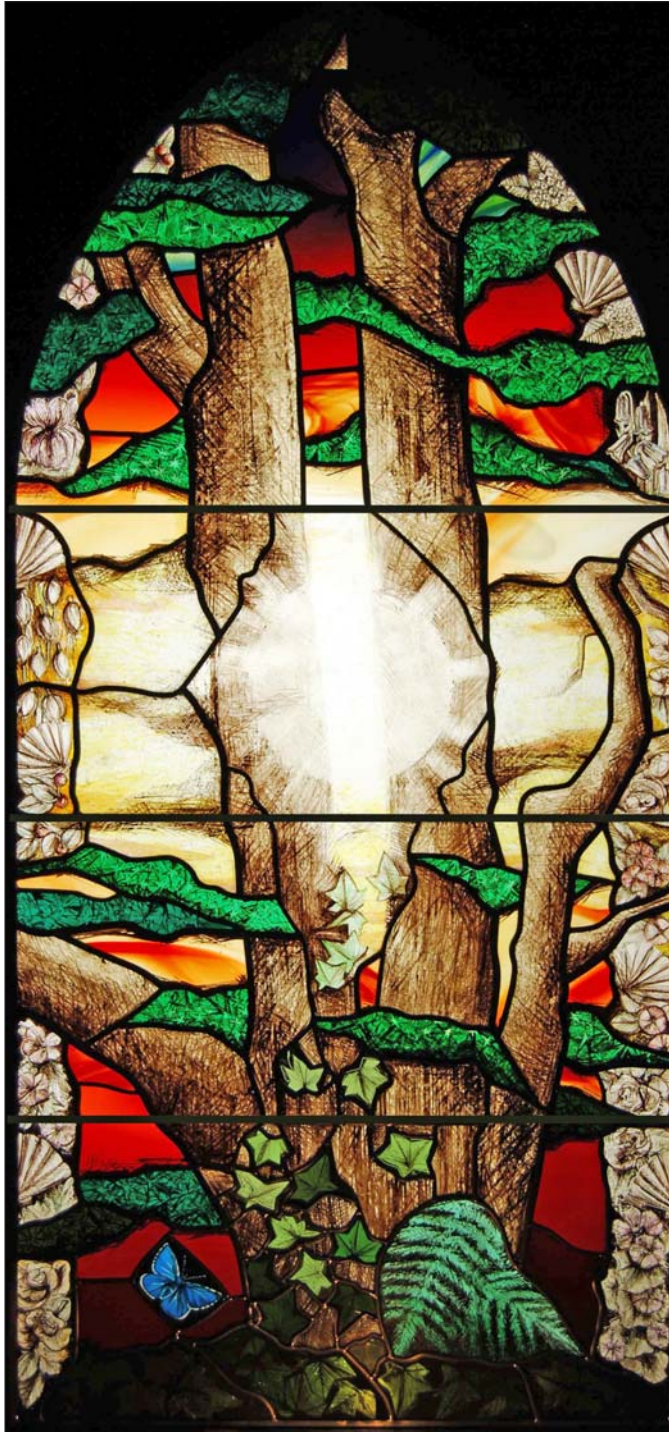




HIGHGATE CEMETERY LONDON

Commemorative Window – North Wall (0.8m x 1.7m) 2012



THE BRIEF

Helen Whittaker was commissioned to create a commemorative window for St. James Chapel, Highgate Cemetery celebrating three generations of the Andrewes family, who lived in Highgate village for over a hundred years. The creation of the window has been part of a major refurbishment of the chapel interior, including recreating its 1880's décor, directed by architect Jon Allen and supported by the Friends of Highgate Cemetery.

THE WINDOW

The window depicts a cedar of Lebanon tree, like one that has stood in the cemetery grounds for over 300 years, since before the cemetery's foundation. The tree is an ancient and deeply revered theme within many cultures and alludes to the interconnectedness of all life on earth. I felt this was fitting for Highgate Cemetery as people of many different faiths and beliefs are buried here; the universal symbol of the tree encompasses these.

At the heart of the tree is a glowing sunset, representing the end of the day and the passing of life. This also relates to the westerly position of the original tree in the graveyard. In the border, surrounding the tree can be seen shrubbery and wild flowers, a key feature of the cemetery. These include geraniums, cow parsley, periwinkles, bluebells, hellebore, snowdrops, rosa glauca, butcher's bloom, ferns and Ivy. Also within the border are shells, a symbol of St. James of Compostella, to whom the chapel is dedicated. At the base of the tree, to the bottom left hand corner of the window can be seen one of the many native butterflies at Highgate, the Holly Blue (*Celastrina argiolus*). The ivy at the base of the window, and growing towards the light, is partially gilded in gold leaf. This new growth suggests the dawn of a new day and a return to nature. Thus the cycle continues; as the sun sets on Highgate, new life begins.

Helen Whittaker
STAINED GLASS
& SCULPTURE