

**The Mocking of Christ; Last Supper; Christ Washing the Disciples' Feet; Sermon on the Mount: four figurative panels of stained glass formerly in the east window of the St Thomas Becket Chapel in Holy Trinity church, Stratford-on-Avon.**

Between 1850 and 1859 the chancel east window at Holy Trinity was fitted with new stained glass, supplied by William Holland & Co., of Warwick. By the latter part of the nineteenth century the style of this glass - and no doubt the intensity of its colours in particular - was out of step with religious feeling. It was taken down in 1894, and in 1895 a new east window, made by Heaton, Butler & Bayne, of London, inserted in its place. Palimpsest revisions of stained glass windows that dated from the early years of the Gothic Revival were not uncommon, and in many instances the old glass was simply taken out and destroyed: fortunately, at Holy Trinity this was not the case.

Holland's window of the 1850s had consisted of 21 subject panels, representing events in the life of Christ, as well as thirty four subsidiary sections in the complex tracery lights; fifteen of these panels and a lesser number of tracery lights were re-sited in the north transept window, where they survive in a necessarily revised narrative sequence. At the same time four of the remaining six panels were placed in the east window of the St Thomas Becket chapel; they, however, slipped from view very quickly, for in 1898 the window was effectively blocked in order to accommodate the workings of the newly installed organ. They were virtually forgotten until 2011, when the organ pipes were being serviced and access was gained to two of the panels by temporarily removing a steel plate. Their survival was particularly fortuitous, since the recent proposal to reinstate them in a prominent and accessible position will facilitate the close study of stained glass which affords unusual opportunities to consider the panels from a wide variety of perspectives, both local and national in scope and embracing questions of art and craft, patronage, patterns of worship, iconography and social history.

\* \* \* \* \*

To appreciate the significance of the four panels in their art-historical context necessitates research and reading in

what is a thinly-documented subject. I shall begin this complex but intriguing story with brief outlines of the chief artist-protagonists:

**William Holland** (1802-1883) was born in Manchester but by 1828 he was established in Warwick as a 'House and Sign Painter etc'; he soon expanded into plumbing and glazing and by 1835 had added 'Glass Stainer' to the services he offered. As someone who had worked with lead and glass - the basic materials for making stained glass - he was strategically placed to capitalise on the rapid rise in demand for stained glass once the Gothic Revival in architecture got under way in the 1830s. It is unlikely, however, that Holland possessed the specialist skills required for designing, painting and firing stained glass, and from the outset he hired journeymen craftworkers for this purpose. Holland's business expanded steadily, and it encompassed many forms of decoration, both domestic and ecclesiastical. In 1847 he moved to the imposing neo-Tudor building that can still be seen in Priory Road, Warwick. Some years before William's death the business was taken over by his nephew, Frank Holt, and although, in the declining years of the Gothic Revival, there was a considerable drop in production, Holt continued to operate the stained glass studio until the early years of the twentieth century.

**Clement Heaton** (1824-1882) was born in Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire, the only son of an itinerant Wesleyan minister. Despite his considerable importance in the history of stained glass no archive for him has ever emerged and nothing is known of his artistic training. His involvement with Holy Trinity's stained glass is perforce, then, partly based on traditional methods of stylistic attribution. In the 1851 Census returns Heaton was recorded as living at 44 Cherry Street, Warwick, and described as an 'Artist upon Glass'. This was an unusual appellation, and might be thought to imply that he was a glass painter (the craftsman who translated the artist's design onto the glass itself), but Heaton continued to describe himself as an 'Artist on glass', and in his will refers to himself in that way. Since William Holland was the only stained glass maker in Warwick in 1851 we may be certain that Heaton was in his employ.

In 1855 Heaton founded his own firm in London, Heaton & Butler, and he was responsible for their figurative designs between 1855 and 1859. Several important examples from this

period are extant, in the churches at Hawstead, Thurston and St James, Bury St Edmunds, all in Suffolk, and Wimborne Minster, Dorset. Equally significant is the large *Entombment* in the clerestory of All Saints', Leamington Spa; signed W. Holland and dated 1849, this, too, as comparison with the designs of 1855-59 confirms, must be Heaton's work; (that is to say, he drew the full-size cartoons used in making the window). These examples enable us to identify key characteristics of Heaton's figure drawing both before and after the Holy Trinity window, and it is by comparison with these designs that I propose Heaton as the author of most, if not all, of the figure subjects in the 1850s east window at Holy Trinity.

**Benjamin Thompson Howe** (1828-1892). While Holland was probably able to rely on just one principal figure designer at this time, several craftsmen were needed to fabricate his windows. The 1851 Census return for Warwick includes two glass painters, Benjamin Howe and John Matthews. Heaton, as we shall see, left Warwick shortly after these events, but long after he had moved to London he continued to recruit craftsmen from Holland's workshop. Both Howe and Matthews became glass painters for Heaton & Butler. Howe's talents were held in high regard, and the unimpeachable skill with which the four panels are executed - the firm but sensitively varied line painting, the subtle smear shading - strongly suggest that Benjamin Howe was mainly responsible.

