

Heritage & Buildings Newsletter

No. 6 - Summer 2015



From **Ian Simpson**

Heritage Officer for the Diocese of Liverpool



Cover photograph: St. Luke, Lowton. A Georgian brick church built in 1732 although the tower is a later addition of 1869 which has the effect of turning the Georgian building into a neo-Norman one, certainly from this angle. The interior has seen some modernisation, particularly in the 1960s, but it is a well-maintained building and obviously cared for. Having survived fifteen years in post as church organist in a parish church I have to congratulate St. Luke's Organist Joan Baldwin on achieving a magnificent SIXTY years in post later this year! **Above:** a fine modern stained glass window, paid for by donations, at St. Luke's.

Rear Cover: Our churchyards fulfil many functions, one of which is to provide a home for wildlife and particularly for birds which I like to photograph as I'm out and about on my visits. So, for a change and to promote the ecological and educational value of these spaces, here are three birds in churchyards: **Top**, a mistle thrush in the churchyard of St. Thomas and the Holy Rood, Melling; **Middle**, a jackdaw at St. Oswald, Winwick; **Bottom**, a blue tit in the churchyard at St. Michael's, Aughton.

If you would like any news items from your church, or an event you are organising, including in future issues of my [Heritage & Buildings Newsletter](#), please let me know. The deadline for inclusion in Issue #7 (Autumn 2015) is Thursday, August 27th.

Author's Note: this Newsletter consists entirely of my own personal thoughts, reflections and opinions from my work as Heritage Officer. It is NOT an official publication of either the Diocese of Liverpool or Historic England and is not to be taken as such. References to third party publications or websites are for information only and no liability is accepted for the content of these or for the results of any action taken in reliance upon them.

Ian Simpson MBA CBIFM, July 2015



Welcome!

Why were churches built? To glorify God and to allow people to gather and worship Him, of course.

But that isn't the whole of the answer. They were places of hospitality to travellers and pilgrims, they served as educational and administrative centres and for centuries formed the backbone of the legal system. In short, they were the hearts of their communities.

Then along came the Victorians. They built schools, courts and town halls, taking many important activities out of church hands. They built church halls so that all the community activities moved out of church buildings. This led to a situation where church buildings were locked for 164 hours out of 168 and, by separating "religion" from "secular activity", unwittingly paved the way for today's secularised society.

In 21st Century Britain, however, churches need to earn their keep. They are not cheap to maintain and yet this burden is falling upon ever-smaller congregations. Keeping them closed for most of the week is simply not an option. They need to be open, working and welcoming, back where they belong at the very centre of life in the communities they were built to serve.

The Digital Atlas Foundation keeps records by Diocese of how many Listed churches are open and when. Recent statistics (which can be seen at www.digiatlas.org) show that of the 93 (out of 117) visited in the Diocese of Liverpool, 69% were locked, 16% were open occasionally and only 10% were regularly open during the week. This puts us very close to the bottom of the national league table. Tragically it means that most of our 1.5 million people are denied the opportunity to engage with God in His house outside service times.

Keeping your church open will bring new people in, and they may become congregation members and / or donors as a result. Even if they don't, opening your church is a key and critical step towards it fulfilling its mission in the 21st Century and beyond.

As ever, if I can help you with keeping your church open or any other Heritage-related matter don't hesitate to contact me by phone (0151 705 2127) or by email ian.simpson@liverpool.anglican.org. The postal address is Diocese of Liverpool, St. James House, 20 St. James Road, Liverpool L1 7BY.



Well done to **All Saints, Liverpool**, for securing HLF funding for Edge Hill Parish Church where extensive dry rot remediation works are urgently required. The £215,000 grant also includes an amount for the repair of pathways and the creation of level access for wheel chair users.

Congratulations too to the churches which were successful in the first round of NHMF Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Grants: five churches in our Diocese were awarded a total of £423,200. These are **St. Bridget with St. Thomas, Wavertree** (£99,500); **St. Michael-in-the-Hamlet** (£97,300); **Emmanuel, Southport** (£78,300); **St. Thomas, Golborne** (£77,700) and **St. Mary, West Bank** (£70,400). Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne very generously doubled the original fund to £30 million, allowing a total of around 500 churches nationwide to benefit.

If your church wasn't successful this time, don't be disheartened as in his Budget speech in March George Osborne announced a second round of funding, worth £25m in total, for "later in the year". My understanding is that this will go ahead in November 2015 with some subtle differences to the first round - more information to follow here when I have it.

