

# ST PETER'S CHURCH LECKHAMPTON

## THE STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS



BY ERIC MILLER

## ST PETER'S CHURCH, LECKHAMPTON

IN THE LITTLE CHURCH of St Peter, Leckhampton, all eighteen windows – apart from those in the clerestory, which are designed to let in more light – are of stained glass. Their artistic quality may vary, but they include several good examples of this stylised blend of art and craft. All repay closer inspection not only for their subject-matter but also for the lives of those whom they commemorate.

Most of the windows were installed without obtaining permission (a 'Faculty') from the diocesan authorities. There is consequently very little in the way of correspondence or other documentation to show how they originated. They do not follow any consistent theme, presumably having been chosen according to their donors' wishes, though many of them would serve to illustrate a sermon, as in earlier times. There are prophets, saints and scenes from parables and events related in the New Testament. In some cases, the choice of subject fits the circumstances, such as the Good Samaritan for a kindly doctor and the Raising of Jairus's daughter as a memorial to a young girl. Where it has been possible to identify a relevant passage in the Bible, this is included in the following descriptions.

In some windows the range of colour is subdued, while others radiate a rich glow. On the north wall of the sanctuary a subtle representation of the Nativity scene faces a vibrant composition which, when the sun shines through it, casts a slowly moving kaleidoscope of jewelled colours across the opposite wall. When they were first installed, in the days before coloured images became commonplace, these windows must have had a great impact on the beholder.

Virtually all the windows were inserted after the enlargement of the church in 1866, the last seven being installed in a flourish in 1903-4. They were designed and produced by makers of national renown, such as Lavers and Westlake, Heaton Butler and Bayne, and Clayton and Bell. (The identification of the maker in most cases is taken from the appropriate volume of Pevsner's *The Buildings of England*.)

This booklet also celebrates the lives of the people commemorated in the windows. Certain details may not have been widely known even around the time of their death, since some were not native to the area but came to Cheltenham to retire. There are soldiers who fought to defend the British Empire, a sea captain with the East India Company, lords of the manor and clergy, landed gentry and philanthropists whose wealth was derived from trade or industry, but there are also young children mourned by a grieving parent.

The opportunity has been taken to reproduce photographs in colour of the statue of the Madonna and Child carved by the Arts and Crafts sculptor Alec Miller and also of the altarpiece in the Lady Chapel. The latter is a reproduction of the famous polyptych in Ghent Cathedral, but in one important respect it is unique to Leckhampton.

The information on the personalities mentioned in the book is taken from newspaper accounts, street directories, census returns and inscriptions on tombstones in the churchyard, and from a variety of internet resources. Where burial plots are mentioned, their location and other information can be found on the family history pages of the church's website [www.stpeter-leckhampton.org.uk](http://www.stpeter-leckhampton.org.uk). The approximate positions of the graves are also shown on a plan printed on the inside back cover.

..... ✂ .....

Copies (price £3.50 plus £1.25 p&p) may be obtained from the author, after 13 June 2013:  
20 Collum End Rise, Leckhampton, Cheltenham Glos GL53 0PB. Please make out cheques to  
'Leckhampton LHS'

NAME & ADDRESS:.....

..... PHONE NO:.....