

LH183(E)

Comparison of the St. Sebastian Windows of Fairford (Glos) and Lighthorne Churches

by Colin Such (2015)



Fairford Church St. Sebastian



Lighthorne Church St. Sebastian

I visited St. Mary's Church at Fairford, Gloucestershire, in order to view the set of late medieval windows, the only complete set anywhere in England. In particular I wanted to view the St. Sebastian window apparently from the same cartoon as the St. Sebastian window in St. Laurence's Church at Lighthorne. The guide book to the Fairford windows states: *The overall plan of the windows is probably due to Richard Fox, Lord Privy Seal and Bishop of Durham, later of Winchester. The glass was made between 1500 and 1517 probably under the direction of the King's Glazier, Barnard Flower, largely in his workshops at Westminster. A number of the glaziers and glass painters came from the Netherlands. Re-leading has taken place at various times and there are signs of patchwork repairs. During the Reformation (about 1550) and in Cromwellian times some of the lights may have been whitewashed over; in the latter period some of the heads of figures were probably removed.*



Fairford Church, showing the position of the St. Sebastian window in the clerestory.

There are 28 windows at Fairford and 8 of them are in the clerestory. They depict the 12 martyrs and confessors of the faith. Unfortunately they are at a considerable height above the nave and cannot be viewed as easily as those in the walls of the nave. I was offered a pair of binoculars by the person in attendance! With the aid of a telephoto lens I was able to take the photo upper left. It must be appreciated that the apparent proportions are not accurate due to restrictions imposed by the lens and the distortions due to manipulating the image to fit this page. However a comparison can be made between the two figures.

It must be said that there are more differences than similarities, though the overall posture of the two figures is similar, as is the positioning of the arms and hands. This is clearly a topic for further research.