

EAST WINDOW—TWYXCROSS CHURCH

OLD GLASS IN TWYCROSS CHURCH

BY ALBERT HERBERT, F.R.I.B.A., F.S.A.

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THE rector of Twycross very laudably decided in September last to take steps to protect the ancient glass in the east window of his church from risk of enemy air raid damage. Acting upon the advice of your Secretary, Mr. S. H. Skillington, whom he first consulted, and later of Mr. Albert Herbert, a firm was called in to carefully remove the painted glass lights, put them into wooden cases and to deposit them in the basement of the isolated rectory which lies some little distance away across the fields to the north west. The vacant lights were then filled in with plain clear sheet glass of diamond-shaped pattern.

An excellent opportunity has been afforded for thoroughly examining the glass and taking notes of the excellent drawing of the brown paint—drawing worthy of a de Honnecourt, as will be seen from the accompanying illustrations. Despite the 700 years of its existence and the inevitable patina, the colouring has remained strikingly clear and one's curiosity is excited concerning the provenance of this precious piece of ecclesiastical embellishment.

The glass is of a high standard of excellence and may be dated *circa* 1225. I have no knowledge of any similar French glass of this early date in the county or indeed the midlands.

The shape of the panels of the ancient glass now set in the three-light window suggests that the glass was designed originally for long lancet lights, some two feet wide, between mullions.

To accommodate the panels to the present east window, strips and borders of commonplace modern glass of most unfortunate colours and design have been added.

On first entering the church one is easily misled, for the general appearance has been greatly cheapened by the inappropriate manner in which the precious glass has been set.

Below the springing line, there are three rectangular panels in each of the side lights and three similar panels in the centre light; but in this central light the uppermost panel has a semi-circular head.

The centre light contains the most interesting subjects—the middle panel portrays the “descent” from the cross. The subject of the bottom panel would appear to be taken from the *Book of Numbers*, ch. 13. v. 23—“And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff”.

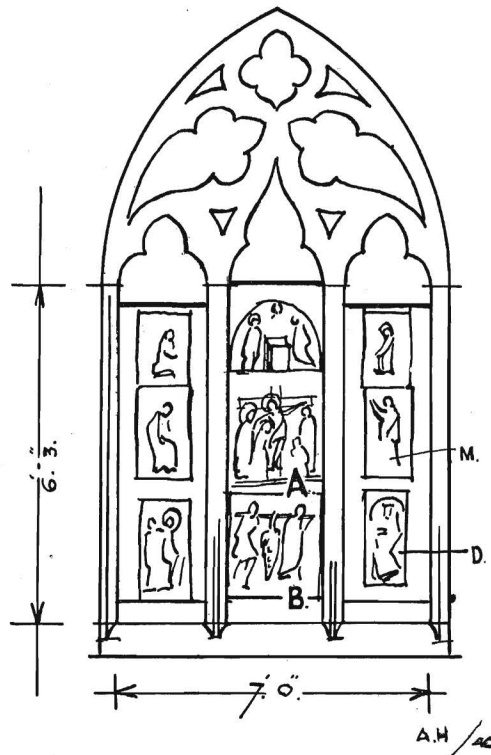
The southern light contains a panel shewing Moses bearing the tablets and below a King David.

The upper portions in the traceried head of the window, above the springing line, are a medley of 13th-century glass combined with fragments of glass of later dates—leaded together with no due respect for design.

In connection with the temporary removal of these relics of old days, one calls to mind the words incised on a one-time rector’s headstone* now in the chancel of Loughborough Parish church.

MALIS TEMPORIBUS EJECTUS, MELIORIBUS
 RESTITUTUS,
 HIC TANDEM REQUIESCIT MELIOREM EXPECTANS
 RESURRECTIONEM.

The excellent photograph illustrating this note was taken by our member, Mrs. S. H. Skillington.



*Nicholas Hall—obit 12 May, 1669.



A.



B.

Ch. of S James Wycross,
DIO. LEICESTER

LEAD CAMES
PURPOSELY OMITTED.

SKETCHES BY ALBERT HERBERT,
1940.