



Warwick Town Council Blue Plaque Unveiling

William Holland
c.1805 – 1883

Master Glass Maker

Lived here



William Holland, (c.1805 – 1883)

William Holland was a 19th-century master maker of stained glass who established his painting and plumbing firm in Wallace Street, Warwick in

1828. By 1832 he was working out of 14 Smith Street, advertising his business as Midland Counties Stained Glass and Decorative Works. His work was in the style of 12th century Gothic art, illustrating scriptural events. His work is now recognised as an important link between 19th Century Gothic Revival and High Victorian Revival work.

William Holland married Catherine Yates, at St Nicholas Church in 1828, with whom he had four children, including Thomas who trained in his father's studio as a stained glass painter. After Catherine's death in 1843, William married Mary Holt in 1848, with whom he had two further children.

In 1847, William purchased then demolished two houses on Priory Road (then Oil Mill Lane). He commissioned the building of his family residence at 3 Priory Rd and adjoining workshops. At this time, his business included decorative house painting, papering, wood and stone carving and glass staining. He received commissions for private residences such as Brownsover Hall, Ragley Hall and Guy's Cliffe and Holland studio stained glass windows can be seen in churches throughout the England, Ireland and Wales.

The 1851 Census shows that he employed 26 men at the Priory Road glassworks, including his nephew Frank Holt, who also became a renowned Master Stained Glass Painter. Both James Butler and Clement Heaton were apprentices at the Holland studios. Both went on to establish the very successful stained glass company Heaton, Butler & Bayne.

Also in 1851, he was one of 25 stained glass producers invited to exhibit his work at The Great Exhibition, which was held at the Crystal Palace, Hyde Park, from 1 May to 15 October. He won medals for his stained glass work and decorative furniture. Following on from the Great Exhibition, Holland added 'Glass Stainer by appointment to the Queen' and 'Prize Medal Winner' to his business letterhead.

William Holland retired in 1873. His business was continued by his son Thomas and nephew Frank Holt. By 1880 the firm had become F Holt & Co, glass stainers, glaziers and gilders and remained largely the same until the company ceased trading in the 1920's.

In 1913, Frank Holt moved his studio to the opposite side of Priory Road, when the Warwickshire Yeomanry took over the site in 1913. It is now the home of the Museum of the Queen's Royal Hussars and Guy Goodwin's antique restoration business.

William died at his granddaughter's residence in Leamington Spa on 27 September 1883, aged 78 years.

Examples of his work can be found locally today in:

- St Mary's Church, East Window, Warwick
- All Saints Church, Leamington Spa
- St Peter's Church, Barford
- St Michael's Church, Budbrooke,
- Former chapel, Princethorpe College
- St James' Church, South Aisle East Window, Southam
- St Peter's Church, Wellesbourne



The Old Glassworks today



Great Exhibition 1851 – stained glass on the left in the Central North Gallery



*Detail of angels from window at St Peter's Church, Barford
(Credit: Sasha Ward)*



Acts of Mercy windows from St James Church, Southam



With many thanks
to Lynne Hampson