



ST. GREGORY'S CHURCH KIRKNEWTON, NORTHUMBERLAND

Centenary window and sculpture in memory of Josephine Butler 1828-1906

South Porch (9.75 sq mtrs) 2006



This commission celebrates the life and achievements of Josephine Butler (1828-1906) on the centenary of her death. She was one of the leading campaigners of the 19th and early 20th centuries for social reform for women. Her fight against child prostitution was instrumental in raising the age of consent from 13 to 16. Her father's cousin was Earl Grey (Prime Minister 1830-34). She was from the North East of England where she spent the last years of her life, and is buried in the churchyard of St. Gregory's, Kirknewton.

Helen Whittaker undertook this project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and public donations. She engaged a local community group in Northumberland to gauge opinions



of Josephine Butler with a questionnaire and brainstorming session. She also worked in two schools, Chatton and Millfield, to teach children about stained glass and symbolism in church windows.

Lettering by Charles Smith FRSA.

THE ARTWORK

The Josephine Butler commission consists of a sculpture and a window. The sculpture in copper comprises nine lilies on seven bars/stems entwined with bindweed. The bars/stems and bindweed symbolise the social constraints and oppression experienced by women that Josephine fought against throughout her life. The bars (and the lilies that spring from them) progress to the light of the window where a short text is printed. Josephine was motivated by her faith and by the trauma of the death of her young daughter to dedicate her life to the service of the poor, the sick and disadvantaged.

Helen Whittaker
STAINED GLASS
& SCULPTURE