Heritage & Buildings Newsletter is going online so if you have missed some back issues (or – shame on you! – lost them) you can get them from my new website <http://www.iansimpson.eu> as free PDF downloads from 1st August. I'll carry on sending out printed copies to those who want them.

Don't forget - if you have any news you'd like to share with us, send it in to me - by email, post or Twitter (@HeritageTiger) - by August 27th!

Maintenance Training Days for 2015

The next Maintenance Training Day will be on Tuesday, October 20th at a venue yet to be confirmed in the Southport / West Lancashire area. The cost will be £15.00 per head with any "profits" going to support the work of the host church. Bookings will open at the beginning of September. There will be, as ever, a maximum of 20 places on the course.

Dates for next year have yet to be finalised, not least as they depend on my contract being renewed after June 2016!

The days start at 10.00am. We aim to finish no later than about 3.30pm and lunch is included as are printed training materials to take home and cherish.

"Keeping Your Church Open" Talk

If you are interested in keeping your church open for visitors and tourists (and if you are not, perhaps you should read page 3 again) and you want to know more about both the benefits of doing so and how to go about it properly, I have prepared an illustrated talk - I am told it is quite entertaining! - which I am happy to present to PCCs, Deanery Synods and similar organisations by arrangement.

Please email me or call me at St. James' House if you would like me to come and give this talk at your church.

Apologies for Lateness

I can only apologise for the lateness of this issue of **H&BN** due to both workload and the pressures of some other projects I've been involved with recently.

I will endeavour to get the rest of this year's issues out on time in September and December.

Burne-Jones Stained Glass in Liverpool Churches

The Pre-Raphaelite artist Edward (later Sir Edward) Burne-Jones (1833-98) is regarded as one of the most important stained glass designers of the Victorian era and his work adorns many fine churches, cathedrals and private chapels (of which Gawsworth Old Hall in Cheshire is a good example) throughout Britain and in the United States. Perhaps best known for his work in Birmingham and Oxford Cathedrals, some very good Burne-Jones glass may be found in Liverpool, including the unique set of 14 windows at All Hallows, Allerton.

The first time "Liverpool" appears in Burne-Jones' accounts¹ is in June 1865 when "a large design in 12 compartments for Liverpool" is mentioned. Unhelpfully it doesn't say which Liverpool church, and in any case it appears that the design was never translated into an actual window. It must have been a sizeable church, and close to the city centre as most of what we now regard as "suburbs" of Liverpool, such as Allerton and even Edge Hill, were separate townships or villages in the 1860s. Beyond that, we can only speculate as to either where it was intended for or why it never materialised.



Folio 30v of Burne-Jones' accounts contains the interesting entry "X. blessing brats" and the sum of £12, 0s, 0d. This refers in fact to a cartoon (as stained glass window designs are called) for glass depicting Christ Blessing the Children, part of the west window at St. John The Baptist, Tuebrook. In the same folio, and two pounds cheaper, is "Ursula" from the same window. The £22 which the artist was paid in 1868 for these two cartoons is worth £2,365 in today's money.

In 1872, Burne-Jones designed the first of two windows for St. Mary's (now All Saints Parish Church), Edge Hill. This is the "Salvator Mundi" window in the north aisle of that church depicting Christ, the Saviour of the world, in the centre light (left) with Mary and Martha either side of Him. Repairs to the wooden frame surrounding this window are included in the HLF-funded package of repairs to the church following an outbreak of dry rot.

¹ Schoenherr, Douglas E., "Edward Burne-Jones's Account Books with Morris & Company (1861-1900): an annotated edition, *The Journal of Stained Glass* – Vol. XXXV (2011)

