

## A PEEK THROUGH THE WINDOW - NO. 21

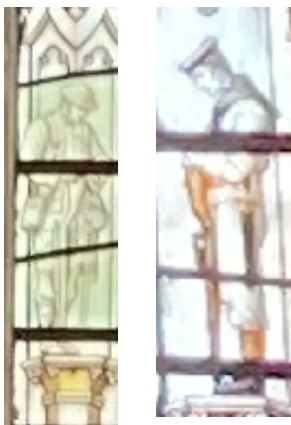
**M**IKE DEEMING WRITES:

Many war memorials feature a sculpture or carving of a soldier 'resting on arms reversed' as a mark of respect for those who have lost their lives. This photo is of the superb memorial in Iwerne Minster, Dorset, which was designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, grandson of Sir (George) Gilbert Scott who had carried out the Cathedral's major restoration in the 1870's. It was dedicated in 1920 by the Bishop of Salisbury. The memorial has a triangular cross-section and is designed to look like a medieval cross, occupying a spot which may well have had a cross in the Middle Ages.



The origin of the tradition of resting on arms reversed is lost in time. It was used by a Commonwealth soldier at the execution of Charles I in 1649 (the soldier was duly punished for his symbolic gesture towards the King's death) and it is recorded being used at the funeral for the Duke of Marlborough in 1722. Most recently it was carried out by military personnel at the funeral of HRH Prince Philip in Windsor Castle. Nowadays it is rarely seen in the UK, but is still common elsewhere in the Commonwealth, notably in Australia and Canada.

The depiction of this show of respect is seldom seen in stained glass windows, and these images from the memorial window in the St Laurence Chapel in the south transept of the Cathedral are two of very few in England.



Commissioned in 1924 from Clayton and Bell, the windows on the east walls of the St Laurence and St Michael Chapels show figures of saints and heroes, together with shields of diocesan towns, commemorating the men of the diocese who died in the First World War. Clayton and Bell were one of the major Victorian Gothic Revival glass makers and designed numerous windows in the Cathedral.

By 1920, Reginald Bell was the third generation of Bell's in charge of the family company and it was he who designed the extraordinary Victory window on the south wall of the St Michael Chapel. His style has moved on vastly from his grandfather's mastery of Gothic Revival exemplified by the narrative windows on the north and south sides of the Trinity Chapel. Now the primary Gothic colours of red and blue still assert themselves, and there is extensive silver staining, but much more white glass to admit more light and contrast with the vibrant colours. An article in 'The Studio' magazine of April 1923 summarised it well – 'His Victory window – one of the finest painted in England in the past four hundred years – would still be a dignified thing, would still tell its story, if every painted line and shadow upon it could be removed..... The lead-lines would still



preserve its composition... in the Triumph light (right) with soaring lines like flames outlining the wings of the adoring Cherubim beneath the rainbow on which the Christ is throned.'

It was at this time too that the Jesse tree window was being re-created by Mary Lowndes in the south nave aisle, with the three 'mandorla'– or 'vesica'-shaped images above one another, with Christ in majesty at the top, the Virgin Mary with the infant Christ in the centre, and the missing mandorla of Jesse below. Although the symbols are different and the mandorla more muted, Bell's Triumph image clearly reflects this medieval design.