

Norwich Historic Churches Trust Press Release – 23rd June 2021

Norwich Historic Churches Trust to Unveil Newly Restored Victorian Stained Glass Window

The Norwich Historic Churches Trust (NHCT) are nearing the completion of a project to conserve the east window in the former church of St Peter Parmentergate on King Street.

The window is a stunning example of Victorian design, installed in June 1861 by Joseph Underwood, 'in memory of his departed wife and children' and commissioned from Alexander Gibbs & Co, a firm that operated from 1858 to 1915.

The restored window will be revealed when scaffolding is removed on Friday 2nd July.



St Peter Parmentergate is one of 18, Grade I listed, medieval churches cared for by NHCT and which are no longer used for religious worship. The main church is currently empty, but operated as a martial arts training centre for a number of years.

Unfortunately, the glass and stone tracery had become loose and this impressive window was at risk of falling out if conservation was not carried out. NHCT worked with Forkes Stained Glass Ltd. Over a number of months, the glass was painstakingly removed, conserved and reassembled in the workshop before stone repairs were made and the glass was reset.

The project cost in the region of £25,000 and is a part of NHCT's ongoing work to preserve these important buildings for future generations. They are a part of Norwich's cultural heritage and historic cityscape.

The project was a rare opportunity to get close to the historic stained glass. It has been carefully cleaned and is once again shining in bright colours.

Mark Wilson, NHCT's Conservation Manager said:

"This project has been a fantastic chance to work closely with some beautiful stained glass and to really appreciate the artistry and craftsmanship. It was an important reminder of the many art-historical treasures that survive in Norwich's medieval churches and how important it is that they continue to be cared for.

We hope to have a new tenant in the church soon which means that it will be open to visitors more often.

Thank you to Neil Forkes of Forkes Stained Glass Ltd for a fantastic job done."

About the church and window

- St Peter Parmentergate was originally founded in the Anglo-Saxon period. Much of the fabric dates from the late 1400 – early 1500s when it was rebuilt. It was extensively restored in the 1860s.
- Joseph Underwood commissioned the window which was installed in 1861. He lived on St Faith's Lane which was in the parish of St Peter Parmentergate. The window contains inscriptions to his wife Emily Hills (d.1836), their daughter Fanny Isabella (d.1849) and their son, Joseph Hills (d.1860).
- The window includes the arms of the Underwood and Hills families who ran a significant Norwich firm which made both vinegar and gin. The business was established in 1762 and by 1865 occupied a 1.16 hectares premises on St Faith's Lane – more or less where Grosvenor House stands on Prince of Wales Road today.
- The window was designed by Alexander Gibbs & Co, a London-based firm whose other work includes the west window at St Mary Magdalene, Taunton, and at All Saints, Margaret Street, London. Gibbs collaborated closely with architect William Butterfield.
- The main sections of the window each have a figure above a scene from the life of Christ (St Peter with keys and the Nativity; Christ as the good Shepherd; Christ carrying the cross; St Paul with the sword and the Ascension). Above them is a repeating pattern of angels with scrolls.
- The window stands above other important surviving features in the chancel including the impressive, almost life-sized Berney-Hobart monument of 1623 which depicts the couple reclining.

NHCT is a registered charity which maintains 18 Grade 1 listed medieval churches in Norwich that are no longer used for religious worship. NHCT has worked hard to find new uses for the churches in its care including providing accommodation for many of Norwich's most vibrant cultural organisations.

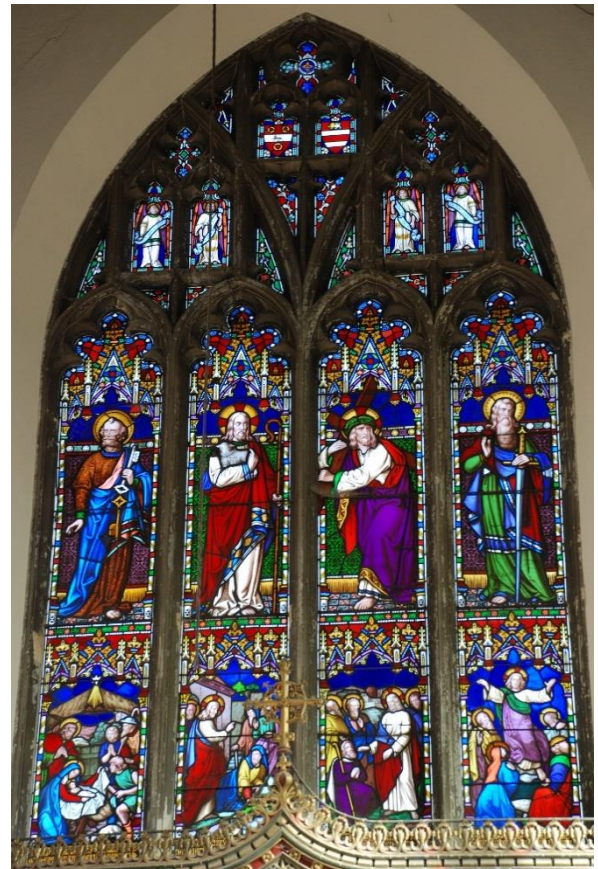
For more information or photographs, contact info@norwich-churches.org | 01603 611530



Neil Forkes delivers a section of stained glass



Section of window during installation



Window prior to conservation