

EVERY WINDOW TELLS A STORY

Stained Glass in our Churches

No 6 East Window, St John's, Horrbridge



The East window is dedicated to John Chichester of Grenofen House, Whitchurch. John was born at Grenofen on 18th January 1870 and lived there all his life. He was one of 8 siblings of William Henry & Harriet Elizabeth Chichester. He matriculated at Exeter College, Oxford in 1889 after which he became a gentleman of leisure living on private means. He collected stuffed birds which he willed to Plymouth Museum along with two vases and three plates of Famille Verte. He was an accomplished organist and played for many years at Horrbridge. In 1915 he was invited to play the opening service for the new organ at Halwill Parish Church. He was a member of the Horrbridge Tennis & Social Club and a great benefactor to the poor. He died, aged 62 years, on 11th December 1932 in Tavistock Hospital.



His funeral was held in Horrbridge where a number of sympathizers failed to get in as the church was fully packed. The road was lined by many spectators including children from the village school who gathered to pay their respects as the cortège passed by. The service was conducted by the rector, Rev B Jones, aided by Rev C Sirant (Buckland Monachorum) and Rev H M Harvey (Yelverton). The organ was played by his great friend Mr J Hele (of Hele's organs in Plymouth). He was buried in Horrbridge graveyard. He left just over £24,000 (about £1,780,000 today) which was to be distributed amongst family and friends. He also left £200 to the vicar and churchwardens for keeping the Horrbridge organ in good repair and £100 to Tavistock Hospital.



It was not until 1939 that his family and friends finally arranged for a window to be dedicated to him. The service was conducted by the Bishop of Exeter, Dr C E Curzon, aided by the Rev B Jones who had been vicar of St John's for 42 years. The Bishop thought the window was a worthy addition to the building, and proved what affection the people of the parish had for their church. The window cost £325 (about £23,000 today) and was beautifully executed. The centre light shows the Virgin and Holy Child, with a dove above representing the Holy Spirit while below her is a lily and at the bottom a crown of thorns, symbolizing Christ's sacrifice.



At the left of the window is the figure of St Peter, resplendent with key. Above him are the arms of Exeter Diocese as Exeter Cathedral is dedicated to St Peter.

The next light shows St John the Baptist, patron Saint of the church. The lamb that he is holding symbolises his recognition of Jesus as the Son of God. When John baptised Jesus in the river Jordan he said 'Behold the Lamb of God' (John 1: 36).



On the right is the figure of St Cecilia patron saint of music and musicians no doubt representing John Chichester's love of music and his organ playing in the church.



At the far right are the arms of the King's Free Chapel of St George, Windsor, with the figure of St George - the Dean and canons of Windsor are patrons of the living. The four outer lights also have angels, two of whom

are swinging incense and two playing musical instruments.



The top lights contain Christograms including IHS, a crown and a Chi-Rho. In Greek capitals, the abbreviations *IHS* denoting the first three letters of the Greek name of Jesus, *ΙΗΣΟΥΣ*, *iota-eta-sigma*, or *ΙΗΣ*. The Chi-Rho (☩) which consists of superimposed Greek letters chi (X) and rho (P), are the first two letters of Greek word *ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ* meaning Christ.

The stained glass was designed and executed by Gerald Edward R Smith (pictured right). A Dorset man, he was educated at Chester Arts School and later, as a pupil of Edward Frampton. In 1906 he joined the firm of A K Nicholson, eventually becoming a partner, and succeeded Nicholson, on his death, in 1937. He was an early member of the British Society of Master Glass Painters, and was their chairman from 1958 to 1959 when he died.

