

The image shows the interior of the All Souls College Chapel, a historic building with a high, dark wood-paneled ceiling featuring intricate carvings of golden angels. The walls are lined with tall, narrow stained glass windows and rows of wooden pews. At the far end, a large, ornate altar is visible, flanked by more windows and a checkered floor leading up to it.

# ALL SOULS COLLEGE CHAPEL

## AN HISTORICAL GUIDE



# ALL SOULS COLLEGE CHAPEL

AN  
HISTORICAL  
GUIDE



John Drury



## Introduction

STEPPING INTO All Souls College Chapel you find yourself in another world, a late medieval world, of beauty made of lucid space and friendly light – all serenely complete. Even the huge screen, painted blue green and lavishly gilded, although it was put up two centuries later and according to quite different canons of taste, enhances the delicacy of the original fifteenth-century architecture.

Five and a half centuries have brought about the chapel's present appearance. If you had visited it in 1450 or 1550 or 1665 or 1750 you would have seen a very different chapel: the same building but furnished and decorated according to spectacularly contrasting forms of belief and worship. They have left traces. Religion is a vehicle of human passions, creativity and hopes, and not stable. Originally a place to enchant the eye with images and colour, the chapel was stripped to the bone a century on, then repopulated with images of human figures (but now flying free and not confined in niches) and finally restored in the 1870's to something much more like it was at the start.

This guide book does rather more than describe what there is to see now. It is also concerned with what there has been and why it was so. Convictions about life and death under changing conditions motivated people – meaning the wardens and fellows of All Souls College – to accommodate the place where they met day by day and week by week to their beliefs and hopes. So as the book takes you round the chapel it picks up traces of changes and of the people who made them and why. Its interest in such people results in a longish section on the monuments in the outer chapel. It was all theirs once.

This book owes a great deal to *The Reredos of All Souls College Oxford* published by Paul Holberton / Ad Ilissum in 2021, to Peregrine Horden its editor and its various and expert contributors. It also draws on a sermon, available on the web, preached by the Warden, Sir John Vickers, in 2018 on the names on the war memorial. (<https://www.asc.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/migrated-files/Sermon20181111-JohnVickers.pdf>)



*View of the  
outer chapel  
from the  
entrance.*



### *Founder and Foundation*

ALL SOULS COLLEGE with its chapel was founded in 1438 by Henry Chichele (c.1362–1443). He was Archbishop of Canterbury, at the head of the English church, for twenty-nine years. In the summer of 1442 (his last) he presided over this chapel's inaugural Mass: the sacrificial ritual in which – as he firmly believed – bread and wine were miraculously changed by his Latin incantation into the actual body and blood of Christ. He was an old man of eighty, supporting himself on a stick, tough but bowed down by decades of dedicated administration, diplomatic travels and meetings. His life had been spent holding things together against disruptive stresses of social unrest, the years with two rival popes, heresy and war. He had already endowed his hometown of Higham Ferrers with a small college of priests, a school and a 'bede house' (care home). These buildings still stand and are well worth a visit. He endowed the Cistercian monks of Oxford with a house just north of the city walls. All Souls was his last project, with the king himself as co-founder. A year later he died and was buried in the tomb that he had prepared for himself some two decades earlier in Canterbury Cathedral (it suited his controlling nature not to leave it to other people). There he lies, fully robed and mitred: an intimidating figure, with his projecting lower lip and his staring eyes looking up at a parade of angels on the ceiling. He is flanked by broad pillars decorated with niches accommodating saints and worthies. His rage for order shows. But on the ground under his magnificent effigy lies a sculpture of his naked, rotting corpse. An inscription reads:

I was born a poor man and raised to be Primate here. Now I am cast down and turned into food for worms. Behold my grave and see in it a mirror for yourself.

