

WORKSOP PRIORY

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

St Cuthbert – Great West Window (1.9m x 5.0m) 2003

This window was commissioned to celebrate the 900th anniversary of the foundation of Worksop Priory. Set within the grid of the new support system, the design depicts the dominant, ascetic figure of St Cuthbert in bishop's vestments, wearing his cross. His right hand is raised in blessing and his left holds his saintly attribute – the crowned head of King Oswald that was buried with him for safe keeping. He stands on rocks at the water's edge with otters at his feet. Their presence relates to the story of a monk who saw the otters restoring warmth to St Cuthbert's numb feet, after Cuthbert had been partially immersed in the sea at night chanting in praise of God. In the swirling waters are scrolls with the dates 1103 and 2003, flanking the Priory arms, and recording the dates of its foundation and anniversary.

St Cuthbert is set against white foliated scrollwork with a blue background. The design elements of the scroll are based on the Priory's south door ironwork and the leaves, fruit and flowers from the Tickhill Psalter. The figure is framed by a geometric band of lozenges in a mix of white tints, bordered by beaded strap work. The central bosses of the diamonds are inspired by the Priory's unique stone-carved rosettes in the architecture of the nave aisle.

The band is interrupted with small chips of coloured glass, break-leads and painted details influenced by Romanesque glass painting. The names of benefactors are recorded within the diamond quarries of this band. At the corners of the base and spring lines of the window are four white-bordered roundels set on a red ground, each depicting an event in the life of St Cuthbert.

The top left roundel depicts the beginning of his commitment to God in the year 651. Cuthbert had a vision, whilst at prayer, of a dazzling beam of light across the night sky. Within the light a host of angels bore a burning globe, the soul of St Aidan, to heaven. In the top right roundel can be seen his ending on the island of Farne. A monk announced Cuthbert's death to the brethren of Lindisfarne by signalling with lighted torches from a high rock.

The bottom left roundel depicts two Eider ducks known as 'St Cuthbert's birds' on the Farne Islands. He befriended and tamed them and promised that they should never be disturbed. To the right can be seen the story of the Ravens that brought St Cuthbert a piece of hog's lard. He used the incident as a parable to teach man how to be obedient and humble.



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Detail: St Cuthbert



Detail: St Oswald



Detail: A host of angels carry the soul of St Aidan to heaven



Detail: A light signals the death of St Cuthbert