Peninsula Post 11

An occasional magazine from the
Church of England Parish of Harwich
November 2026

Stained glass

Although glass is an ancient material, the Romans appear to have been the first to use glass in windows. In the UK, fragments of coloured window glass dating to the 7th century have been excavated at sites of monasteries in Monkwearmouth and Jarrow in Northumbria. The Anglo-Saxons may have been making stained glass windows, using coloured glass and lead, but essentially, stained glass as we know it was a medieval art form which was widely used in gothic architecture.

The oldest remaining glass *in situ* (in its original place) in England dates from the 12th Century. Glass from this early period survives in Canterbury Cathedral where it was placed in 1184.

Glaziers responded to changes in architectural styles, and had to adjust their designs from the single lancet Norman windows of the 13th Century to the much larger and more complicated windows of the 'Decorated' period. These later gothic windows were often divided into several sections by vertical stone mullions. The narrow elongated openings created by the stonework presented challenges for stained glass artists, who responded by creating 'band' windows with pictorial or figurative panels across the windows alternated with bands of grisaille, (clear glass).

Much early stained glass was smashed in the Reformation period of the sixteenth century for fear the images were misleading people into the worship of images. After that most glazing was plain but things changed as the feeling that the gothic style was more ‘proper’ and all things gothic, including stained glass, was reintroduced in the nineteenth century.

How is the glass made and then coloured?

During the late medieval period glass factories were set up where there was a ready supply of silica, the essential material for glass manufacture. Silica requires a very high temperature to melt, something not all glass factories were able to achieve. Such materials as potash, soda, and lead can be added to lower the melting temperature. Other substances, such as lime, are added to make the glass more stable. Glass is coloured by adding metallic oxide powders or finely divided metals while it is in a molten

state. Copper oxides produce green or bluish green, cobalt makes deep blue, and gold produces wine red and violet glass. Much modern red glass is produced using copper, which is less expensive than gold and gives a brighter, more vermilion shade of red. Glass coloured while in the clay pot in the furnace is known as pot metal glass, as opposed to flashed glass, which fuses a thin layer of coloured glass to a thicker layer of colourless glass to produce the desired colour.

All Saints has almost every window containing stained glass and in a short series I want to look at them as they may not be appreciated or observed as much as they could be. Most of the windows (11) are by Ernest Richard Suffling (1855–1911) who was a prominent British stained glass artist, author, and traveller based in London. He operated the West London Stained Glass Works from Edgware Road for roughly thirty years, and his ecclesiastical windows can still be found in various churches throughout Britain. He authored what many consider the definitive book, A treatise on the art of glass painting in 1902 and it is still available. He also wrote adventure books for boys and about the Norfolk Broads. There is a window in the chancel, facing the road, which he donated.

The only other glass is the very small window near the back of the nave facing the road from the studio of William Morris & Co, or William Morris Studios, founded in 1901, dated 1958 and so among the last pieces they made. This is not to be confused with William Morris the Arts and Crafts genius, who worked in stained glass, but confusingly a London company with the same name. It is a memorial window showing the Good Shepherd. There is also very small window by the door to the passage leading to the Fryatt Room and the artist, Carl Edwards (1914-1985), is very important. His crowning glories must be part of the huge west window, completed in 1978, of Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral and the east window of St David's cathedral in Wales. His signature is just legible in the bottom right corner. The image is rather Eastern Orthodox; Christ, seated, gives a blessing, and I assume, the ship represents Harwich's sea trade receiving that blessing.

The large west window in the tower, (criminally obscured by frosted glass), was a personal gift of Queen Victoria's grandson, Kaiser Wilhelm II, given in 1899 and made of glass from the Royal glass works in Munich. You can see his monogram, 'WII', in the very top. It commemorates the German soldiers who died and were buried in the churchyard following the Walcheren Expedition of 1809–1810. This gift complements the lychgate also built in 1899 and given by Queen Victoria to honour British soldiers who also perished, or contracted fatal illnesses, during the same military campaign. I wonder if it is by Joseph Mayer as they had a London office but used Munich glass, known for rich colour blends.

Now to look at two of the windows, because, I will argue, many are deliberately paired left to right. Stand at the font – either side, left and right, are windows with a water theme.
The first has, at the very top, Noah's ark and beneath two male figures, Jesus and his cousin John, who is baptising him. On the other side we have Jesus again, now walking on water and rescuing a sinking Peter, who cries out for help after beginning to sink after initially walking on water himself.

Come forward by the pulpit, where the original chapel of the famous Dovercourt Rood was likely placed (but that is another story), and you will see a pair of small windows at waist height. A son departs and a son returns to his father; the child is welcomed back; it is the prodigal. Sadly, the return panel is showing decay but notice the flowers and especially the care over the foliage. Now look across and the larger window again has welcome for children but this time it is Christ giving the blessing.

