

Two reports from the frontline at this year's conference, held 31 August to 3 September:

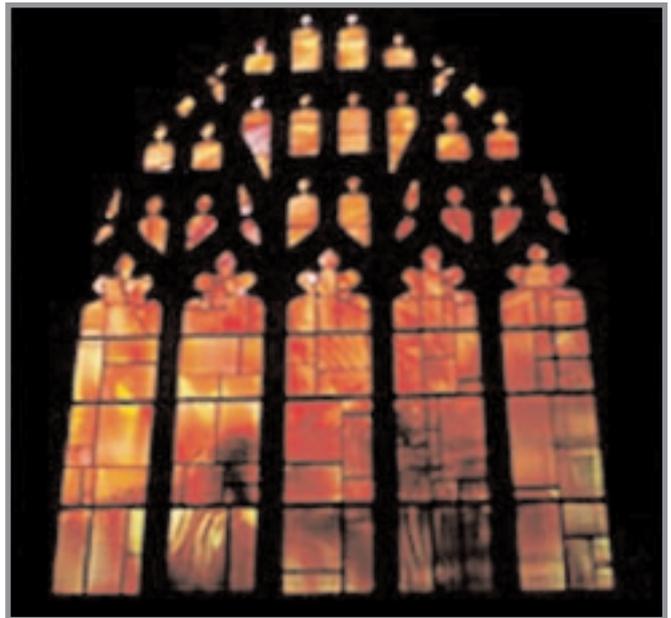
FROM NOREEN CONWAY MORRIS In late summer 2006 BSMGP members converged in Manchester for the annual rendezvous. Stepping out of puddles and away from the hurly-burly, we were welcomed to peace and quiet at Challoners Hotel and Conference Centre, three miles south of the city centre. A glance at the list of participants disclosed two Lancastrian and two Yorkist residents? native born. Made a mental note: 'Do not mention the Wars of the Roses' (1471–85), 500 odd years ago but memories die hard. Stick to 21st century battles like cricket or Manchester United vs City. In the evening lecture, by Penny Hegbin-Barnes on 'Stained Glass in the Region of Manchester', she outlined ancient and modern treats in store over the next three days.

DAY 1 Friday morning fair and saw a woodpecker (greater spotted) in the grounds of the Centre. First stop to Ladybarn to see St Chad's, a red-brick, Edwardian church built 1905–7. Chad (d. 672) had a chequered career, according to *The Oxford Book of Saints* but, in spite of or because of that, had thirty-three churches and wells dedicated to him, plus two cathedrals, Birmingham and Lichfield, no less. Here at Ladybarn the windows recall him and, for company, some of his contemporaries, Cedd, Oswald, Bede and the Abbess Hilda of Whitby and the poet Caedmon. Of note are the War memorial windows, one 1914–16, and another by Karl Parsons, a pupil of Christopher Whall's, dated 1916 when the war was nearly lost.

We moved on to Hathersage to visit the much-publicized Victoria Baths, which scooped the first prize of £31/2 million in a recent BBC TV 'Restoration' series. When the baths opened in 1906 to the hard-working, impoverished citizens this project must have been nothing short of a miracle. From its attractive cream/terracotta exterior we filed through the entrances, men to the left, women to the right, no fraternizing here. The pay lobbies are fitted with polished wood, stained glass panels and an ocean of green Minton tiles. In the Turkish bath rest room are two larger stained windows by (?) William, Pointer. The pools, empty of water, looked forlorn with neither the ghost of a swimmer nor a Polish plumber in sight. Our guide reminded us that another £16 1/2 million is needed to complete the restoration, but perhaps the Bath's chief claim to fame is as a chapter in books on social history. As our coach edged its way through the traffic it passed the site of a vast development advertised as a forthcoming 'Aquatic Centre'. If this is competition it is overkill. Perhaps the hoarding misled us. It could be a marine zoo for friendly dolphins, porpoises, sea-lions, not of course crocodiles or the dreaded stingray? No time to investigate as the lights turned to green.