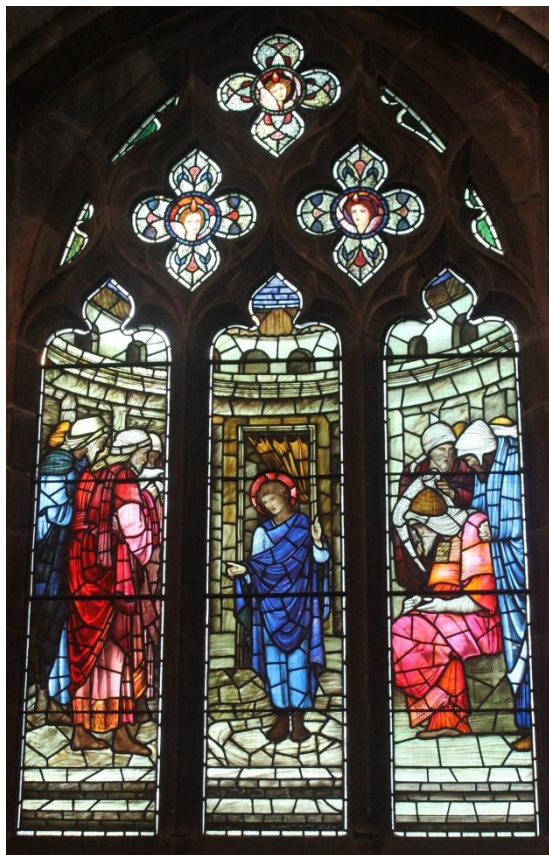
It has been suggested² that Burne-Jones' account books are the "funniest account books in the history of book-keeping" due to his habit of writing sarcastic comments about certain clients or about the alleged stinginess of his employer (the great William Morris in whose firm Burne-Jones was a partner). In August 1872, he was moved to write "Absalom – a perfect type and ensample of what design should be – in the annals of ill-paid genius what withering homily may not this page afford!" in reference to the £12 he was paid for the design of the Absalom window at St. John The Evangelist, Knotty Ash. Bear in mind that this sum is over £1,000 today and was paid for just one cartoon from the 34 he produced during the year.



A section of the "Middle Period" Burne-Jones E. window at All Hallows, Allerton.

² *Ibid.*, p.79

In October 1874, Burne-Jones produced "Paradise", the first of fourteen windows for the church of All Hallows, Allerton. These windows were to be designed and executed over a period of twelve years and it is possible to trace the development of Burne-Jones' style over that timescale. The east window, plus those in the transepts and west end, are from his "Middle Period" whilst the eight three-light aisle windows are all from his "Late Period" as evidenced by the bold use of strong blues and pinks and the refusal to be constrained by the vertical lines of the stone mullions. A very good example is "Christ Disputing with Doctors" (right, from 1886) in which the three lights form one coherent scene with a common background.



Burne-Jones was particularly pleased with this window, describing it as a "masterly conception" (who said self-praise was no praise?) and indeed he was well paid for it: the sum of £60, the 2015 equivalent of which would buy you a decent secondhand car!

The windows at Allerton had a lucky escape in World War II. They were taken out of the church and removed to a farm in Yorkshire for safe storage. Temporary glass was installed in their stead – and two weeks after this was done a bomb blast blew it all out. What would have been a catastrophic loss was prevented by the foresight of the church, something for which we must all give thanks.

Alas, nearby Mossley Hill church was not so fortunate, and among the treasures lost in August 1940 when it became the first church to be hit in an enemy bombing raid was a Burne-Jones window depicting St. Joseph.

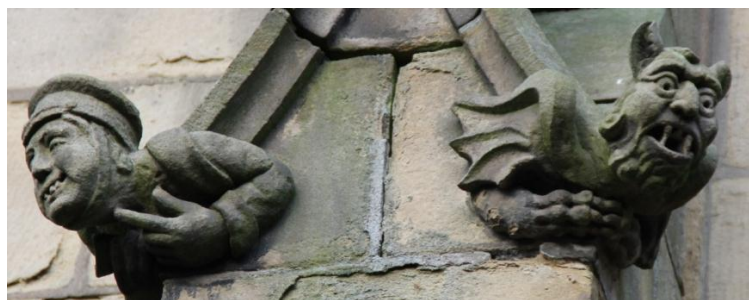
During the period in which he was designing windows for Allerton, Burne-Jones also designed a further aisle window for St. Mary, Edge Hill, and the West window at St. Stephen, Gateacre. The Edge Hill window depicts St. Nathaniel in one light (designed specially for the church in 1879) but the light depicting St. Timothy re-uses a design created for Oxford Cathedral some eight years previously.

St. Stephen's Church in Gateacre is rightly very proud of its West window, for which Burne-Jones designed scenes of Christ blessing children (no "brats" here!) and of Seraphim, and has made this the centrepiece of an HLF-funded history and interpretation project.

