four of the windows of the Church. The symbol consists of four circles, three of which surround the angles of an equilateral triangle and the fourth is in the centre of the triangle. The circles at the angles bear the inscriptions: "Father", "Son", "Holy Spirit" and the centre one "God". Between each pair of circles of the angles is inscribed "is not", and between each circle at the angle and the centre is inscribed "is". The whole is a symbol of the Christian faith "The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God.; the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is not the Father."

SEPTEMBER 1937.

Lady Cable, of Lindridge, whose death took place last week, had an intimate link with Torbryan Church, for this Church was selected by her for some reason unknown to the present Rector for a memorial to her only son, Lieutenant Pickersgill Cable, who was killed in the first month of the Great War. She and her husband, Sir Ernest Cable, presented the Church a suitably inscribed silver Chalice and Paten as a memorial. The Church already possessed a fine Elizabethan Chalice, made by Moore, of Totnes, in 1580, but it is found more convenient to use Lady Cable's gift, and our communicants are constantly reminded of her.

SEPTEMBER 1939.

The architect has decided that the stonework of the East window requires strengthening and he is recommending non-rusting materials for the new bars. DECEMBER 1939.

We are glad to be relieved of the concern for the safety of the East window. A few months ago it was noticed that the stonework was giving way, and that three mullions were unsafe. We called in the architect from Exeter, and he ordered two strong metal bars of Delta material to be placed in such a position as would hold the whole window together. This has now been carefully done by Mr. George Daw, and the work done without having to remove the stained glass, and without any damage. We hope that now everything has been put right. At some time in the past, no one knows when, extensive repairs to the stonework were done with plaster of Paris. This has now been removed and replaced by Beer stone, as in the original work.



We kept Sunday, November 12th, as Remembrance Day, thanking God for the courage and sacrifice of those who fought in the Great War, and making our prayers for guidance and protection in the present war.

It was with great sorrow that I heard just before taking the service on January 28th, that Mrs. Kelly had passed away at Tornewton House about an hour before. We remembered her in our prayers that afternoon, and on the following Thursday her friends gathered at the Church for the celebration of Holy Communion held at 11.50, followed by the burial service at 12.30, to pay their last tribute of respect and affection to one who had lived nearby for the latter part of her life, and had been so attached to the old Church. Ever since her husband had died in 1930, she had lived a solitary life in much ill-health and weariness waiting for the day when God would call her to join her late husband. One of the greatest interests of her later years was the Diocesan Retreat House at West Oghwell, in the founding of which she took a leading part, and to which she and the General contributed liberally. She was laid to rest by the side of the General under the Old Yew Tree at the West end of the Churchyard. R.I.P.

The Rural Dean made his Annual Visitation to the Church on the afternoon of Saturday, March 9th. There he met the two churchwardens, the curate in charge, the Rev. F. B. Meneer, and the Rev. J. P. Denham, the vicar-elect. He made a thorough inspection and examination of the Church, inside and out, and was very pleased with the condition of the fabric. The only defect he noticed was that the window on the South side of the Chancel was not proof against the rain, as the stonework at the bottom of the window appeared to have sunk, thus letting in water.

On handing over the charge of the parish to Mr. Denham, I wish to thank both churchwardens, the organist, choir and sexton for their kind co-operation during the time I have been officiating, and may I express the