On to Oxford Road to the mid-19th-century Church of the Holy Name, built originally for the Jesuits and much praised by the not-easy-to-please Mr Pevsner, who considered the architect, J.A. Hansom, had never designed anything finer. Hansom was better recalled, of course, by his patented invention: the Hansom cab. With two shrines and seven side chapels the church is well endowed with stained glass and statues. In the south transept there are two war memorials, the first executed by Paul Woodroffe, a pupil of William Morris.

On again to the highlight of the morning: Manchester Cathedral. Something here for every taste from history to architecture, stone work, sculpture, wood carving (the famous misericordes), brasses, heraldry, and above all the dramatic display of stained glass. The Cathedral suffered grievously in the 1940 blitz and much Victorian glass was destroyed. Its replacement with plain glass proved unsatisfactory, both practically and aesthetically, but happily an alternative was found in 1970 when Anthony Hollaway was commissioned to design five major windows at the west end. Enter by the south porch and on your left are four windows, brilliant 'in colour and intensity', symbolic in style and treatment of historical events and depicting



Hollaway's interpretation of the great biblical themes. A fifth west window under the tower, again symbolic, is in soft shades of blue, the colour associated with the Virgin. In the South Chapel we find Margaret Traherne's inspired Fire Window (above), dating from 1966 and restored by her in 1996 after IRA damage. David Pearce has contributed some engraved glass.

A short break to sit in the sun on the cathedral benches or sample the tourist shop/cafe, walk/amble to St Ann's Square, a little traffic-free oasis and, as one approaches, meet with a larger-than-life statue. Enquire of Manchunian passers-by 'Who is he?' 'Sorry luv, no idea.' Move closer – no dates, no tributes – in faded gold an inscription with the surname only: Cobden, the great radical reformer. St Ann's church, a stone's throw away, built early in the 18th century, was restored by Waterhouse, whom we will meet again soon. Six stained glass windows are by Frederic Shields, one of three Apostles by William Peckitt of York, dated 1760.

The remainder of the afternoon is devoted to secular sites: first a short distance to the Central Library, built 1930–4, through Tuscan columns and a Corinthian portico. We collided with a book-signing (regretfully the name of novelist and book escapes, but a policeman dressed in a Victorian outfit gave us a clue). The stained glass panel honouring Shakespeare, and some of his best known plays, is an attractive feature. Across the road to the Midland Hotel where the more stalwart members squeezed into a lift to see a window by George Wragge of a lady dancing to a piper's tune; the faint-footed stayed in the spacious reception thinking of cups of tea or something stronger.

Finally to the heart of the city in Albert Square where the Town Hall occupies one whole side. The designer, Alfred Waterhouse, secured the commission from 137 rival entries and building commenced in 1866. Both the exterior and interior are impressive with the main entrance under a tower and spire 286' high. From the reception area our tour of the building began in the Great Hall with its hammer-beam oak roof, seven bays of windows with geometric patterns, a west window with six lights, and an organ in the apse. Our guide, John Archer pointed out details in the twelve wall paintings by Ford Maddox Brown illustrating the real and imaginary history of the City. Dining tables were laid for an EU function and we took a sneaky look at the menu: no stinting, the guests would not starve. We hoped there would be reciprocity in Brussels or Strasbourg. Stained glass proliferates throughout the building achieved by collaboration between Waterhouse and his chosen glazier, Francis Odell of London, Staircases, corridors, the Lord Mayor's Parlour and other official rooms overlooking Albert Square are suffused with light



Hathersage Public Baths (left, below right and overleaf). Photos by Andrew Taylor

memorial executed prior to the Battle of Flodden Field (1513). Popularly known as 'The Flodden Window', it portrays Sir Richard, sixteen archers and their chaplain, all individually named and the archers in identical blue jerkins, white hose and neatly styled hair. How many returned to Middleton, one wonders, to tell of their victory? Centuries later G.F. Bodley, whom we met at Pendlebury, designed a window commemorating seven local men who died in the Boer War (1903) and later still the Whalls contributed beautiful windows in the Lady Chapel, and on the south wall.

