



## Welcome to St. Mark's Dundela .... "The Lion on the Hill"

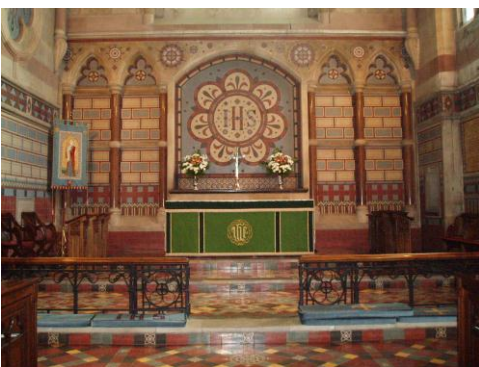
The building is situated on Bunker Hill, an elevated position, which allows this beacon of Witness, to be seen from many parts of the city, and the surrounding hills.

The site was acquired and vested in a group of trustees chaired by William Ewart; a wealthy linen magnate, for the purpose of building a Parish church. The foundation stone was laid on 13<sup>th</sup> October 1873. It should be remembered, that at this time, the site was then in rolling countryside, and on the edge of the city of Belfast.

In contrast to other Parish churches of the period, the trustees didn't chose a local architect, but rather the celebrated Victorian architect, from England, William Butterfield. His work had already included such notable buildings as All Saints, Margaret St. (the tallest church spire in London), and Keble College Oxford. Indeed St. Mark's is the only Parish church in Ireland to be designed by Butterfield.

The church building was consecrated on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1878. However due to financial constraints only the nave and tower were completed, and there seemed little prospect that the parish would be able to afford the additional work. But in early 1890, shortly after the death the previous year of Sir William Ewart M.P., one of the founders of the parish and a munificent benefactor, his family offered to bear the cost of building the new chancel and transepts as a memorial to him. The work was thus completed to Butterfield's design and consecrated on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1891.

The church exhibits many characteristics of Butterfield's work including; high ceilings, arches, pillars, mosaic, tiling and of his later work, contrasting coloured stonework.



As a member of the Tractarian movement, who was always conscientiously faithful to the Book of Common Prayer (BCP), it is not surprising that Butterfield designed his churches so as to emphasize the importance on the two sacraments "generally necessary to salvation". "One might almost say that his churches were built round the Altar and the Font".

It is interesting to note that that Butterfield viewed the Holy Table as the most important object in the church and as such it stands higher than both the pulpit and lectern.

Sir John Betjeman described St. Mark's as, "Butterfield at his best"

Mr Stephen Dykes Bower, a consultant architect to Westminster Abbey and foremost authority on Butterfield, was commissioned to supervise restoration work in 1976, and commented, "It is an outstanding example of Butterfield's work ..... and a fine specimen of Butterfield attempting to re-create the Gothic grandeur of a mediaeval cathedral." Dykes Bower recommended and designed the pendant lighting which gives a warm glow akin to candle light, and thus created in the twentieth century one of the finest visual features, lit or unlit in a nineteenth church.

### The Baptistry

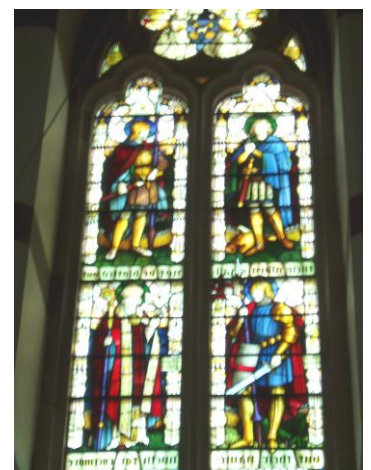
The Baptistry is situated at the west end of the church. Its location, spaciousness and imposing font remind us of the importance of baptism, the first sacrament to be received whenever we are welcomed as members of the body of Christ.

The Parish war memorial is also to be found in the Baptistry. The two brass plates are inscribed with the names of those parishioners who fell during the two world wars (1914-1918 and 1939-1945).

Above the memorial plates the Belt type window by Shrigley and Hunt, Lancaster, commemorates the fallen of the Great War 1914-1918 and it was dedicated in 1921.

There are four lights each divided into two panels. The figures in the lower panels are those of St. Patrick, St. Columba, apostle of Scotland, St. George, patron saint of England, and St. David of Wales. Above are shown four great warriors of Israel – Joshua, Gideon, King David and Judas Maccabaeus. The arms of the Diocese and the winged lion of St. Mark are in the small upper lights, and on the scroll across the window are written the famous words from the Book of Ecclesiasticus:

"Their seed shall remain for ever and their glory shall not be blotted out"..... "Their bodies are buried in peace, but their name liveth for evermore".