St. Stephen's is one of several churches with Burne-Jones windows which is hosting Heritage Open Day events – see the next article for details.

In February next year I will be speaking at a major public event – details to follow! – on the subject of stained glass windows, how to care for them and some problems to look out for. In the meantime if you need any advice on this subject, or about any other conservation or repair issues, please do not hesitate to contact me and I'll be happy to assist you in any way I can.

Just For Fun!



The grotesques featured in [H&BN No. 5](#) are among several working hard to frighten evil spirits away from All Saints, Wigan – well done if you got that, but (as ever) no prizes! There's more on grotesques and gargoyles in [H&BN No. 7](#)....

Heritage Open Days 2015

This year's Heritage Open Days will be held from Thursday, 10th September to Sunday 13th and many thousands of volunteers will be giving their time to open up buildings to the public, show people around them and bring their stories to life. This is a Europe-wide event and as such is probably the world's largest organised heritage event. At the time of writing (July 24th), the following churches within the Diocese of Liverpool are confirmed as hosting HOD events:

Location	Church	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
Abram	St. John the Evangelist			X	
Allerton	All Hallows	X	X	X	X
Crossens	St. John		X	X	
Gateacre	St. Stephen			X	
Hale	St. Mary			X	
Knotty Ash	St. John The Evangelist			X	
Lathom	Lathom Park Chapel			X	X
Parr	St. Peter		X	X	X
Penny Lane	St. Barnabas			X	X
Prescot	St. Mary		X	X	X
Southport	St. Cuthbert	X	X	X	X
St. Helens	St. Helen			X	
Toxteth	St. Clement			X	X
Toxteth Park	Christ Church	X	X	X	X
Toxteth Park	St. Agnes & St. Pancras	X	X	X	
Tuebrook	St. John The Baptist			X	X
Wavertree	St. Mary				X

More may declare themselves: there is still time to register (until August 1st) and indeed I would urge as many churches as possible to consider doing so. Let me know if your church registers or is thinking of doing so and I'll support you in any way I can.

The website for registering – and for checking the exact times of opening of the churches listed above – is <http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk> .



Hosting Heritage Open Days this year are:
 (top) Lathom Park Chapel, (right) St. Clement,
 Toxteth and (bottom) St. Peter, Parr. These
 fascinating churches are all well worth a
 visit so why not take this opportunity?

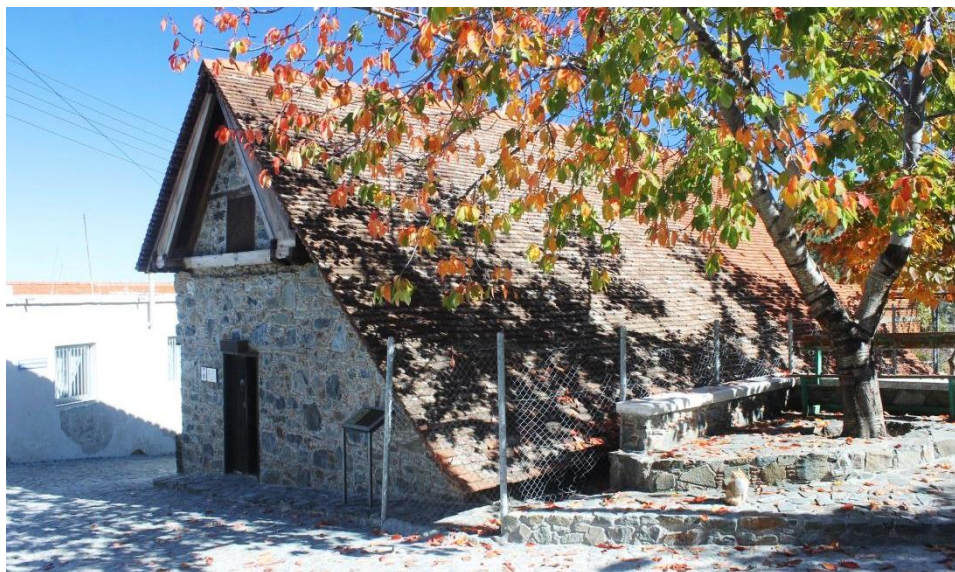


Archangelos Mihail and the Troodos Painted Churches

The sixth church we visit on our tour of Europe's Best Churches is about as different as it possibly could be from the fifth. Unlike the monolithic Sagrada Família at the heart of the sprawling metropolis of Barcelona, the subject of this article is a tiny church in a village of maybe 900 souls over a kilometre above sea level in the Troodos Mountains of central Cyprus. But Archangelos Mihail in Pedoulas was also built to glorify God, and just like its much larger Catalan sister, it has been listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.