**Heaton, Butler and Bayne** (fl. 1855-1953). Evidently Clement Heaton had left Warwick by 1852, for in May of that year, from 80 Portland Rd, Regent's Park, he began to order raw glass from James Powell & Sons. Yet his connection with Warwick appears not to have been severed entirely; the coming of the railways had rendered it much easier for him to travel back and forth from London to Warwick, and by this date there were fast trains to Leamington. In 1855 Heaton formed a partnership with James Butler (1830-1913), who was born in Warwick and who had trained with William Holland as a fret lead glazier. Heaton & Butler enjoyed moderate early success, although it was not until Robert Turnill Bayne (1837-1915), who was born at Stoneleigh, Warwickshire, was made a partner in 1862 that the firm's business trajectory rose to see it become one of the most prolific studios in the UK. Thus the replacement in 1895 of Holland's east window at Holy Trinity by Heaton, Butler & Bayne was not without irony: Heaton's youthful essay was

removed to make way for a typical later product of the firm he had founded - albeit this was after his death and after his son, Clement John Heaton, had left the firm in dissatisfaction at what, as a pioneer of the Arts and Crafts movement, he considered their outmoded, industrialised production methods. The changes, in terms of theological impulses, between the incumbencies of Granville John Granville and George Arbuthnot would doubtless inform the question of the iconography of the two east windows.

### **The Surviving Panels**

The east window at Holy Trinity was the first new stained glass to be inserted in the church since the fifteenth century. Only fragmentary remains of the church's beautiful medieval glass had survived post-Reformation iconoclasm, a symbol of a lost inheritance that had ramifications for the reinvigoration of both religion and Gothic architecture. The new window was made by William Holland, whose workshop in Warwick was busily engaged in providing stained glass to numerous churches in the south-west Midlands, as well as further afield. The window was very large - of seven lights - and thus relatively costly. It was paid for by parishioners, and inserted piecemeal as subscriptions were forthcoming.

Holland was reported in the *Warwick Advertiser* and the *Leamington Spa Courier*, October 8<sup>th</sup> 1853, as having been 'lately engaged in the preparation of an East Chancel window' for Holy Trinity; the subjects of the first three lights to be made were described (the three central lights of the seven, with the *Crucifixion* in the top band of the central light). The main purpose of these articles was to record visits to an 'open week' at Holland's workshop, where the east window of St Gregory, Tredington, was in production; a five-light window illustrating *Parables*, this is still extant and provides an instructive comparator with Holy Trinity's coeval glass. It is difficult to ascertain exactly what 'lately engaged' signified, but if the first three lights were inserted at Holy Trinity as late as 1853 then the chronology of the window is complicated by the fact that one of the four panels under review here, the *Mocking of Christ*, is signed with Holland's monogram and clearly dated 1850. It would appear likely that the commission originated in 1850 (when the entire iconographic programme must have been drawn up), and that the three

lights were in fact either fixed in the church at that time, or at least entirely or partly completed and their insertion delayed until sufficient funds were raised in 1853. Two outer lights appear to have been added later in the 1850s, and it was not until 1859 (*Leamington Spa Courier*, 30 April 1859) that the two outstanding lights were fixed and the seven-light window completed.

The *Mocking of Christ* attracted particular attention when the panels were uncovered in 2011, and a striking image of Christ's head adorns Madeleine Hammond's guide to Holy Trinity's stained glass, published in 2012 (see pp. 26-27). This was not a common subject at the time, and the representation is clearly somewhat indebted to an engraving of Anthony van Dyck's *The Mocking of Christ* (the original painting is now in Princeton University Art Museum, USA). It is possible that by the 1890s such tortured scenes from Christ's Passion were considered less congenial by an Anglican congregation, which would account for this panel not being placed in the north transept. The architects of the church in this period, responsible for the restoration of the chancel, were Bodley & Garner; since both were eminent in stained glass, it is paradoxical that they were unable to exercise their influence on the new stained glass introduced in the 1890s: Heaton, Butler & Bayne's east window would have been anathema to them.

Clement Heaton was an accomplished colourist, and as glass makers expanded the range of colours they manufactured in the 1860s he became adept at exploiting the newly-available tints, often in unprecedented combinations. But in the four panels under review he was already breaking out of the standard repertory of flashed ruby, blue and green, introducing secondary and tertiary colours and deploying (quite sparingly) a pale yellow stain (known as 'silver stain') for the figures' hair and haloes.