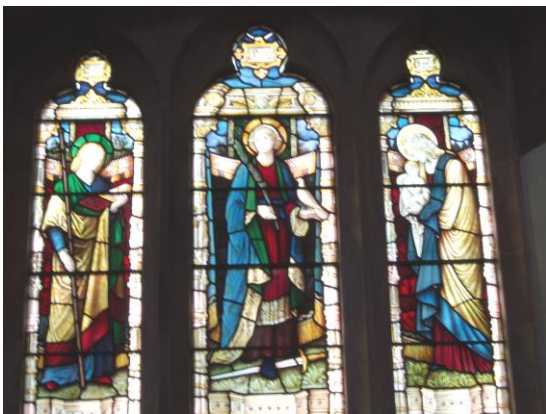


Turning to face the east, the grandeur of Butterfield's design can be fully appreciated; arches, pillars, contrasting coloured stonework, mosaic, tiling, high ceilings and the central aisle leading to the Holy Table.



### Side aisle windows

Moving eastward along the south side aisle, a series of four stained glass windows can be observed:



#### **1. Memorial to Miss Catherine Mackay Henderson:**

Another example by Shrigley and Hunt, Lancaster, erected in 1921. Its three lights bear symbolic figures representing, Faith, Peace and Love.

## 2. Lewis Memorial:

This window presented by C.S. Lewis and his brother Warren, in memory of their parents. It was produced by Michael Healy (Dublin 1933). The three lights depict St. Luke, St. James and St. Mark. In the central light St. James is holding a chalice similar to the one presented to the church by the Lewis family in 1908. Three churches appear in the window, the central one is said to be St. Mark's Dundela. The Latin inscription reads; "To the greater glory of God and dedicated to the memory of Albert James Lewis, who died on 25 September 1929, aged 67 and also his wife, Flora Augusta Hamilton, who died on 23 August 1908, aged 47.



## 3. Memorial to Major R Lloyd Thompson:

This is the only example of locally produced glass in the church. It was created by Ward & Partners Belfast, and was erected in 1919, in memory of Major Thompson who was killed in action in 1917. The central light shows Abraham about to sacrifice his son Isaac, and the side lights depict David and Jonathan. The three lights symbolise, Sacrifice, Love and Valour.

## 4. Memorial to Rev. Thomas Robert Hamilton:

This is the oldest stained glass in the church, and is by Shrigley and Hunt, Lancaster. It was erected in 1906 in memory of the Rev. Hamilton, first Rector of St. Mark's, and its subject is Christ blessing the children.

It is interesting to note that the Rev. Hamilton was the grandfather of C.S. Lewis.

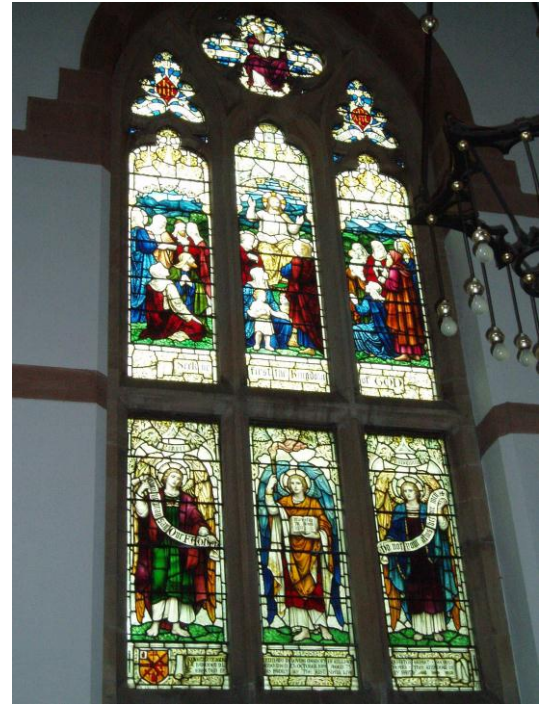


The aisle leads to the Side Chapel, which is located in the south Transept, and another magnificent window.