The ten Painted Churches (of which one is actually a monastery) on the UNESCO List in the Troodos date from the 11th to the 15th Centuries. Archangelos Mihail is the newest; unusually for this region, the church contains an inscription which both dates it - to 1474 - and names the Priest whose donation funded it. He was Vasilios Chamados who is depicted with his wife and daughters offering a model of the church to the Archangel Michael.

The late 15th Century was not a good time for Cyprus and indeed this was one of the last churches to be built before the island was sold to the Venetians in 1489.



Exterior view of Archangelos Mihail Church.

The first immediately obvious feature of the building is its steeply-sloping roof which comes down almost to ground level on the liturgical south side. This is common among the ancient churches in the Troodos as – although this is hard to believe if you visit in the summer – it can snow very heavily here in winter. The small door and minimal fenestration are also typical of the region, keeping out the harsh light of summer and the bitter cold of winter.

The structure of the church is quite simple. It is single-aisled with an L-shaped narthex to the south and west sides. This narthex was the only part of the church in which women were allowed; only men were permitted to enter the nave.

The small door has a sign on it prohibiting photography - this is pretty much standard for Greek Orthodox churches - but the three UNESCO chaps who were there when I visited didn't seem to mind me taking a few photographs of the wonderful frescoes inside. They were taking plenty of photos themselves!

It has to be said that the wall paintings are not all in very good condition though Archangelos Mihail has avoided the worst of the vandalism suffered by other Painted Churches during the Ottoman occupation. The rather incompetent "restoration" work which I noted in the Panagia church at nearby Moutoullas thankfully has not (yet) been visited upon this church either.

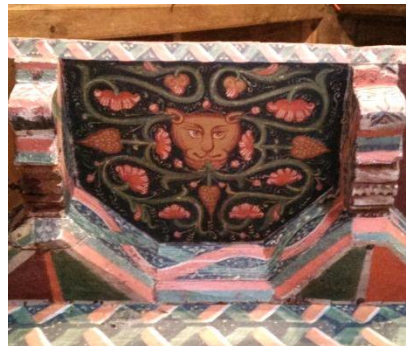


Typical condition of the wall paintings at Archangelos Mihail.



The name of the artist responsible for the wall paintings is also recorded, again somewhat unusually. His name was Minas of Marathasa. Obviously a local man (Marathasa is the name of the valley in which Pedoulas is situated), Minas' work exhibits much more "western" (i.e. Venetian) influence than that of earlier generations of church painters, a sure sign of the changing and turbulent political situation of the time.

A further unusual feature to be found in Archangelos Mihail, which I did not see in any of the other Troodos churches, is the rather "pagan"-looking figure on the templon (the wooden screen separating the nave from the sanctuary), which rather put me in mind of the "Green Men" to be found in some Derbyshire churches.



Of the ten Painted Churches of Troodos, Archangelos Mihail is undoubtedly one of the best-preserved and easiest to find. Some, such as Panagia Tou Moutoulla, are only accessible via narrow winding tracks which call for some driving skill (or a good pair of walking boots) to negotiate safely. All are worth visiting though.

At Pelendri, a few miles from Pedoulas on the road towards Limassol, the church of Timios Stavros holds a Relic of the True Cross (the English translation of the church's dedication is "Holy Cross"). This church is guarded by a delightful elderly gentleman who lives close by and who is happy to show visitors the Relic.



The Iconostasis at Timios Stavros Church, Pelendri.

Opposite Archangelos Mihail Church in Pedoulas is the small but excellent Byzantine Museum which contains a fascinating collection of artefacts – Icons, paintings, crosses and the like – retrieved from churches which haven't been so fortunate in withstanding the ravages of time, such as the Church of the Holy Cross in Pedoulas which was lost to fire in the 1950s.

Cyprus is a beautiful country with a fascinating – though often tragic – history and visitors are guaranteed a warm welcome, especially in villages such as Pedoulas. I would definitely recommend it as a destination.

In **H&BN #7** (Autumn 2015) we will be visiting Onze Lieve Vrouw Kerk in Dordrecht, the Netherlands' oldest city.

