



The east window of
St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace,
designed by Helen Whittaker
(www.helenwhittakerart.com)

*The genesis of *Fragments**

After I was approached by Eugenie Maxwell with a commission to compose a piece for the visit of the Worshipful Company of Musicians to St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, I spent a great deal of time reading about the history of the church and the story of St Ethelburga herself.

However, it was the period of silent contemplation that I spent in the reconstructed St Ethelburga's which gave the greatest impetus to my work, and which most shaped my final conception of the piece.

I was especially moved by the story of the magnificent east window and its redesign and reconstruction, which began with the gathering up and cataloguing of many fragments of glass from the original window, which the artist Helen Whittaker fashioned these into a beautiful new depiction of St Ethelburga: 'These fragments ... remind us of the tribulations of the past – but give us Hope for the future.'

This gathering up of the old stained glass was an inspiring story, and I wanted to incorporate this metaphor into my work.

I joined together various musical threads that to me reflected the wealth of influences embodied in the new St Ethelburga's, influences that both look backwards to the past and forwards to the future. The medieval origins of the church; the devastation of the terrorist attack of 24th April, 1993; the location of St Ethelburga's with its Andalucian garden in the heart of a bustling 21st-century financial district; and, not least, the pioneering role of the Centre in promoting dialogue and understanding in a troubled world.

Although all these individual elements, both glass and music, retain their separate identities and colours, they also take on new life and a different meaning as part of an organic whole. This, for me, was highly symbolic of the restoration and renaissance of the building itself.

Adrian Horsewood, March 2011