The double theme of this autobiographical monument, order and mortality, is reflected in Chichele's last project. All Souls was to be both a college and a chantry for the souls of the dead. Its forty fellows were to divide their time between study and prayer. They were young men who had graduated in the university. And they were priests, serving orthodox religion and its rituals. At the same time they were training, by reading and formal disputations, to be capable lawyers, upholding public peace and order. They were to be sent

out as what Chichele called ‘an unarmed clerical militia’ to impose the law and extirpate heresy nationwide. Chichele felt an urgent need for this. While he was diligently climbing the career ladder – provided by Bishop William of Wykeham’s new foundations at Winchester and New College, Oxford – an Archbishop of Canterbury had been lynched when the Peasants’ Revolt occupied London in 1381. In 1414, the year of Chichele’s enthronement as Archbishop of Canterbury, Lollards attempted a *coup d’état*. Their name meant ‘mutterers’, readers half-aloud of their English bibles. They were followers of the radical reformist Oxford theologian, John Wyclif of Balliol College: puritanical and contemptuous of the Church’s wealth and ceremonies, sceptical of the miracle of the Mass, sustained by unofficial, and private reading of the Bible in English (not the official Latin). Chichele hated them. It was remarked that, as an archbishop in his sixties, he got on his horse and hunted them down, consigning thirty of them to his vile prisons.

The foundation of All Souls College was motivated by justified anxiety for the security of the realm. It was also moved by that fundamental existential anxiety, the fear of death. Chichele and his contemporaries thought they knew what happened to the dead and it was not reassuring. They were not entirely dead. Their bodies, like Chichele’s on his tomb at Canterbury, had perished, but their souls lived on in purgatory, being punished for their sins. This was to prepare them – miraculously reunited with their bodies – for divine judgment at the end of the world. However, charity softened justice. The prayers of the living could assist the dead and shorten their torments. So the other function of Chichele’s college was to remember the dead, particularly those of the French wars, by praying for them and offering the redeeming sacrifice of the Mass on their behalf at the eight altars in the chapel, day by day. That was why the fellows were to be priests as well as lawyers and theologians. The combination of a graduate training college for public service with an oratory for the dead was marked and very much Chichele’s own idea – the idea, not of a saint but of a manager. All Souls, as a graduate college, added a third stage to William of Wykeham’s college for boys at Winchester and his college for undergraduate students at New College.



*The chapel from the entrance to the college*

### *Entrances*

APART FROM the grass (originally it was paved) the college’s front quadrangle looks exactly as it did when it was built nearly six centuries ago, between 1438 and 1442. It accommodated forty fellows, crammed two or three to a room. The eight taller windows on the right-hand (eastern) side belonged to the library. There they would read books – all in manuscript and all in the Latin which was the everyday language of learning and religion in western Europe. The tallest and widest windows of all are the five which confront the visitor across the quadrangle. They are in the peculiarly English style of late gothic architecture aptly called ‘perpendicular’ from its emphatic uprights. They light the chapel, the most important of all the college buildings, the site of divine presence and worship.

The chapel is entered though a vestibule in the north-west corner of the quadrangle. Its ceiling is fan-vaulted – another peculiarity of the English late gothic style. Facing its entrance is a relief sculpture which was once over the college gate, and so is eroded by centuries of English weather. Naked human figures are coming out of



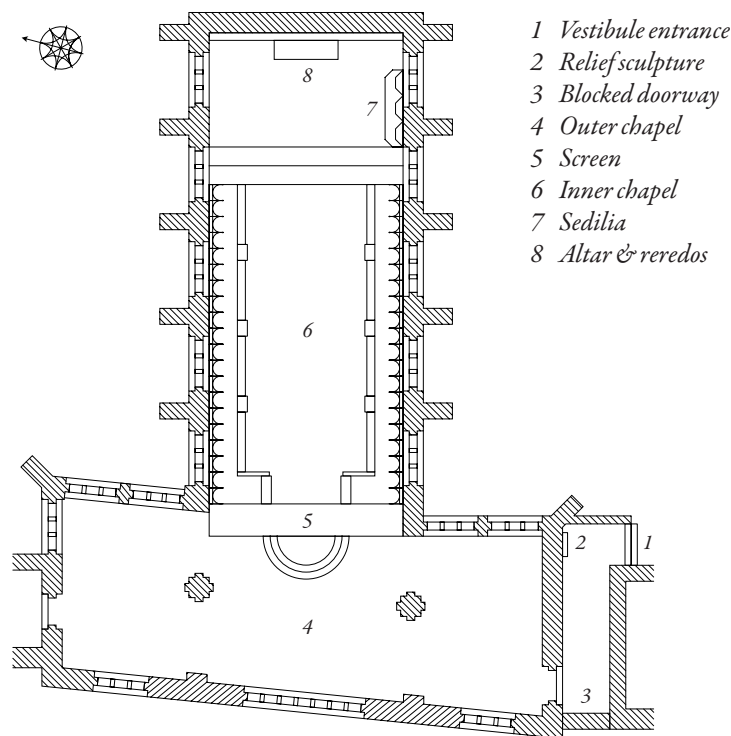
*Vestibule entrance  
The public entrance on  
Catte Street*



their tombs. These mortal bodies have been reanimated by their immortal souls: souls constantly prayed for in the chapel while they endured the purifying fire of purgatory. Here that is over. Body and soul, they are rising up for judgment at the final day of doom – the climax of history which will also be the climax of the iconographical scheme inside the chapel.