In the afternoon on to Ashton-under-Lyne to a non-conformist confraternity at Albion United Reform Church, like Monton, formerly Congregationalist, built 1890–5 by John Brooke. The church is well endowed with windows: at the east end c. 1893 seven lights representing the Virtues, seven more the Saints, surrounded by celestial images of the moon, stars and angels.

These were increased by twenty more specially designed by Burne Jones, ten of New Testament figures in 1895, and ten of the Old in 1896. The First World War is recalled in a ceramic reredos, and in the burial ground there is a memorial to the victims of a colliery disaster. Still at Ashton-under-Lyne, on to St Michael and All Angels, another 15th-century rebuild by a local landowner. The name again, Ashton, this time Sir Thomas (d. 1516) who donated a window to commemorate his own and the contribution of other members of his family to the church, A manuscript dated 1596 details the glass at that time but it is an imperfect record. Fortunately what have survived are nineteen lights illustrating the life, times and legends of St Helen (d. 330) and it is possible that the church was once dedicated to her, a very popular saint in medieval days. The panels were moved by a zealous Scotsman, James Ballatine of Edinburgh, in 1872 and yet again in 1913 by a local JP, Maurice Lees. In the north aisle three canonized kings are honoured: Edmund of Abingdon (d. 1240), Edward the Confessor (d. 1066) and, doubtfully as regards both identity and sainthood, the Lancastrian Henry VI (d. 1471), murdered at the end of the Wars of the Roses.

Last on the day's programme was St Martin's at Marple. The saint (d. 397) was the source of many legends and still honoured even by the Met Office in having a late-in-the-year spell of sunshine named after him. The church designed by J.D. Sedding in 1869 was richly decorated with a painted ceiling and alabaster reredos, all restored in 1981. The designs of the windows appear to have brought together the names of all the well-known PreRaphaelites: William Morris contributed five Apostles, Ford Maddox Brown one, D.G. Rossetti one, other Apostles and biblical scenes by Burne Jones. Later Christopher Whall added two windows, Christ and the Disciples, and St Martin, and a painting of the Annunciation in an unusual Peak District landscape on the reredos of the Lady Chapel. A large sculptured figure of St Christopher and the Christ Child greets one at the south porch, the work of Henry Wilson.

DAY 3 Rain ++ and over the border into Wilmslow in Cheshire for an appointment at Pownall Hall, now a school, with the Headmaster as our guide – children still on holidays. Henry Boddington, the brewer whose ales are still enjoyed, built his home here in 1886, the exterior fashioned in striped black and white mock Tudor. Boddington gave the Century Guild a free hand to furnish the interior and the house was fitted throughout in the then up-and-coming Arts & Crafts style in wood, stone, plaster and metal work, with attention paid to the smallest detail. In addition there is an abundance of stained glass in the sitting and dining rooms and on the staircases depicting mythical Spirits of the Four Winds, Grecian figures, flowers, birds and coats of arms. On the upper floors in the children's rooms are designs in sentimental vein with owls, bats, toadstools, and only St George and his dragon promising a bit of adventure.

Pownall Hall is a 'treasure' to devotees of the Arts & Crafts era, but it's time to move to another, looking backwards in time, to the 14th-century church of St Wilfred at Grappenhall. Wilfred (d. 709) had a pretty stormy career and, by all accounts,

from glass in naturalistic forms, soft tones of blues, greens, gold avoiding dark churchy colours. Panelled ceilings and Gothic chimneypieces added to the overall sense of civic pride. As David O'Connor reminded us 'Francis Odell remains an unsung hero ... a craftsman worthy of much more attention by glass historians'. With architecture and craftsmanship on this scale Manchester could make a claim to be Capital of the North.

The evening lecture by Wendy and Barrie Armstrong illustrated locations of special interest on the schedule for Saturday and Sunday, and had a short biographical note on Frederic Shields, whom we had met at St Ann's.