The designs of the panels of the *Last Supper* and *Christ Washing the Disciples' Feet* are relatively conventional, although the groupings are formally well balanced, and eschew extravagant gestures. The inherent verticality of the lancet format in stained glass required a very different arrangement, for subjects such as the *Last Supper*, than, say, Leonardo da Vinci's famous extended landscape composition, and Heaton sensibly followed 15<sup>th</sup> century prototypes in this respect. In order to demonstrate the consummate glass-painting skills devoted to these windows one needs only to examine the panel representing

the *Sermon on the Mount*, and in particular to the passage depicting a group of followers to the upper right of Christ. Here the line painting, for example, which is assured throughout, sensitively changes to a slightly lesser depth of tone for the child in its mother's arms. In the painting of flesh throughout the panels the soft matt shading in dilute enamel paint is modulated to a finely graduated chiaroscuro; the modelling retains the glass's essential translucency by avoiding deep shadow.

The dissemination of religious art in the 1840s and 1850s has only very recently become a serious topic of research in academia, and has not yet extended into that most publicly accessible form of art - stained glass. Holy Trinity's initiative will, it is hoped, act as a spur to further study of this subject. As yet there is no primary literature regarding Clement Heaton's artistic inspirations. While Heaton's figures and compositions may have been partly indebted to A.W.N. Pugin's designs of the 1840s, they have closer affinities with those of the Nazarenes, a group founded in Germany in 1809 in dissent against contemporary Neoclassicism; in their inspiration from early Italian art they anticipated the English Pre-Raphaelites. Nazarene paintings were extremely scarce in England, however, and even in print form their work was not readily available until after 1850. Given we have no details of Heaton's training, it is plausible that he attended the Government School of Design at Somerset House, directed by the painter William Dyce from 1838 to 1843. Dyce was, in spirit, the closest British painter to the Nazarenes, and his ascetic 'Christian Art' strongly influenced his students. The mother and child in Heaton's *Sermon on the Mount*, for example, are redolent specifically of Dyce's *Madonna and Child*, c. 1827-30, now in Tate Britain.

The east window was, in accordance with the tracery it had to occupy, conceived in the Perpendicular style. William Holland was, according to *The Ecclesiologist*, 'a large contributor' (pp. 182-84) to the Great Exhibition of 1851, held in the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park. In fact he sent exhibits in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Decorated, Perpendicular and Elizabethan styles, no doubt to demonstrate his ability to supply stained glass to suit the tastes of a wide range of clients. One of two Perpendicular windows he displayed was intended for St John Baptist, Upper Shuckburgh, Warwickshire, but the catalogue does not specify the

destination of the other exhibit, raising the distinct possibility that in 1851 Holland also showed some of the panels made for Holy Trinity.

The principal concession that Holland was required to make to the Perpendicular window form was expressed in the canopy forms above each scene. The micro-architecture of the canopies in the east window was freely based on the style associated with York workshops in the first half of the fifteenth century. The *Last Supper* and *Sermon on the Mount* have retained their original canopies, and fragments of tracery lights and a substantial section of another canopy were also found behind the organ, which will facilitate their close scrutiny.

At the beginning of this report I suggested that the four panels in Holy Trinity presented abundant opportunities to explore 19<sup>th</sup> century stained glass in a variety of contexts. To expand on all of these is impracticable in the context of this report, but it is hoped that many new avenues of inquiry will be opened up by the retention and re-display of these panels, whose great historical importance has now been recognized.

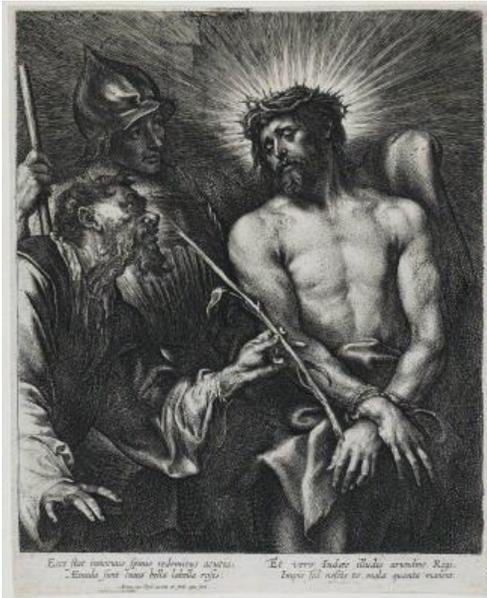
**Martin Harrison, FSA, FMGP**

October 16<sup>th</sup> 2013

My grateful thanks are due to Bob Bearman and James Edgar for their kind help with the Holy Trinity archives, to Stephen Oliver for similar help and for alerting me to the exciting rediscovery of the stained glass, and to Nick Beacham for showing me the retrieved panels in his workshop in Redditch.



William Dyce, *Madonna and Child*, c. 1827-30; Tate Britain



Anthony van Dyck (engraving after), *Mocking of Christ*, Minneapolis Institute of Arts