

Lancing College Chapel

Lancing College was founded in 1848 in Shoreham by Nathaniel Woodard. The Woodard corporation today has 12 schools, which if you include Academies, and Affiliated schools now numbers 32 including 2 overseas schools. 10 years later in 1858 the school moved from Shoreham to its current position, 10 years later again in 1868 the foundation stone was laid for the chapel. NW the founder employed R.C Carpenter as the architect, although much of the design was completed by his son R.H Carpenter and William Slater. The chapel was to be both the school chapel, but also the central minster of the Woodard schools. Sir George Oatley described the building as 'a perfect blend between the lightness and elegance of early French Gothic and the strength and masculinity added on to it, on the soil of England'

The site for the chapel was found to be clay and sand, not chalk, so it was suggested to move the site for the chapel, but NW would not hear of it. Victorian navvies started to dig, the chapel's foundations are 21 m or 70 feet deep in places. Underneath each of the pillars in the chapel are deep column of concrete, 100 tons a week were poured, the foundations took 2 years to complete. The chapel is constructed of Sussex sandstone, quarried from Scaynes Hill. By 1875 the crypt was completed and used as the school chapel. In 1881 the walls had reached the triforium level, by this stage Nathaniel's son Billy was the driving force behind the construction, NW told Billy to build the apse to the full height, NW climbed the scaffolding at the age of 70 years and laid the bonding stone, so that after his death the size of the chapel would not be scaled back. The original design included a tower of 350 feet - 107 m, which would have been twice the height, the foundations were built, but not the tower. NW died in 1891.

In the 1870s Billy bid for a ship wreck off Shoreham, which contained a cargo of Portland stone, which was used for the chapel floor. The upper chapel was finally dedicated in 1911.

The stalls were designed by Gilbert Scott, and were presented to Lancing College by Eton, after they found some medieval wall paintings behind the stalls. The desk fronts were designed by Walter tower, to accompany the stalls. After the WW1 the tapestries were installed designed by Lady Chilston in 1933, these portray the patron saints of the original 12 Woodard schools, they are believed to be the largest of their kind in the world. They were woven at Merton Abbey, and completed in 1937. Left hand panel is the virgin Mary, central Our Lord in Glory, right hand panel Saint John the Baptist. The central fountain is a symbol of the four rivers of paradise. The original plan was for a huge carved reredos at the east end, but it was decided colour was preferable. The borders top and bottom were woven separately, and attached afterwards. The works at Merton Abbey had been founded by William Morris, Lady Chilston had designed a set of four tapestries for Eton college chapel depicting St George. St John in the right hand panel is the patron saint of Hurstpierpoint college.

The brass lectern is by Bainbridge Reynolds and was presented in memory of a chaplain Edmund Field, after which one of the boarding houses is now named Fields.

Temple Moore designed the two Chantries, the one on the south side is the founder's chantry, but he is not buried there, there is a recumbent effigy by P Bryant Parker, and he lays on a slab of Sussex marble. The one on the north side is for his son Billy Woodard who was instrumental in building this building.

The standard candlesticks are an 18th century copy of a pair in Certosa di Pavia in Lombardy Italy. The silver cross on the high altar is from Toledo and is silver nailed onto wood, rather than solid silver. It dates from 1490, many such objects were melted down during the Renaissance. Bainbridge Reynolds who made the lectern made a pair of candlesticks to match, these were stolen in 1978 and a replica pair of candlesticks were made.

In the south aisle is a 17th century wooden statue of St Nicholas, the stained glass window depicts S. Nicholas and S. Martin, in memory of a great benefactor Martin Gibbs. The white ensign is in memory of the war years when the school was evacuated and the school became HMS King Alfred. The side chapel is dedicated to S. Nicholas.

The side chapel on the north is the lady chapel. The stained glass here was designed by Stephen Dykes Bower

The height of the nave is 27 m or 90 feet. The simple design was to draw your eyes upward.

The war memorial cloister was again designed by Temple Moore, and each stone was laid by Dick Gale who spent his entire working life building the chapel, as well as the names of all those who died in the 2 world wars are inscribed in Sicilian marble, and a stained glass window dedicated to HMS King Alfred.

Finally the west end, including the pulpitum which supports the organ loft, and the rose window, designed by Sir Stephen Dykes Bower, the rose window is thirty two in diameter and is the largest such window in the country, nothing has been built on this scale for 500 years. The shield of LC is at the centre. The outer ring of shields are 16 other Woodard schools, each school contributed for the glass of their own shield. The smaller ring of trefoils are representing arms of the dioceses. There are sixteen petals of colour radiating from the centre. The stonework and the stained glass were both designed by Sir DB, there are 30,000 separate pieces of glass, the glass was blown, and therefore the colour can vary, lead is then used to join the glass. Sir DB also designed the painting on the ceiling below the organ loft.