

ST THOMAS THE MARTYR

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

The Malta George Cross Memorial Window -
North Nave Aisle (1.2m x 2.7m) 2000

This memorial to the people of Malta and the personnel of the armed forces and merchant navy commemorates the Siege and Relief of Malta, 1940-1943. It was commissioned by the North of England and Scotland Branch of the George Cross Island Association.

The design incorporates St. Paul and St. Luke – fishers of men depicted as modern-day seamen – climbing onto the rocks from the wreck of their fishing boat. The hold of the boat is filled with trapped fish symbolising the captive people of the Island of Malta. Nailed to the cross-like mast of the boat are the tattered remains of a sail representing the nails and shroud of Christ's passion.

A turbulent sea boils across the middle of the window. To the right is the emblem of the George Cross Island Association.

Coming through the waves out of a hopeful dawn are the first three ships of the Pedestal Convoy to break the siege on St. Mary's Day (15th August) 1943. Nicknamed Santa Maria, their masts stand against the sky signifying the three crosses of Calvary. Above the ships are depictions of three Gloucester Gladiator biplanes named Faith, Hope and Charity.

The image of an angel rises above the ships and the aircraft, guiding them towards the beleaguered island. The left arm of the angel stretches out to the top of the window, where a dove of Hope is released into the clear light of Heaven. The angel's downcast look meets the eyes of the shipwrecked sailors in the foreground; earthly life is sustained by heavenly protection. The insignia of the Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force and Merchant Navy are shown at the bottom right of the window.

