

OBITUARY

DENNIS GEORGE KING, M.B.E., F.S.A., Hon. M.A.

15th May 1912-5th March 1995

President 1974-1976, Vice President 1977-1995

Dennis King was educated at the King Edward VI School, Norwich, and when he left at the age of fifteen he joined his father, George King, in starting the family ecclesiastical lead-glazing workshop of G.King and Son, Ltd. in 1927. He was later joined by his younger brother, Alec., and his elder son, Michael. Dennis led the workshop for the rest of his life, only retiring from active work in the last few months of his life. During this long period, he acquired a vast and comprehensive knowledge of English stained glass which enabled the firm to become the leading establishment in the country for the restoration of medieval and later glass.

His interest in the Middle Ages and matters antiquarian, which included a wide knowledge of heraldry, was encouraged by his collaboration with Revd. Christopher Woodforde, the first of many academics to take advantage of his detailed insights into the often very fragmentary collections of glass which passed through the workshop to emerge in a much more pristine and ordered condition. Hundreds of churches in East Anglia benefited from his intervention, including Long Melford, in Suffolk, and St Peter Mancroft, whose glorious east window he removed during an air-raid in 1940. He also did work for buildings all over the country, especially the colleges of Cambridge and Oxford. His best known restoration was that of the former east window of Winchester College Chapel, where with the help of John Harvey he brought together the dispersed panels of Thomas of Oxford's Tree of Jesse which had been discarded by 19th-century restorers because much of the glass was opaque with corrosion. Dennis's pragmatic approach to problems of restoration led him to develop a new technique of abrading the exterior surface of the glass to restore its transparency, and the result was the window now to be seen in a west window of the Chapel.

Dennis's range of friends and acquaintances was very wide, and included many in the field of conservation and art-history. He also acted as consultant to several bodies, including the York Minster and Canterbury Cathedral glaziers, and was a member of the technical committee of the *Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi*, in which capacity he came to be widely known and respected on the continent and in the U.S.A.. In addition, many students of stained glass came to the workshop over the years to ask for help and advice, and Dennis was always generous in his response to such requests.

He had little time for writing, publishing only a handful of short articles on various restorations which he had directed, and much of his vast knowledge is now sadly lost to us, despite his generosity in sharing what he knew. Recognition of the very special place which he made for himself in the life of this country and of the contribution which he made to it came in the form of election to the Society of Antiquaries in 1959, and the award of the M.B.E. in 1979 and an Honorary M.A. at the University of East Anglia in 1994.

D.J.K.