

ART. XVI.—*John Scott & Son, of Carlisle, stained glass manufacturers.* By M. I. M. MACDONALD, M.A.

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FOR over thirty years in the 19th century a small firm of glass stainers worked in Carlisle to produce a series of windows from which solemn saints and martyrs still gaze down upon the faithful in many Cumberland churches. The notes that follow seek to draw attention to the work of this firm, Messrs John Scott & Son, of 23 Rickergate, Carlisle, carvers, gilders, glass stainers, and ecclesiastical decorators. No records of the business are known to survive, and these notes have been compiled almost entirely from the columns of the *Carlisle Journal* (*C.J.*), and the *Carlisle Patriot* (*C.P.*).

The firm centres round a father and son, both called John Scott. From the 1851 Census it appears that Scott, sen., was born in Wigton in 1780.* He died on 26 July 1865, and was buried in Carlisle Cemetery. Scott, jun., was born in Carlisle in 1816. The date of his death has not been established. His name last appears in the Citizens' Roll of Carlisle¹ in 1880/81, but he is not listed in Jackson's *Directory* of 1880. If he died around this date he was not buried at Carlisle. A member of the third generation John Scott, born in 1849, became an artist, and enjoyed a modest success in London and Dublin, but his career is outside the scope of these remarks.

John Scott, sen., first appears in the militia list for Rickergate in 1809, where he is described as a gilder. Some time before 1841 he took his son into partnership,

* His baptism does not appear in Wigton parish register.

and the business became known as John Scott & Son.² In 1855 Scott, sen., retired, but his son was joined in partnership by David Relph Drape, and the business continued as Scott & Drape.³ Drape had previously been employed as a foreman and manager by William Atkinson of Carlisle, an obscure architect and decorative painter who was responsible for "extensive repairs" to Kirkoswald Church in 1847. By 1861 the business was being advertised as "late Scott & Drape",⁴ and thereafter remained as John Scott & Son. The firm closed down, probably in early 1880.

On 17 July 1824 the *Carlisle Journal* carried this advertisement:

"Grateful for past favours, John Scott respectfully informs his friends and the public that he has added to his establishment of carving and gilding, the magnificent art of GLASS STAINING and ENAMELLING, after the manner of the Ancients, and equal in splendour and durability. Orders executed to any design or pattern, for church windows, staircase, fanlights, or other fancy windows, comprising armorial bearings, figures, borders, etc. Specimens may be seen in his shop."

As though to advertise his new skill that same year, Scott filled the windows of Paul Nixson's Academy of Fine Arts, Finkle Street, with stained glass for the Second Annual Exhibition of Paintings and Sculpture,⁵ but no description of these windows has been found. He appears as a member of the first committee of the Carlisle Mechanics' Institute formed in 1824,⁶ for which he made a "barometric gauge" in 1825.⁷

For the next twenty years information is sparse, Parson & White's *Directory*, 1829, list Scott as "carver, gilder, and glass stainer". He carried out the clear glazing of Stanwix Church in 1841.⁸ Demand for stained glass must have been very limited during this

period, apart from coloured borders and heraldic symbols for private houses. The boom years of Victorian church building still lay ahead.

A new phase opened in 1845 with the completion of the East and West windows of St Paul's Church, Warwick Bridge. As the *Carlisle Journal* remarked,⁹ the East window "reflects the highest credit" on its designer, while Mannix & Whellan describe both windows in their *Directory* of 1847. Thereafter the local newspapers report the appearance of many stained glass windows, describing them *in situ* in a church, or from a special viewing in the workshop. In some years the firm must have been very busy indeed. In 1868, for instance, they worked on windows for the churches of Arthuret, Gamblesby, Pooley Bridge, St James, Carlisle, St Stephen, Carlisle, and for a church in India. At the same time the firm was advertising itself more prosaically as house painters and decorators. Thus alongside the Gothic dreams of haloed saints and apostles in crimson-robed splendour, there were the everyday realities of a painting and glazing firm. The last recorded window appears to be that in Hethersgill Church, 1876, though John Scott, jun., painted the Decalogue on metal panels for All Saints' Church, Cockermouth, in 1879. A list of Scott windows is added below.

