



Southwell Minster Goblet

[2 are in the display cabinet in the State chamber]

These were commissioned by Denis, Bishop of Southwell in 1984 to mark the centenary of the Minster becoming a cathedral in 1884. They were limited to a maximum of 500, although it is not known if the full number were made. The first one was given to the Queen to mark her visit on 19th April 1984 for the Maundy Service.

The following is copied from the information that was provided with each goblet:

“THE SOUTHWELL MINSTER GOBLET, by Aurum Designs, is made of 8¹/₂ ounces (8 ounces Troy) of solid sterling silver and stands 6¹/₂ inches high. Pure gold only is used for the gilding of the pierced leaf sculpture above the stem, the undulating lines on the foot and the whole of the interior of the bowl.

Each Goblet is individually made by craft methods and bears the London hallmark of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths. The design is by Hector Miller, a Freeman of the Company. The base of each Goblet has an inscription which contains its individual number and the number in the limited

edition, 500. The accompanying certificate is signed by the Lord Bishop of Southwell.”

And the following is copied from the accompanying illustrated leaflet which would have been edited by the then Archdeacon of Newark, soon to be Dean of the Minster, David Leaning as chairman of the Southwell Diocesan Centenary Committee:

“THE LEAVES OF SOUTHWELL are of varied plants and trees. Among the main ones are Oak, Hawthorn and Ivy and these provide the three finely sculptured studies above the Goblet's stem. Each study has as a centrepiece a different face mask of the Green Man, inspired by the Chapter House carving



The three golden lines which decorate the Goblet's foot also make a dual heraldic allusion. Undulating lines, 'wavy fesses', are indicative of water in heraldry. They are a principal feature in

both the shield of Nottinghamshire, referring to the River Trent, and in the shield of the Diocese, recalling the three ancient wells which gave Southwell its name.

Nottinghamshire's Diocese is named from its great Norman Minster at Southwell, situated in the heart of the county and the smallest cathedral city in England.

Since the year 1108, Southwell Minster has been the mother church of Nottinghamshire, in the last hundred years as a cathedral and before then as a collegiate foundation of the old Saxon kind. It is the inspiration for the design of the silver goblet commissioned by the Lord Bishop for the centenary.

The Minster was built in the twelfth century but its Choir and Chapter House date from the thirteenth. Their architectural style is acknowledged in the Goblet's design by the sweeping line of its profile, which gives emphasis to the focal point above the stem: a pierced filigree of leaves, fashioned in silver and overlaid with pure gold.

They are inspired by the Leaves of Southwell, the Minster's richest treasure. For this sober Norman building yet contains the most luxuriant and finest Gothic foliage carving in all England.

Leaves of stone adorn the arcaded walls leading to the Chapter House and arch around its graceful entrance. Inside, leaves spread in and over the tall canopies above its seats and enmesh the capitals of its many columns. Above, the bosses of its vaulted roof are formed of yet more leaves.

Carved true to life with consummate artistry, the Leaves of Southwell are varied in kind, all belonging to the English countryside and garden. Set among them are flowers, birds and beasts and, conspicuously, the Green Man of folklore. His foliate head in different guises permits, as it does in the Goblet, centrepieces for designs of leaves, adding a touch of fantasy to their naturalistic forms.

The Green Man became part of the symbolic language of the Church early in the Middle Ages, although his origin goes back to pagan times. Ancient spirit of the English greenwood, his presence cannot be accidental in a Minster which, nearly nine centuries ago, was built so hard by Sherwood Forest, through which were brought its oaken beams and gold-hued Mansfield stone."

Hector Miller designed many similar commemorative goblets and other items in the 1970s and 80s, about 35 in all, including for : Lincoln, York, Canterbury, Chichester, Westminster Abbey, The Queen's 60th birthday and the Royal Wedding of 1981.

With thanks to Margaret Waddington who has a goblet and kindly provided the associated documentation and Peter Aldrick who took the photographs.