

ST MARY AND ST LAWRENCE'S CHURCH ELLERTON, EAST YORKSHIRE

Stevens Competition Winner –
East Window (1.9m x 3.8m) 2003

The prize for the 2002 Stevens Competition, organised by the Worshipful Company of Glaziers, was to design a new east window for Ellerton Priory (the Priory Church of St. Mary and St. Lawrence, Ellerton). The brief called for a design which would respond to the landscape and ecology of Derwent Ings, celebrate the harmony of husbandry and nature and acknowledge the history and associations of this ancient religious site.

My design, selected from fifty-six entries, depicts the stone walls of the ruined mediaeval priory overgrown with ivy and bindweed. In the top of the right-hand light is St. Gilbert of Sempringham, founder of the Gilbertines who established Ellerton Priory in 1203. In the top left is Robert Aske of the neighbouring village of Aughton, leader of the 16th century Pilgrimage of Grace. His emblem of a newt – known locally as an 'aske' or 'esker' – adorns his cloak.

The traceries contain the coats of arms of families associated with Ellerton in the 14th century. These are exact copies of the originals and made using precisely the same mediaeval glazing techniques (the surviving 14th century Ellerton glass is now in Selby Abbey). The top tracery contains the 'guardian spirit' of the Priory; the barn owl, which has nested in and around this sacred place for centuries.

The large red quatrefoil running across the main lights of the window opens onto a vision of the restored church, viewed from across the Derwent Ings. There is the seasonal cycle of flooding, herb-rich grassland and Autumn grazing, together with examples of the rich fauna and flora of the river and the beautiful floodmeadows. Salmon, burbot, lapwing, curlew, snipe and migrating swans, butterflies, moths, a bumble-bee, a dragonfly, orchids and great burnet can also be spotted by the sharp-eyed.



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Dunnington Jefferson Arms – Quatrefoil
(0.5m x 0.5m) 2001

I was invited by the Ellerton Church Preservation Trust to create this tracery light for the middle window on the south side of Ellerton Priory, commemorating its rebuilding between 1846 and 1848. The project was supported by the Reverend Dunnington- Jefferson of Thicket Priory; just across the river Derwent at Thornaby. His coat of arms is included within the design.

