

## What's hidden in the stained glass



In 1919, the grieving Stuart family finally saw the magnificent memorialisation for their sons in the form of Graylingwell Chapel's eastern stained glass windows. In following years, the remaining windows were replaced with similar commemorative art dedicated to the individuals and sacrifices of the hospital and its staff. The companies of Heaton, Butler & Bayne and Jones & Willis created these stunning works, keeping an attentive eye on the details portrayed in each panel; with what must have been a remarkable understanding not only of the brothers and relative personalities, but of the symbols, icons, and history fused into each stained glass, these artists created not just memorials, but immortalised scenes.

The left panel on the main window is Lieutenant Walter Stuart, the son memorialised by his military service having served for the British in the Boer War until his passing in action in 1900. He is sat, serene in his command, looking beyond the viewer as if deep in thought; it is clear in the symbols in his pane that he was regarded as the soldier son in the Stuart family. The eye is immediately drawn to the sword held just beyond the centre of of the pane, reminiscent of a 15th century longsword by its characteristic hilt designed to be held with two hands - with its prevalence being the period between c.1100 to c.1500, the longsword brings together the eras of medieval chivalric nobility and renaissance military intellectualism. The close-helmet sat in front of Walter's body continues this theme of long standing military tradition, as does the plate armour protecting his feet. The sword being pointed down and the helmet closed signifies that a struggle or a fight is at its end; Walter's window was both a

commemoration of his death in action and contextualised by the end of the First World War. To his right is a large circular shield, likely taken from ancient Greek aspis shields often depicted in imagery of Greek wars against Sparta. This seems to place Walter amongst the heritage of ancient warriors both as a means of exemplifying Walter's place in the British military and as a familial source of longstanding pride. The icons of the ancient world are extended with the lion skin cloak worn on Walter's head and trailing to his feet. This is a symbol of Heracles in ancient Greek and Roman mythology who, as punishment for killing his wife, was tasked with 12 Labors, the first being killing the Nemean Lion. The animal terrorised the village of Nemea and was invulnerable to anything piercing its skin; Heracles strangled it with sheer strength. It has become a symbol of warriorship, overcoming challenge, and strength, sometimes depicted in imagery of Alexander the Great. Walter is sat on rocky, barren ground yet over his left shoulder grows a tree, simply understood as life growing from desolation, as existence prevailing through the unimaginable hardships of war. The flora continues through the helmet he holds, a continued icon of the tree or perhaps a personal symbol that despite the man who once wore it is no longer on this plane, life continues on.

To the right of the main window is the pane depicting Captain Charles Stuart who died in 1917: the academic and classical historian, a student and lecturer of Cambridge University, and captain of the Suffolk regiment. The most immediate element of Charles' pane is how warm it is compared to his brothers'; the red fabric background demands attention first and foremost before the eye can wander to the more detailed elements. Its symbolism could be explained through multiple routes, the first being that Charles' pane offers a significant effort to portraying his life as a scholar, thus the red background (with its strong emotional associations) returns the emphasis to his military career. A second approach encompasses the family as a whole as red appears as a distinctive feature in all three windows, possibly symbolising the familial blood that binds them or that spilled to cause their untimely passings. Thirdly, and rather logically, it could simply be the creative hand of Heaton, Butler & Bayne who's portfolio of wonderfully detailed stained glass all contain a considerable variety of colours of which red is simply most vivid - if this is the case, however, it is highly likely that the symbols and emotions of aforementioned interpretations were considered within the creation of the windows.

Charles sits, rather regally, between pillars and on a stool of stone carved in the likeness of the ancient Greek ionic order (one of the three principal orders of classic architecture) almost bracketing his expertise on the classical world. In his left hand is a golden sceptre, often an icon of imperial rule used by monarchs and emperors yet also one wielded, in the Greco-Roman period, by judges and religious elders. This can easily be a motif of Charles' scholarly intellect through the symbols of rank and respect as he earned his place in Cambridge University through a scholarship, meriting his later employment as a lecturer. Winding around the sceptre is a green snake featured as a symbol of wisdom and cunning (much like its similar feature on Elizabeth I's Rainbow Portraits). In his right hand sits a book, bound and gilded with intense detail, held with reverence almost as if showing the cover to the viewer. It is unclear the title as words were left intentionally absent but allows the viewer to interpret it how the visual invites them: it could as easily be a historic publication as it could a bible. Charles is clothed in what appears to be an interpretation of the ancient Greek style of draped cloth dress consisting of a tunic and cloak; the fabric is a rich blue contrasted to a clean white, symbolising calmness and dependability, and purity and innocence respectively. In such blinding contrast to the red background, these colours

articulate a depth to Charles' character that suggests peacekeeping and serenity. The dichotomy of his life is further expressed in the black and white tile he rests on. It is the epitomised representation of human contrast, with Charles' being between war and peace, conflict and research, the soldier and the scholar.