Clearly most of the surviving windows are the work of John Scott, jun. His recorded work is almost entirely confined to Cumberland and North Westmorland, with two rather surprising exceptions. On 14 October 1864 the *Carlisle Journal* described a window for a church in Bombay, India, to be followed on 21 August 1868 by a report of another window for the same country. Nearer home, he received at least three commissions for windows for the Episcopal Church of St Paul, Dundee, now the Cathedral Church of the Episcopal Diocese of Brechin. When one window was installed

in 1864, the *Dundee Advertiser* compared it favourably with the work of the Munich School of glass painters, a natural comparison in Scotland at a time when Glasgow Cathedral was being plunged into a dim religious gloom by the Munich artists.

If the younger John Scott ever had a sense of disappointment, it was surely with regard to Carlisle Cathedral. Here were windows, large, intricate, and bare. As preparations were made in 1853 for the great restoration under Ewan Christian, his expectations must have risen high. While one must not question the piety of its donor, perhaps there was just the merest whisper of a hint in the gift by Scott of the glass for the small round window high in the gable of the North Transept, where it glowed, a little pool of colour, above the empty expanse of the great transept window. There could be no mistaking the next hint. In February 1855, and again in April 1856, Scott obtained the permission of the Dean and Chapter to display in the Cathedral the panels of glass which he had made for Dundee. The contrast between the lush greens and ruby reds of this glass and the naked, shameless, windows of Carlisle's venerable cathedral, was not lost upon the *Patriot* and the *Journal* both of which called for Scott to be given the task of filling the windows with his art. It was not to be. Wailes of Newcastle was entrusted with restoring the mediaeval glass in the East window. Otherwise, Hardman of Birmingham carried off all the big prizes, eventually executing the glass for the East, North Transept, and West windows, and also decorating the organ. Still, there were consolation prizes to be won. Scott & Drape were given the contract for the clear glazing of the windows, and were responsible for the decoration of the ceiling of the Choir in the gold stars on blue of Owen Jones's design. For the latter work they were paid a total of £543. 7s. od.¹⁰

In 1866 Scott displayed a window — a figure of Christ — at the Caldewgate Working Men's Industrial Exhibition. There he faced a potential competitor in his field, John Sewell, painter and glazier, of Scotch Street, Carlisle. Earlier that year Sewell had begun to make diaphanie, a design transfer process which enabled patterns to be applied to plain glass to produce a cheap imitation of stained glass. It was hailed as a means of bringing a substitute for real stained glass to even the poorest congregation. The *Carlisle Journal*,¹¹ however, noted how Sewell's window had a "rather faded or washed-out appearance" compared with the genuine stained glass of Scott's window. Sewell made windows for the churches of Hayton, Threlkeld, Upperby, and for Bowness-on-Solway, in the churchyard of which he was buried in 1880.

Little can be said about the working of the firm, except to note that the 1851 Census states that Scott, sen., "employs 5 men glass painters". One report¹² mentions that Messrs Scott & Drape have been using Powell's glass, "it being the best imitation of ancient glass which Messrs Scott & Drape have met with". The glass would be bought from Powell of Whitefriars, and cut and painted in Carlisle.