Come behind the screen now and again look left and right. The theme is healing and in one we see the story from 2 Kings 5 and the other we see Jesus in a story recounted in Matthew, Mark and Luke. Jesus heals a man with a skin condition, we commonly say leprosy and Elisha sends Naaman to wash in the Jordan; you can see the water at the raised left hand (presumably of Elisha's servant as the prophet didn't leave his house when Naaman came calling!). So two healing stories involving severe skin conditions. We take another step forward for the Christmas/Epiphany windows and the birth of Jesus.

On one side the angels come to worship Jesus with Mary, Joseph and the Donkey present. Please notice the ploughed fields and red and orange of one set of angel wings. This window is marked as the personal gift of the artist, Ernest R. Suffling 1898. On the other side the Magi, the wise men or kings appear with their gifts. One seems to have already cast his crown before Jesus; it is at Mary's feet. Fabulous foliage and the ploughed fields appear again but the star has a prominent role in the left top corner and the town seems far away, just above one box of treasure. The window commemorates the diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria, 1897, 60 years on the throne and a year in which the building was restored by JEK Cutts who was a prolific church architect (1847-1938) and his brother JP Cutts. They opened blocked windows, removed the ceiling and installed the lychgate.

In the next issue I will describe the two windows either side of the chancel, the window over the altar and the very large nave window. But when you are next in All Saints please, stop, look closely at these pairings of windows and the unique other ones.

Children & Families MINISTRY

Summer Highlights

Building relationships
Sharing God's love
Welcoming families



As summer turns to autumn, the seasons begin to change and we start to feel that familiar nip in the air. It feels like the perfect time to reflect and share with you all the wonderful things that have been happening within our Children and Families Ministry over the summer months.

Building on Solid Ground

YEAR 6 TRANSITIONS

In July, I visited St Michael's and All Saints Schools to deliver our Building on Solid Ground workshop to the Year 6 pupils preparing for their transition to high school.

The workshops were once again a great success, giving the children an opportunity to reflect on this exciting new chapter in their lives.

The children decorated stones and leaves, which were then added to their school transition tree – a lovely reminder of the strength, support and encouragement they carry with them as they move forward.



A tree of encouragement for new beginnings

Little Saints Summer Party

Fun
Games
Food
Fellowship
Friendship

We enjoyed our Little Saints Summer Party, bringing our families together for a morning filled with fun, games, food, fellowship and friendship.

It was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the connections we have built within our growing Little Saints community.



Pop-Up Summer Party



Our Pop-Up Summer Party was another fantastic success, with St Michael's church filled with families, including many who were visiting us for the very first time!

Hannah, from the iSing Pop project, joined us for an afternoon full of joyful singing, creative arts and crafts, refreshments and plenty of laughter. The church was filled with bubbles and balloons!

Singing, creativity and lots of laughter!

We were also delighted to welcome Bishop Roger, who joined in with our fellowship. It was wonderful to see so many families enjoying all that our church community has to offer.

Seaside Explorers



On the evening of the eclipse, Seaside Explorers took us down to the beach for a wonderful evening exploring the story of Jesus calling His disciples to become fishers of men.

We were delighted to welcome more than 20 families, with children digging out boats, colouring fish, singing songs, listening to stories and enjoying delicious hot dogs.

It was a joyful evening of faith, fun and friendship, bringing the story of Jesus to life in a beautiful seaside setting.

Faith, fun and friendship by the sea

Growing Connections Within Our Community

It has been wonderful to see how our Children and Families Ministry continues to make a positive impact within our local community. Through school workshops, family events and opportunities to come together in church, we are building relationships, creating welcoming spaces and making sure that children and families know they are valued and always welcome.

Since returning in September, our Little Saints group has continued to grow, with new families joining us every single week. Our Pop-Up Church is also beginning to flourish, and we are delighted to be welcoming new families as they come along to discover what we offer.

Each of these events gives us the opportunity to share the love of Jesus in a real life setting.

Looking Ahead to Autumn and Christmas

Pumpkin story workshops

I am about to begin delivering our autumn pumpkin story workshops in local schools, providing children with another opportunity to explore the Christian faith through creativity, story telling and the changing seasons.

Christingle workshops

We will once again be delivering our much-loved Christingle workshops at Mayflower School, All Saints School and St Michael's School, as well as visiting our local 2nd Parkeston Cub group and a local nursery.

Thank you!

It has been a summer filled with laughter, creativity, friendship and opportunities to share God's love with those around us. Thank you to everyone who has supported our Children and Families Ministry and helped make these events so special. I look forward to seeing what the coming months will bring!