DAY 2 Mist and rain, and off to explore three churches built in the Victorian era. First was the Unitarian Church at Monton Green, the successor to three old chapels with their troubled history of sectarian persecution. The architect was Thomas Worthington, built c. 1875, and the windows designed and crafted by artists A.H. Marsh, T.R. Spence, and the entrepreneur J.G. Sowerby, a chemist turned artist. Three windows depicted Faith, Hope and Charity in a narthex and, an unusual feature, the clerestory windows with a gallery of historical figures from philosophers Socrates and Aristotle, poets Dante and Milton, reformers and scholars Luther and Thomas More, and many others. The second church, St Augustine at Pendlebury, greatly admired by Pevsner, and thought to be the finest example of Victorian-style in the north. The church was doubly fortunate in having as its architect G.F. Bodley, who had a very positive opinion on stained glass. Writing to the building's financier, E.S. Heywood, Bodley summarized 'We have kept them (the windows) broad in colour, each having its leading colour ... the first time it has been tried in modern times ... I think the less variety of colour is more artistic.' The overall theme stressed the continuity and unity from the Old Testament to the New, from the Tree of Jesse to the Crucifix, portraying patriarchs and prophets to Doctors of the Church, and to Apostles and Evangelists.

Thirdly, to St Peter's Church, Swinton (1809), built by G.E. Street for the Rev. H.R. Heywood, brother of the Pendlebury benefactor. Here the dates of the windows span eighty years in differing styles. Three are painted by Kempe, three designed by Burne Jones with Morris & Co, and three, Mercy, Truth and Purity, by Christopher Whall (1910). Later (1932) Veronica Whall contributed familiar friends, the saints Columba, Hilda and Francis, and finally a window by a Lancastrian-trained artist, Joan Howson (1951) of St John the Evangelist.

Last of the morning, a treat for lovers of all things medieval, to St Leonard's, the 15th-century parish church at Middleton. St Leonard (d. 7th century), celebrated as a hermit, was very popular in Western Europe with 177 dedications in England alone overtaking Chad many times over. On the site of earlier chapels the Lord of the Manor, Sir Richard Ashton (?Assheton) and his kinsfolk built the church in the first quarter of the 16th century. Over the years much of the early glass has been relocated from original placements and much fragmented. Fortunately the most famous window has survived in better shape, namely the

managed to fall out with Chad, his contemporary, over an episcopal appointment – nothing unusual there you will say. Nevertheless this beautiful little church, rich in history, is dedicated to him, dating from the early 1300s and founded by Sir William and Nicola Boydell. The family names in windows and on shields confirm them as the benefactors and in 1334 a loyal son, also William, promised to pay a chaplain to pray for their souls. Other 14th-century windows honour the familiar figures of St John the Baptist, several of the Apostles, and St Mary Magdalene. Near the door a homely touch in the lighted image of St Ann teaching her daughter, the Virgin Mary, to read. Much needed re-reading, and some relocation, was carried out in the 1960s by Williams and Watson of Liverpool.

In the afternoon a contrast in more ways than one: from Arts & Crafts and 14th-century medieval to St Oswald's Church at Ashton-in-Makerfield. Here the unexciting 1930s exterior belies an interior with windows in kaleidoscopic colours. The windows were designed by Henry Clarke and his school, those in and above the apse by Clarke himself. In the west window in vivid colour Christ in Glory is portrayed, but turn again towards the east and high in the apse see seven saints dressed in jewel shades of amethyst, emerald and gold. Who is the female second from the left with a candy-pink halo? Even after fifty-odd years she still has a startled expression, or perhaps not her favourite colour? Admirers of Henry Clarke's talent were joyful but conservatives (small c) wondered if it was 'a bit over the top'.

The last of our excursions was to the church of St John the Evangelist at Higher Broughton and, alas, a melancholy occasion. This fine church, built in 1846 by public subscription, survived much anti-popery propaganda in the 19th century but now has new enemies: lack of funds, neglect, vandalism, and a diminished congregation. A few Minton tiles and a west window by Kempe are relics of its past. If there are ghosts, Gregan, Pugin, Kempe, Eardman and Wailes would be there now. One can only admire its survival through the loyalty of the remaining parishioners until its fate is decided.

There had been a few diversions during our 3-day schedule – namely weddings. There were so many at the Town Hall that they seemed to be on a conveyor belt: the first a strike-up-the-band variety, another a quiet and modest affair, the last neither.

