

## **RAF Memorial Window.**

Dedicated on 6th December 1955, this window was the gift of past and present members of the RAF the RNZAF, their relatives and friends. It was designed by Edward Liddall Armitage, and manufactured by James Powell and Sons, Whitefriars (their trademark tiny white friar is visible at the lower right hand corner of the window).

The window is a Memorial to Bomber Command in East Anglia 1939-1945. The upper tracery contains the badges of the RAF, Bomber Command, and the RNZAF.



Liddall Armitage also designed matching windows at St Paul's Cathedral, Wellington in New Zealand. Their windows are separate lights representing the armed forces and merchant sea services but contain the same images as those at Ely. (Please see photograph opposite of Wellington Cathedral window, and, below, detail – images courtesy of Pam Bunting and Brian Parsley).



Here at Ely, the main window depicts:

Upper from W:-

Air Crew; St Michael (Patron St. of RAF); St George of England with Lion of St Mark (Patron St. of RNZAF); Ground Crew.

Middle from W: - Badges of No 2 Group; No 3 Group; No 8 Group (Pathfinders); No 100 group.

Lower from W: - Wellington Bomber taking off from local airfield; circling over the roof of the Cathedral; over the North Sea by moonlight; under searchlights and flak fire over Heligoland.

NB No 3 Group badge contains symbols connected with the Cathedral, the three crowns for Etheldreda and her royal successors, (as the Group was based at Exning, birthplace of Etheldreda) but adapted to show the heraldic crowns proper to the Army (Mural) Navy (Ships under Sail) and Airforce (Astral). The motto 'Niet zonder arbyt' is Old Dutch, meaning 'Nothing without hard work' and is taken from the house of Cornelius Vermuyden.

The Wellingtons were included at the suggestion of Dean Hankey. Michael and George were chosen as 'Dragon Slayers' and above their heads are depicted the thistle, shamrock, rose and daffodil, of Scotland, Ireland, England and Wales. Also included are symbols in the tracery commemorating other members of the Allied Forces – The Royal Netherlands Air Force (red white and blue segmented roundel); Czech air Force (similar but with a yellow centre); Poland (red and white squares) and France (cross of Lorraine).

The window previously contained glass by Lusson of Paris – History of John the Baptist, the gift of Chancellor J H Sparke. The Lusson window was apparently of very poor quality, 'so shocking that it should be removed and destroyed'.

### **RAF Hospital Window**

Commemorating 52 years of the RAF Hospital in Ely, (1940-1992) the window depicts the badge of the Princess of Wales Hospital (as it became) – Air force blue, rimmed in gold with the Red Cross, and the Crowns of Ely Diocese; and a badge for the City – two Eel glaives (silver three pronged forks) above a green pool.

The window was donated by the people of the City of Ely.

#### *Sources:*

*Ella Thurmott's manuscript from 1996 on Ely Cathedral Stained Glass – Window Identification.*

*Christine Pownall, Stories in Stained Glass – The Windows of Ely Cathedral (2009).*

*Charles William Stubbs, (1897) Historical Memorials of Ely Cathedral. (London 1897).*

*Eric Milner-White, Report on the Windows of Ely Cathedral (1937 In Friends of Ely Cathedral, 1st Annual Report).*

Compiled by David Bruce, with additional information from Pam Bunting and Brian Parsley, Cathedral Guides, 2015.