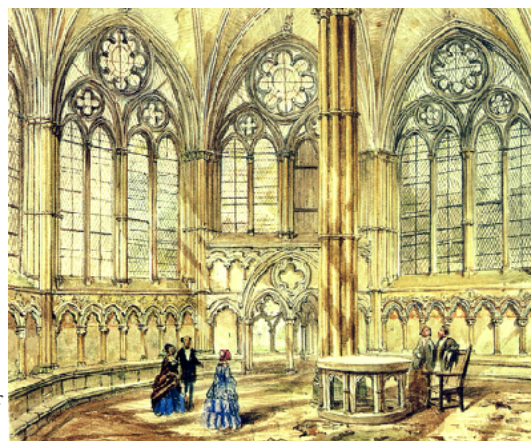
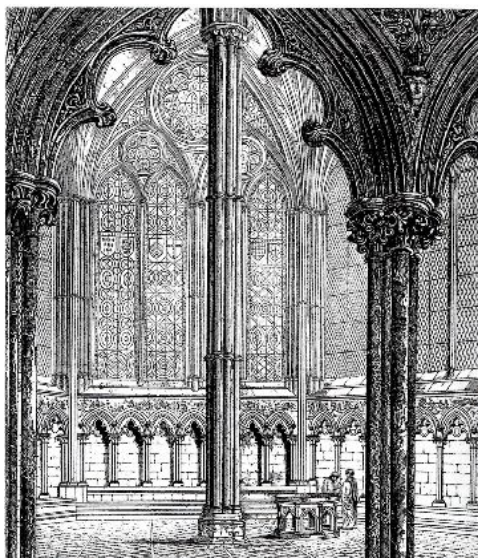


A PEEK THROUGH THE WINDOW - NO. 36

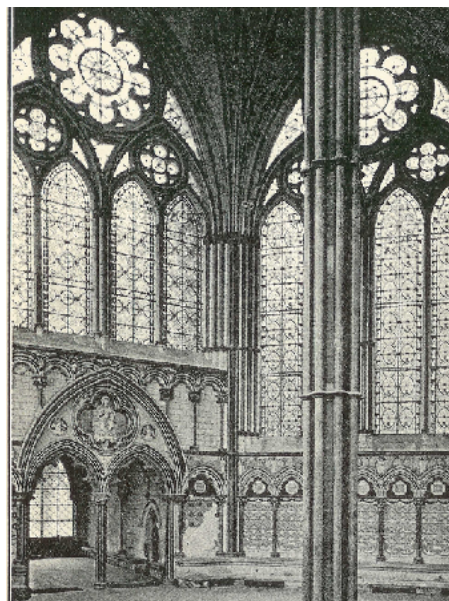
MIKE DEEMING WRITES:

The Cathedral is home to an art gallery of stained glass. Like most galleries, the 'pictures' can be moved around, both because fashions change and for repair and conservation. Some Cathedral windows – especially at the east and west ends – have been changed on numerous occasions. The marvellous uniformity of architecture also means that relocation of windows is relatively straightforward.

But the area that has 'suffered' most from this flexibility is the Chapter House. The windows here had the good fortune to be spared the Wyatt 'redevelopment' of 1790, but were then cannibalised for Beare's 'restoration' in 1820. It's worth tracking the history of the Chapter House windows for the evidence of past pictures, some illustrated here. In 1814 (top), the east window is glazed with patterned glass but featuring the medieval coats of arms, that were re-located to the Cathedral's west window in 1820. By 1852 (middle) all the glass was plain and indeed the whole chapter house was pretty dilapidated. By 1898 (below) patterned grisaille glass had been installed throughout (including above the entrance porch) – the glass was commissioned from Ward and Hughes in 1860, as part of the Chapter House restoration, and is a copy of the original. Numerous local donations had been sought and so the windows are dedicated to individuals, mainly relatives of Bishops Hamilton and Denison.



The whole thing went pear-shaped in 1967, when a campaign, led by Canon Treasurer Dawson, sought to have all the glass replaced with clear glass, as this was deemed by him to be more appropriate for what was essentially an administrative building. The saga that ensued with questions in parliament, letters to the papers, and personal vendettas was expertly covered in a 2012 paper entitled 'God's bright sunshine, or a claustrophobic gloom', by the late Keith Blake, one of our guides[1]. Suffice it to say that clear glass was installed in the west and south west windows before the programme came to a full stop. One problem was that the southwest window had been funded by a guinea subscription from groups of ladies interested in the restoration. The outcome of all this was that new glass was commissioned for the east window, including the nurses' badges, and a tribute to farmers (funded by the NFU), both groups not having featured in the WWII memorial window in the north nave aisle. The opportunity was taken too to install above each window a copy of the medieval King and Bishop roundel which had been relocated to the south nave aisle. To get



some balance of the grisaille patterns, a couple of windows were swapped, and Bishop Denison's commemoration was moved to the northwest. This sketch diagram shows how these movements worked!

The 1967 dispute was one factor that led to the introduction of the Care of Cathedrals Measure 1990, and hopefully, with this measure in place, this sort of window re-dressing won't happen again!

[1] A copy of Keith's paper can be found on the Jot and Tittle website