## Side Chapel

### 5. Memorial to Sir William Quartus Ewart:

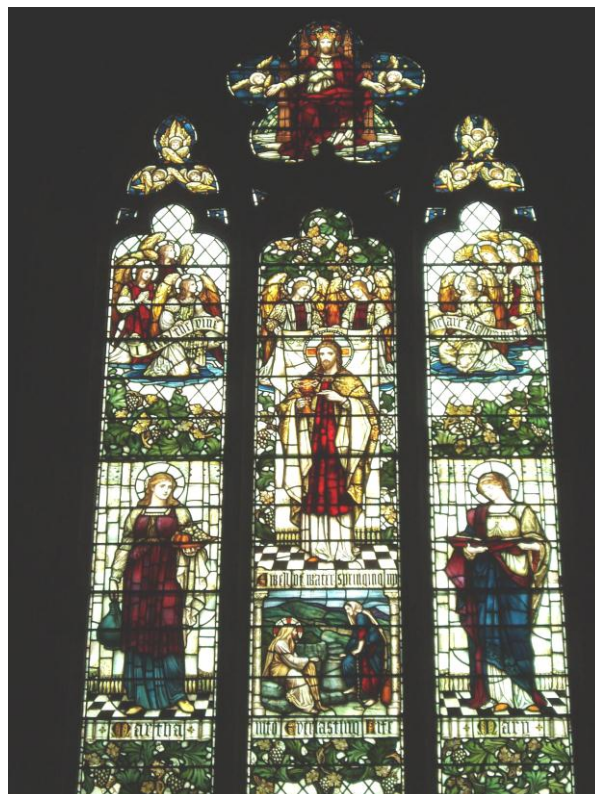
This window was produced by Powell & Sons, London, and was erected in 1924. The light shows our Lord preaching to the people, and sentences from the Sermon on the Mount are displayed on the scrolls.



## The East Window

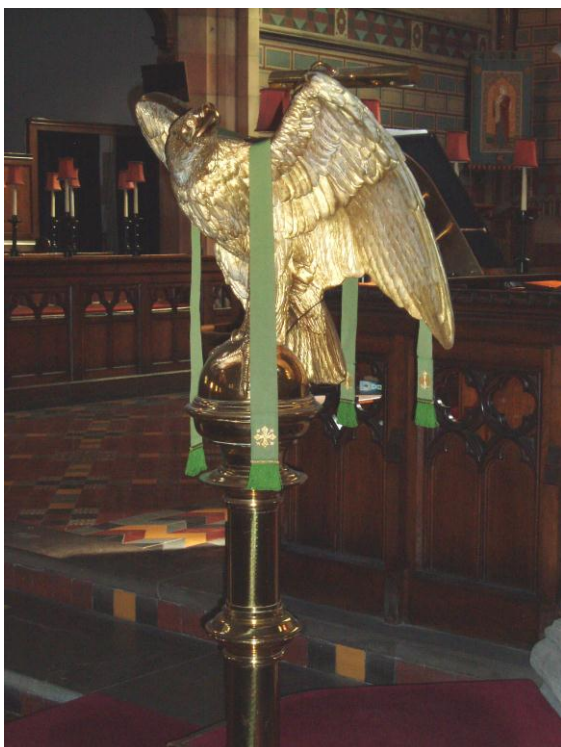
### 6. Memorial to Isabella Kelso (widow of Sir William Ewart):

This window is a Grisaille type by Powell & Sons, London, and was dedicated on 27<sup>th</sup> April 1913. The central figure is that of our Lord, attired in priestly robes, and bearing a chalice. In a predella beneath the figure is a reproduction of a picture (by Harold Copping) of the scene at the well of Sychar. The small cinquefoil light above, depicts Christ in royal robes, enthroned and crowned, and in the side lights are Mary and Martha of Bethany



## The C.S. Lewis Connection

- His grandfather Rev. Thomas Robert Hamilton was the first Rector of St. Mark's
- His parents were married in the church
- C.S. Lewis was baptised by his grandfather in St Mark's on 29<sup>th</sup> January 1899
- He spent his formative years in the Parish , before leaving for boarding school in England
- His family presented the Parish with communion silver in 1908 – The Lewis Silver
- C.S. Lewis and his brother Warren presented the Parish with a memorial window in memory of their parents in 1933
- The church has a memorial window to his grandfather Rev. Thomas Robert Hamilton
- His family presented the Parish with the church lectern – The eagle is the symbol of St. John the Gospel writer, and represents the Word of God being carried on eagle's wings across the world.





### Acknowledgement

This short guide has drawn heavily on the exhaustive research of J. C. Beckett and Anthony M. Wilson, and in particular their historical record of the Parish – “The Lion on the Hill” ( available at a cost of £5 ).

Brian Kennedy 17<sup>th</sup> August 2007

