

On 25 March 2014 at a special Evensong in the Chapel two stained glass panels, being life-size representations of former Archbishop members of the Inn, were re-dedicated, nearly 75 years since they last graced it.

Their return to the Inn is a fascinating tale. They were originally installed in the Victorian Chapel in 1920, the gift of a Master Mattinson, having been made by the then leading stained glass craftsman of the time, Robert Anning Bell. At the outbreak of World War II, they were removed, along with all the Inn's other wonderful glass (in common with that of many other buildings in London) and taken to Wales for safe keeping.

The Chapel, along with much else of the Inn, was heavily damaged in bombing in 1940 and 1941, which in turn led to major rebuilding after the war, all under architectural supervision of Sir Edward Maufe. (See the pictures of the destruction and new designs in the Chapel Gallery.) The glass was returned to London. Maufe's new Chapel design – the one we know today – was incorporated into a revised Domus. It has fewer windows than its predecessor, and so

But what of the big question: where could they go? While the restorers were doing their work a number of the Inn's finest minds considered the issue and got out the tape measure. It soon became obvious that they were a perfect fit for the rebates on either side of the Chapel Gallery, and that this was an excellent place to locate them. We had further learnt that, using a still developing technology, one could backlight stained glass with special dimmable panels, giving them the impression of open air behind, and that was what we resolved to do. A Faculty was obtained to allow this, and, after about four years from our first learning of them, the work commenced. This all sounds very easy, but in fact it was the most tricky, heavy and awkward job, requiring clever precision planning and engineering to mount the panels and then elevate them, let alone perfect their lighting. We were privileged to have at the helm of the project David Wain, who gave it his heart and soul beginning to end.

We are delighted with the result and so were the Master and other representatives of the Worshipful Company of Glaziers and the Repository who attended the rededication. I hope other Chapel goers are just as pleased. ■

## STAINED GLASS PANELS RETURN TO CHAPEL AFTER 75 YEARS

MASTER ROGER EASTMAN, DEAN OF CHAPEL

not all the old windows were used. What happened thereafter to the unused panels is not entirely certain, and, frankly, the Inn lost track of them.

The story is taken up again in about January 2010 when the Worshipful Company of Glaziers were contacted by an American academic who was a scholar of the works of the said Anning Bell. Did they know the whereabouts of the two Archbishop panels from Gray's Inn which didn't go back after the War? A quick search of the Repository's inventory revealed exactly where they were – downstairs! It also answered the mystery of where they had originally been installed. They had been in the Repository since about 1983 when it was created, having, it is thought, been brought there from a North London glaziers' yard when it closed down, with nothing to identify their original source.

The Glaziers Company contacted the Inn and told us of them. Were we interested? Not much! The Under-Treasurer, the Director of Estates and I hot-footed to the Repository to inspect, and were delighted with what we found. They were just as good as the panels we knew well, and in fairly good order. Would we like them back? There was no doubt about that. And so, in return for a donation to the Repository's funds and a promise to have them restored by recommended experts, we were able to retake possession of them.

The panel on the left depicts John Williams (1582–1650), appointed Archbishop of York in 1642, who supported the King in the Civil War. The panel on the right depicts Richard Bancroft (1544–1610), appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 1604, who organised the teams of translators who produced the King James Bible.