Our gratitude for the courtesy and hospitality received throughout at the Conference Centre, at Ashton-under-Lyne and Ashton-in-Makerfield, and the welcome tea at St John's.

A FOOTNOTE In the quiet and peaceful old burial ground at Ashton-in-Makerfield I found a tombstone with an inscription in long hand. It is a wistful message of farewell and an invitation, and it reads as follows:

*'You that pass by and cast an eye
As you are now so once was I
As I am now so must you be
Therefore prepare to follow me'*

(Elizabeth Okell, wife of Peter Okell, died 2 June 1762 aged 38.)

Thank you, Peter Okell.



THE ADVENTURES OF A CONFERENCE FIRST-TIMER! BY HELENE DAVIDIAN

The day before it (the Conference) even started, my saga began! Being vain, I had on my favourite high-heeled sandals, to go to a pre-birthday lunch with my daughter, and two of my four grand-daughters. As I was putting presents in the boot of my car and at the same time watching Jasmine (four) and Jade (two), I neatly slipped on a rather large stone in the road and twisted my left foot painfully. The chemist's bandage supported; the 'nip' of brandy eased the pain somewhat – then the wait to see if it still hurt as badly the following morning.

THURSDAY I phoned Sue, who reassured me by saying that a Doctor would be present (our lovely Stephen, I was to discover later!). Sue enquired if I had a stick. I had, and had tried to lend it to one of my neighbours only a few days earlier!

I got a mini-cab to Euston and enjoyed a golf-cart style ride to the train. I was met at Stockport around lunchtime by an old friend Janet, who giggled at the sight of me. She drove me to the Chancellors Centre first, to book me in. We had such a pleasant surprise: my room was of a very good standard with en suite bathroom! We then drove in the Manchester rain to the Whitworth Gallery for a very brief visit before my return to get ready for dinner. I sat on a table with, among others, Linda, Dinny and Deanne, and we were soon chatting and giggling! Afterwards we had a lecture with slides from Penny, but I was rather tired and had trouble hearing what was said! Deanne had kindly brought out a more suitable stick for me, and we chatted for a while before bed. That night I found it very hard to sleep, and eventually around 3.30 am I decided to make myself a hot drink. Fine you say, but the kettle would not boil, whatever I checked. So, while leaning on my walking stick, I carried the kettle downstairs. The nice man on the desk changed the fuse for me and I returned to my room. But this was not the end of the matter, and this time I had the sense to phone down. The same man brought me a replacement kettle and soon afterwards I was drinking hot chocolate.

FRIDAY After very little sleep, I rose to both my birthday and a very beautiful day (the sun always shines on the righteous, blah, blah). I got ready and had a hearty breakfast, after which we set off by coach to see some local churches, etc. I was lucky in that I had a double seat to myself, so that I could put my leg up for a bit. I received calls and texts from the family wishing me 'Happy Birthday'. One of the calls from Jasmine and Jade came while David O'Connor was speaking to us in St Chad at Ladybarn. As the girls were singing to me, I couldn't stop them so I just went outside. I know that there were some nice windows there, but I don't remember very much, nor do I have any mementoes. (However, Linda has promised to send me copies of her photos so I may recall them later.)

We then went on to the glorious Victoria Baths at Hathersage. The deterioration was sad, but there was some delightful glass left. Sadly we were overrunning our time slot – which was to happen quite frequently, inevitably with such a large number of people (nearly 70 of us). This meant that I didn't get a chance to buy any cards, etc., and just managed to buy a tea towel showing details of Public Baths and Wash-Houses, dated 1st May 1938. Happily, I was to receive a lovely postcard of the stained glass 'Angel of Purity' (left) for my birthday, from Deanne.

