

Bromley Parish Church Stained Glass Windows by Alan Brooks

The earliest windows (1953) are the four lancets in the Childrens Chapel of the four archangels by Margaret Aldrich Rope (1891-1988).

Margaret Rope was born in Leiston, Suffolk. She studied at Chelsea School of Art and later Central School under well-known Arts & Crafts glass artists. She used a studio at the Fulham premises of Lowndes & Drury from 1923 for some 40 years, and also at a studio at her home at 61, then 81, then 89 Deodar Rd in Putney where there was a small artist's colony. Assisted by her former pupil Clare Dawson, she made many windows after the War. In about 1970 she retired and in 1978 moved to Suffolk. Many of her commissions were due to her association with the architect J Harold Gibbons, including those at Bromley. She is a successor to those eminent artists of the Arts & Crafts movement, and her windows are always of the highest quality artistically and technically.

The other windows in the chapel are by Edward Woore (1880-1960) and date from 1954. These again are excellent though in a different style with more developed figurative design and more muted colours. Woore had also trained under eminent Arts & Crafts artists, notably Christopher Whall. Before the War he lived in the artists community in Deodar Road, so knew Margaret Aldrich Rope and Clare Dawson very well.

The three-light east window in the church is by Rope and was made at the studios of Lowndes & Drury, dating from 1958.

Also in that year, the Baptistry window was made at Lowndes & Drury and was designed by Clare Dawson. Dawson (1891-1988) was a pupil of Margaret Rope, and her work much resembles that of her teacher. She attended the Central School in the late 1920s. She lived in Deodar Road, Putney, as did Rope and for a time, Woore; and she also rented a studio at Lowndes & Drury, as did Rope.

The north transept Te Deum window is by Rope and was also made at the Lowndes & Drury studios, in 1959. As well as putting the windows together, the Lowndes & Drury staff also fixed this and Dawson's window into position in the church.

In the Lowndes & Drury archive there is a later entry under both Rope and Dawson's name for some minor work in 1970, but it is not stated what exactly this was.

Finally, Carl Edwards designed the Resurrection window in 1961. Edwards (1914-1985) trained at various art schools in London and joined the glass-making firm of Whitefriars in 1928 where he became their chief designer. He left in 1951 to start his own studio above the Apothecaries' Hall in the City. Then in 1972 he moved to the premises of Lowndes & Drury. His daughter, Caroline Benyon, is currently Chairman of the British Society of Master Glass Painters.