

The *Splendour* of *Light*

CHRISTOPHER WEBB (1886 - 1966)
and the WINDOWS of St LAWRENCE JEWRY



ST LAWRENCE JEWRY next Guildhall
Tuesday 4th to Friday 28th October 2016
OPEN Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

CHRISTOPHER WEBB

and the WINDOWS of St LAWRENCE JEWRY

Christopher Webb was a well-known and popular stained glass artist of the mid 20th century.



The windows at St Lawrence Jewry made up the largest of his schemes and in many respects represented a culmination of his prolific career in stained glass design and manufacture.

2016 is the 50th anniversary of his death and a good time for a re-assessment of his achievements - while his work has remained popular in many churches lucky enough to have one or more of his windows, it has often been damned with faint praise by architects and other critics for its apparent conservatism and lack of adventurousness.

This exhibition puts Webb's commission for the refitting of St Lawrence Jewry after its destruction in the blitz of 1940 in the context of his development as an artist over the previous three decades. It also uses copies of original sketches and full-size cartoons from the collection of his son John Webb to show how designs for individual windows changed, sometimes very significantly, during the commissioning and approval process.

In the almost complete absence of written records of this process, the sketches and cartoons provide a fascinating and unusual insight into Webb's ideas and the ways in which they were modified by input from other interested parties. For example, in the original scheme one window was to have been a portrait of the Queen but this idea was abandoned after Webb had prepared a particularly attractive sketch. Fortunately the sketch survives and will be included in the exhibition.

The sketches and cartoons have not been seen outside the Webb family since Christopher Webb's death in 1966. Many of the sketches, while showing signs of their practical use in making the windows, are miniature works of art in their own right, and the cartoons, fragile as many of them are now, demonstrate Webb's skill in draughtsmanship.



The exhibition will be accompanied by a comprehensive catalogue and concludes with pointers to other Webb windows in and around the London area.

The two small panels shown above were made by Christopher Webb in 1943 for the temporary chapel constructed under the tower after the rest of the church had been destroyed. Services were held there until the church was reconsecrated in 1957. It was perhaps this earlier connexion with the church which led to him being approached for the major scheme a decade later.