Similarly, there is little to be said on the influences on Scott's designs. One suspects that the large East window of Holy Trinity Church, Carlisle, by Thomas Williment, 1845, so much admired by contemporaries, must have made a considerable impression on him. Some of his designs were copied from oil paintings, as was done by many Victorian glass stainers. The destroyed East window of Aspatria Church was a little art gallery in itself, containing, we are assured, "the Crucifixion after Albert Durer, the Resurrection by Raffaele, and the Ascension by Vanderwerff". Holman Hunt's "Light of the World" is unavoidable, and occurs in a Dundee window. It is worth noting, in this respect,

that Scott & Son were the Carlisle agents for the Royal Birmingham & Midland Counties Art Union for the Purchase of the Works of Living Artists.¹³

A critical appraisal of the artistic qualities of Scott's glass is not within the competence of this writer. Doubtless it falls within the "bad or indifferent" category to which Professor Sir Nicholas Pevsner consigns the bulk of the glass in the county. He suffered from the defects of his contemporary glass stainers in striving to render three dimensional figures out of the medium, in harshness of colouring, and in a stifling conventionality in depicting scriptural scenes or figures. In fairness to Scott, he had to satisfy the wishes of his patrons. When the good Miss Burdett-Coutts personally selected the designs for the windows for St Stephen's, Carlisle, she would have very definite ideas of what a stained glass window should look like. The Victorian churchman looked for "sweetness" in the face of Jesus, or "resignation", or "meekness", just as he looked for "richness" in the colouring. "The colours are crimson, ruby, blue, green, orange, yellow, and purple" enthused the *Carlisle Journal* when reporting upon Scott's window at Crosscanonby. Particularly where he attempted large figures, as at Arthuret, the effect is almost always one of depressing coarseness and vulgarity. Some of his small scenes, however, can be quite attractive, most notably in the Throgmorton window in St Catherine's, Penrith. At St James's, Carlisle, he rose to the occasion with confidence to provide three windows which effectively terminate the apse with their strong colours.

Churches in Cumberland and Westmorland with Scott windows.

The list which follows of Scott's windows in Cumberland and Westmorland cannot be regarded as complete. He must have made many more. In addition

to stained glass windows, his workshops produced decorative work for churches, such as the illuminated metal panels of the Commandments for Ivegill (*C.J.*, 24 July 1868), and for All Saints', Cockermouth (*C.J.*, 22 April 1879). The firm also carried out the decoration of the chancel of St Paul's, Carlisle (*C.J.*, 2 December 1870).

Arthuret. The E. window, inserted as a memorial to Sir James Graham, M.P., during the restoration of 1868/69. Probably Scott's most spectacular window in the county. The commission was won in competition with artists from London and Newcastle. Contemporaries marvelled at "the rich blending of orange, purple, blue, white, and other dyes, which delight the eye of the beholder, and impart to the window an aspect of magnificence". The only portion of the design that was considered less than perfect was the Dove of the Holy Spirit at the top; some people wished to replace it by the Graham arms. (*C.J.*, 1 May 1868 and 30 April 1869)

Aspatria. Scott was responsible for the glazing of the new church, and for several coloured windows, of which most are now destroyed, including his E. window. Among those surviving are the heraldic Musgrave window, 1847, and the Thompson window on the South wall of the chancel, 1859. (*C.P.*, 19 November 1847, *C.J.*, 10 March 1848 and 8 July 1859)

Baumont. Three lancets in E. wall, inserted during the renovation of 1872, in memory of Thomas Hodgson of the Carlisle & Cumberland Bank. (*C.J.*, 27 December 1872)

Brough-under-Stainmore. Single light, showing the Resurrection in a frame of vine branches. (*C.J.*, 11 July 1856)

Carlisle, Cathedral. See text, above.

Carlisle, Fisher Street, Presbyterian. Inserted in the "west" wall during the rebuilding of 1855/56. For a congregation of the United Presbyterian Church this was still rather a naughty thing to do in the 1850s. As it was, Scott was asked to alter his original design to one that was scrupulously non-figural. He obliged, for an extra £2. The window must have been destroyed when the church was altered in 1894. (*C.P.*, 5 July 1856, and minutes of the Building Committee, on microfilm at the Record Office, Carlisle.)

