



Douglas Strachan at All Saints, Cambridge

Douglas Strachan (1875-1950) was a Scottish artist who designed the stained glass windows in the chapel at Westminster College, but he also designed the Womanhood window at All Saints, Jesus Lane, Cambridge.

Douglas Strachan (1875-1950) was a Scottish artist who designed the stained glass windows in the chapel at Westminster College. Our chapel was commissioned by Sir William and Lady Black Noble in memory of their son William Black Noble, 2nd Lieutenant in the Northumberland Fusiliers, who died in World War One at Ypres in 1917. They asked Douglas Strachan to design the stained glass windows on the theme of the Benedicite - 'O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord' - and Strachan's windows are full of strong, beautiful colour, and dynamic movement:

dancers, worshippers, the heavenly fire descending on Mount Carmel, the swell of the stormy sea.



Detail of 'Womanhood', at All Saints Church, Cambridge.
Photo by Adrian Powter

If you're visiting All Saints Church on Jesus Lane, Cambridge, then while you're there, take a moment to admire another Douglas Strachan window – this one on Womanhood. (It's immediately to your left as you come in.)

The Womanhood window at All Saints is a work from 1944 (some twenty years later than the Westminster windows), the gift of John Murrish. Blue, green and purple tones dominate, with silvery opaque highlights. The central panel shows the Virgin and Child as a mother with a baby, standing benignly behind a young boy dressed as a Scout; he's just taking his first step down from the rock on which she stands, out into the wider world. Though she is still, the landscape around her is full of movement in the form of curves: the path, the tree, the leaves, her gown. She is flanked by women caring for strangers and for the sick, and by four portraits of famous women of compassion, charity, and bravery: Elizabeth Fry, Josephine Butler, Cecile Isherwood, and Edith Cavell.

As well as the Strachan window, take time to admire this incredible building, full of colour and craftsmanship. Designed by GF Bodley and built 1863-1871, the decoration of the church was finished in the 1920s and includes work by key Arts & Crafts names: Bodley himself, Morris & Co, Kempe, and Leach. All Saints is now managed by the Churches Conservation Trust.

Helen Weller, Archivist
May 2018