I didn't like the fact that the swimming pool water was issued to the 1st-class males' pool then recycled to the pool of the 2nd-class males, then finally to the only female pool. Ugh! We then went on to the Catholic Church of the Holy Name in Oxford Road briefly, before going on to Manchester Cathedral. I was aware of being both hungry and tired (my foot giving me a little trouble now!). There was much to see here. There was one more modern window (designed by a lady not listed anywhere) on the same wall as the famous Fire window by Margaret Treherne and the St Mary window by Hollaway, which moved me most. I was more interested in the facts that Dr John Dee (consulted by Elizabeth I) and Mother Ann Lee (later of the 'Shakers', a branch of Quakerism), were both past attendees of the Cathedral. There was also a 19th-century, world-famous Belgian singer Mme

Malibran, who had died aged 28 after coming to Manchester to perform. Her husband, who had engaged a homeopathic doctor for his wife, suffered abuse for it and had to flee home. It's interesting that even today there is still some hostility to different ideas!

I then went off with Linda to have a light snack in the Cathedral Visitor Centre and a look round their shop. Afterwards we walked to the delightful St Ann's Church, built in 1712 without stained glass. However, in the late 19th century this omission was rectified, and the church has a splendid booklet of its windows, including a three-light window from 1769 by William Peckitt which had been hanging in two other churches before being reconstructed and installed in 1981.

We then moved on to the Library, led by Barrie Armstrong. By this time I was suffering and went over to sit in the foyer of the Midland Hotel with my leg up. So I missed the glass in there. Our final destination was to be the Town Hall. I must admit that I really loved this splendid Waterhouse design and wanted to see as much as I could until finally I came to a standstill, and had to sit with my leg up with some of the more senior participants, waiting for the others. I then determined that I would return to Manchester at a later date to see what I'd missed due to injury. Thankfully we then returned by coach for dinner. I dressed up (it being my birthday) and went down to buy myself a brandy (to help with the pain) and Dinny shared some sustaining chocolate with me. We then had dinner with Deanne looking after me. I enjoyed the 'Arts & Crafts' lecture from Wendy and Barrie Armstrong. We chatted for a while afterwards, and then I got some sleep.

SATURDAY Had breakfast and then we set off north-west to Monkton Unitarian Church. I sat next to Sue's husband Frank, and I fear that I just chatted away! I liked Monkton enormously, starting with Neil's delightful explanation of Unitarianism, which I'd not understood prior to this trip. I liked the way Unitarians honoured men with morals and virtue, regardless of religious persuasion, and so had stained glass portraits of such famous past thinkers displayed in the church. I personally admire both Quakers and Buddhists for their inclusiveness and respect for other faiths, so I can now add Unitarians to this list. The glass used was rather beautiful because of its lead content, which caused different visual effects on the glass surface. What I hadn't mentioned was the awful heavy rain we were dealing with. We had to trudge to St Augustine's at Pendlebury through it! A Victorian church by G.K. Bodley, it is quite different, but quite beautiful in its way. The windows differed by each being of mainly a single colour. Sadly many were quite damaged. We then moved on to St Peter's in Swinton, which like St Augustine's has connections to the Heywood banking family. This was the only church so far in which the stained glass was listed and colour-coded showing maker, date, contents and for whom it was a memorial, making it so easy to view and enjoy the windows. We were also served very welcoming hot coffee there. We then moved on to St Leonard's in Middleton in the north-east of Manchester. This is a much older church, dating from 1524, although a church has been on the site since 1100 (there are two Norman arches still in the present church). There is a famous memorial window to local archers (said to have fought at Flodden) from the 16th century – said to be the oldest such window, which also shows the Ashton family.

We then moved further south-east to Ashton-under-Lyne. As we were running late, a wedding was already going on in the Albion United Reform church. We went round to the refectory to be served delicious homemade soup with a buffet to follow. The vicar's wife had made some gluten free breads for us to taste! Afterwards we went round the church. The windows were by Burne Jones and William Morris. (I was interested in the fact that Dr David Livingstone's mother-in-law had had links with the church in the early 19th century.)

Our next visit was to the Parish church of St Michael and All Angels, which contained a large number of medieval windows, many being of members of the Ashton family, who were donors



of the church through several generations, as well as a whole set of St Helen. She was a very popular saint in the latter Middle Ages. I was impressed enough to buy the church booklets on the windows. Helen was the mother of Constantine, who converted Rome to Christianity!

