



Parish life and heritage in stained glass



Helen Whittaker working on the window.

Window on the world

A RARE treat is in store for visitors to Ellerton Church on Sunday.

A new stained glass window, filled with unusual local references and unlike anything else in an English church, will be unveiled to the public.

"This must be the first time a cannabis leaf and a burbot have been included in a large stained-glass window," says restoration fund chairman Phil Thomas.

"We can't wait to explain the strange reason to all our visitors."

Ellerton's church building, which stands on the site of a rare Gilbertine monastery just above the ings of the Lower Derwent Valley, was closed in 1978 and was completely derelict by 1992.

Since then it has been lovingly restored with the help of money from the Heritage Lottery Fund and with hundreds of hours of local vol-

unteer labour.

The restoration programme has been done using traditional local craftsmanship in stone, wood and glass.

Where possible, the trustees aim to commission new work of outstanding quality.

Thus they asked Helen Whittaker of Barley Studios, at Dunnington, to design and make the new Ellerton Window.

Barley Studios, internationally renowned for the conservation of ancient glass, has made the window to commemorate the 800th anniversary of Ellerton church.

Helen and the studios recently designed and made the new east window for St Ethelburga's, the City of London church devastated by a huge IRA bomb blast.

The company's windows at Ely Cathedral, Cambridgeshire, have been

widely praised.

Helen's Ellerton design reflects the traditional farming pattern of the Derwent Ings, with its associated fishes, birds, plants and personalities.

She has also incorporated jewel-like coats of arms in recognition of Ellerton's important medieval glass, first recorded in 1584.

There will be plenty more to attract visitors on Sunday including home-made refreshments, produce stalls, guided tours, tombola, an exhibition and plentiful free car parking.

The Ellerton Window has been sponsored by the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, English Nature and numerous generous private donors.

Future work at the fabric and refurbishment of the church is to be supported by the Local Heritage Initiative and is to be administered by the Countryside Agency.