In the high centre is the indisputable icon of Jesus Christ, yet he is framed in the panel that memorialises Arthur Stuart, Senior Medical Officer (SMO) at Graylingwell Hospital from 1907 to 1915. It appears that his representation as Christ is a design choice by the Heaton, Butler & Bayne company, perhaps as a means to represent the visual of Jesus above the altar piece, perhaps simply to memorialise a man so dedicated to the care of his patients in his time as the SMO that his memory lays in the utmost healer of Christianity. His gaze looks out directly to the viewer, with body and palms turned forward, it is an arresting sight that Jesus in this window focusses his full attention on whoever turns to him. Around his halo attends six angels and beneath and surrounding him across all three panes are people in awe; some stand in reverence, some collapse towards each other. It is a scene evocative of the baroque art style of the European renaissance - striking lights and shadows, dramatic scenes, diagonal compositions of characters that create dynamic movement, and rich colours. It is clear that Arthur's memorial transcends just his memory and represents the essence of faith. The imagery is incredibly emotive and encapsulates the heart of the Chapel as a Christian place of worship, the hospital as an institution for care, and Arthur as an individual crucial in the wellness of his patients.

The principle of embodying the task of care in the symbol of Christ was continued into the window memorialising Harold Kidd on the wall north of the altar. As Graylingwell Hospital's first Medical Superintendent, Kidd exists almost as the emblem of care in the institution's early days and as such has earned a stained glass memorialising his efforts. This window was constructed by Jones and Willis and appears to draw inspiration from the Stuarts' stained glass, continuing the imagery that those who worked at the hospital fulfilled the divine endeavours to heal represented by Christ himself. Kidd's window depicts the risen Christ with pierced palms and the crown of thorns adorning his brow - he is looking downward (though his body is turned towards the altar) as if in contemplation. The bushes in the foreground easily symbolise life and growth (as it does in Walter's window) whilst the vibrant background suggests the sun is setting; it is a wonderful contrast in the context of Kidd's memorial, being his incredible impact on the lives of his patients and the end of his own.

Turn to the right of the altar and the window memorialising the fallen soldiers of the hospital during the First World War. Of 38 male members of staff who signed up in 1914, 23 returned to Graylingwell, two left, four are assumed to have left, and nine died - these men are remembered here. The stained glass utilises Arthurian symbolism - the height of medieval chivalric conduct - to memorialise the fallen soldiers, reinforcing the values of service, sacrifice, loyalty, and the pursuit of good over all else. He wears armour reminiscent of 15th century complete plate armour and has with him a longsword of the same period; in much the same way as Walter Stuart's warrior iconography, this soldier is shown as the legendary medieval knight, thus, emotively, the men he represents were the best the country had. Behind him stands his horse, its head bowed and eyes closed. The horse is used across time and culture to represent strength and power and its white coat suggests purity and innocence; the image of such a mighty animal bowing its head is a visceral reminder of

the pains of war but also of the responsibility and burden of the soldier who exists to protect the innocent. Winding around the knight's right foot is the roots of a tree that appears again over his shoulder. It embodies strong foundations and support - presumably one cast by family, friends, and comrades - and of spiritual ideas of the tree of life. It is interesting in this window that the tree covers the soldier but not the sword, protecting the man not the weapon. The colour red is particularly striking, not least because of the well known connotations in war; his sword is scabbarded in red leather and upon his back is a red shield, reminiscent of the backpacks used by soldiers in the war. The scene presented suggests there is no danger, that both the knight and his steed are in relative safety, and yet he does not remove his shield - it remains a heavy reminder of the blood spilled and the endless weight it has on the minds of the survivors. The horse's bridle is in the same red, continuing the theme of the weight of war in its inherent heaviness that drags its head down. The knight faces the altar with a resigned expression, his body slightly relaxed and leaning against something out of frame, his hands clasped together as if in momentary prayer. It is a sombre scene of exhaustion and cautious hope. The artists have very intentionally designed this window to allow the viewer to interpret this knight as whoever they need him to be, it is a universal symbol of the burden of warfare and the morals of the soldiers who fought them. The scene is simply one of finality; the war has exhausted but it is done.

These stained glass windows are masterpieces in artistic expression with countless symbols and stories fused into each pane. Each individual is memorialised with deeply meaningful icons that represent both themselves in life and a larger idea in death, inviting the viewer to both investigate the smaller details and interpret the larger themes as they need in moments in the Chapel.