Carlisle, St James. The three windows of the apse. Given to

the new church by Thomas Nelson, of Murrell Hill House. (*C.J.*, 26 July 1867 and 3 July 1868)

Carlisle, St Stephen. During her stay in Carlisle for the consecration of the church, Miss Angela Georgina Burdett-Coutts visited Scott's workshop to select personally the designs for most of the windows of this building. Now demolished. (*C.J.*, 2 June 1865 and 10 April 1868)

Crosscanonby. E. window, inserted by "the liberality of the parishioners". Attributed to Scott by both the *Carlisle Journal* of 6 April 1849 and the *Cumberland Pacquet* of 10 April 1849. The window has an apparent signature "Carl Scott". Should this be read as an abbreviated "Scott, Carl[isle]"?

Gamblesby. Chancel windows, one of which was given by Mrs Nicholson, of Blencarn Hall. (*C.J.*, 11 December 1868)

Hethersgill. E. window, in memory of George Graham of Riggfoot, died 1851. Apparently Scott's last recorded window, but as the church took about two years to complete, it could date from 1875. (*C.J.*, 15 December 1876)

Holm Cultram, St Paul. E. window, 1852, in memory of John Messenger, of Eastcoat, near Skinburness. Not one of Scott's best. Lancet window commemorating John Saul, of Green Row, much better. Some other lancets look like his work as well. (*C.J.*, 12 March 1852 and 2 November 1855)

Kirklington. E. window, *c.* 1845. Given by J. M. Strachan, Esq., of Teddington Grove, "who as guardian of Joseph Dacre, Esq., was patron till the day on which the church was consecrated, when the latter attained his majority". (Mannix & Whellan, *Directory*, 1847, p. 6 16, and *C.J.*, 14 November 1849)

Kirkoswald. E., W., and some side windows, inserted during the renovation of the church under William Atkinson of Carlisle, architect. (*C.J.*, 10 April 1847)

Nicholforest. Windows in chancel and W. wall, presented by Mrs J. T. Mounsey at the building of the church in 1867. Round window in W. wall, 1869. (*C.J.*, 20 September 1867 and 6 April 1869)

Penrith, St Catherine's Catholic. Catherine Throgmorton memorial window, in S. transept. One of Scott's best. The press report also mentions five small side windows, one with the Throgmorton arms. (*C.J.*, 29 March 1850)

Penrith Christ Church. One window on S. side of the chancel, in memory of T. Scott, of Brent House, 1875. The colours here

are softer, without the "richness" of ten years earlier. (*C.J.*, 14 May 1875)

Pooley Bridge. E. window, of 1868. The IHS monogram, flanked by Alpha and Omega. (*C.J.*, 31 July 1868)

Rockcliffe. E. and W. windows, paid for by George Gill Mounsey at the building of the church. N. transept window commemorates Robert, Mary, and Isabel Mounsey. Small window in the chancel in memory of John Grice Topping and George Gilbert Topping. (*C.J.*, 7 September 1849)

Warwick Bridge, St Paul. E. and W. windows, inserted during the building of the church at the expense of Peter Dixon, Esq. The W. window, with St Paul, is particularly treacly in colour. (*C.J.* 6 September 1845)

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References.

- ¹ In the Record Office, Carlisle.
- ² Advert. in *C.J.*, 17 April 1841.
- ³ Advert. in *C.P.*, 24 March 1855.
- ⁴ Advert. in *C.J.*, 3 May 1861.
- ⁵ Catalogue in Jackson Library, Tullie House.
- ⁶ *C.J.*, 27 November 1824.
- ⁷ *C.J.*, 22 October 1825.
- ⁸ *C.J.*, 22 May 1841.
- ⁹ *C.J.*, 6 September 1845.
- ¹⁰ Statement of accounts of the Cathedral Restoration Fund, in the Library of the Dean and Chapter (CF2c).
- ¹¹ *C.J.*, 26 October 1866.
- ¹² *C.J.*, 25 April 1856.
- ¹³ *C.J.*, 28 December 1844.