For our final visit of the day, we drove south to Marple (which made me think of Agatha Christie's Miss Marple – I wonder if there is a connection?). I was rather tired by that point and after a brief look at the Morris & Co windows, and admiring the embellishments in the Lady Chapel as well as the unusual font, I rested my foot.

We returned to the Chancellor's Centre, where I discovered that my foot had swollen due to the bandage having got wet (it had been raining continuously during the day). Reception provided some ice and I managed to get the swelling down, after which I joined the others for a drink and to chat. Linda got me a drink and Deanne had arranged the seating at the Conference dinner, to enable me to put my foot up! We had Dinny, Refia, Ruth, Linda and Cliff at our table. Andrew Taylor was persuaded to join us, for as Dinny put it, 'we need another man!' We had a very amusing time – we tried to get Deanne to show us her belly dancing, for which Cliff offered to play a flute accompaniment – alas we failed. The food was of an excellent standard and most enjoyable. I must admit to feeling quite 'rough' by then, and after a brief look at the fireworks belonging to another event at the Centre, I went to bed exhausted.

SUNDAY Deanne kindly came for me in the morning, and after breakfast we went to the coaches in bright sunshine. Linda sat next to me and we had a nice chat. Our first port of call was Pownall Hall, down south of Manchester in Wilmslow. This beautifully decorated house is now a boys' primary school. I felt that the headmaster was surprised to see more than sixty people arrive at once, but he coped admirably! The site was mentioned back in 1297 in a Royal Charter and had various owners, while the current house was built in 1830 by James Pownall of Liverpool. The most interesting owner was Henry Boddington the brewer, who commissioned much of the present interior in the late 1880s, yet lived in the house only till 1891 as by then Henry had lost his fortune.

We then went west towards Warrington to St Wilfred's of Grappenhall. This ancient church has been added to over the years. In addition to the other stained glass windows, there is a small fragment of a medieval window in yellow and brown, which is sadly 'imprisoned' in a glass-fronted light box causing to leadwork to completely disintegrate – it is in a very unfortunate state! I personally feel it would be better made into a special small panel that could be hung somewhere in the church in fresh lead. We drove north along the M6 to Ashton-in-Makerfield and made our way to a community hall adjacent to St Oswald and St Edmund's church. (The weather was showery again.) There were plates of sandwiches laid out, etc. After a snack, we looked round the delightful and well-used 20th-century Catholic church. I found the stained glass by the Harry Clarke studio quite

stunning, my favourite one being of St Clare (I believe), holding a 'monstrance' (a sacred vessel); I found the colours and style breathtaking. Sadly we had to leave all too soon to drive back east into Greater Manchester to St John the Evangelist at Higher Broughton. I found this the most depressing visit of all. Built in 1839, the church was no longer in use and was in an awful state due to both vandalism and the removal of most of its contents. In the end, I sat outside and waited for the others while I secretly wished that we could have spent more time in the previous churches or have gone to a gallery instead (still it was the only place on the whole trip that I didn't enjoy!). We then made our way back. Linda, Sue and I went on the coach taking people to the station. We enjoyed another trip round the city centre on our way back to Chancellors.

We chatted to those who were leaving, including Linda, then those of us still remaining, went to see Ann Sotheran's slide presentation at 5.30 pm. It was both enjoyable and informative seeing Ann's work, and I really wished that I could have seen

other people's work too. Roger even commented as such! Our remaining group went to eat a really nice meal, after which even more people left. I went to sit in the lounge to chat, and we had the privilege of listening to Cliff's intuitive playing of a Native American flute, which was very moving. I went to bed quite exhausted around 10-ish.

MONDAY I left with Angela and two of her friends by cab for the station, and so to home.

FOOTNOTES I went to have my damaged foot looked at and X-rayed. Apparently I had chipped a bone, which was quite clever of me! But I'm happy to say that it is now much better. I'm also delighted that the lovely Victoria Baths have been successful in attracting funding to renovate the main pool (it was on the 'News'). Finally I would like to say a huge 'Thank you' to Sue Ashworth, Caroline Benyon et al, not forgetting the amazing staff and accommodation at the Chancellor's Centre. What a wonderful experience – I'm so glad I took the plunge!