There is a sheared-off holy water stoup in the wall: once people would sprinkle themselves from it on their way in. At the end of the vestibule there is a blocked doorway. It once opened onto the street – on which side it is elaborately carved and moulded to welcome townspeople into the outer chapel where there were no less than four altars. At these altars they could witness one of the college's fellow/priests perform the miraculous sacrificial ritual of the Mass, benefiting the living and the dead. The pains of the souls in purgatory were reduced and the devotees' own due time there shortened. And Lollardy was publicly withstood. This accessibility to the street matched the public mission of the college's studies.





### *The Outer Chapel*

THE GROUND PLAN of the chapel as a whole has the shape of an inverted letter T. This is an Oxford feature derived from previous chapels at Merton College and Chichele's own New College, where he was an undergraduate. So the outer chapel (open to everybody) is broad and short, the inner chapel (reserved for the fellows) narrow and long. Between the two was the screen (now a much later one, see p. 28). The windows, two on either side of the screen in the eastern wall, are original and lovely. Stained glass like this by John Glazier of Oxford was more than decorative. Its transparent colours and clarity show saints: human figures saturated and penetrated by light. The twelve upper lights are occupied by the rugged figures of Christ's twelve apostles or emissaries – all male, eleven bearded, and holding their emblems: in five instances the instruments of their violent deaths. The lower lights are occupied by female saints, represented with much more delicacy and sympathy. Five of the twelve are mothers with their children.



Going from left to right, they are:

- 1 Christ's grandmother St Anne teaching her daughter Mary to read.
- 2 Mary herself carrying the infant Christ.
- 3 Mary Cleopas with her four children, all to be apostles of Christ.
- 4 Mary Magdalen holding the jar of the ointment with which she anointed Christ's feet and her long hair with which she dried them (St Luke's Gospel, Chapter 7).
- 5 Mary Salome with her children, the apostles John and James.
- 6 Agatha, virgin and martyr.
- 7 Elizabeth, with her child John the Baptist, Christ's herald.
- 8 Helena, the British mother of the first Christian emperor Constantine and discoverer of Christ's cross, which she holds.
- 9 Anastasia, Roman martyr.
- 10 Etheldreda, English princess and Abbess.
- 11 Katherine, princess and martyr.
- 12 Sativola, alias Sidwell, local to Devonshire, killed with a scythe at the behest of her wicked stepmother. She is a rarity, but two fellows of the college, John Druell and Roger Keys, were both Devon men who supervised the building. They may well have introduced her.

These graceful women are a surprise in a chapel belonging to a college of unmarried men. And records from 1644 suggest that this happy gender balance was originally maintained in the windows of the inner chapel as well.

Why? A reason is suggested by that blocked doorway in the entrance vestibule to the chapel. It admitted people from the town to the chapel, women as well as men – very likely more than men – and provided for them the stone benches along the west wall. They would have identified with these luminous images of women, some of them unworldly virgins but many of them earthly mothers who had survived the dangers of childbirth to take on the work of bringing up a family. They could pray to them in mutual sympathy at the altars below the windows. The cult of female saints was, in any case, popular and widespread. And the cult of saints generally had an intimacy which was appealing and, as Julian of Norwich wrote, ‘a comfort of us for homeliness’. St John of Beverley, the Northumbrian bishop who died in 721, was to her ‘a kind neighbour of our knowing’. (He appears, top right, in the northern window in the outer chapel.)

Apart from the Last Judgment in the big window in the west wall (1861 by Hardman, and a muddle) all the rest of the glass in the outer chapel was originally in the windows of the medieval library, where readers were surrounded by luminous images of the great and the good. They were installed in the outer chapel in 1876–9: kings of the realm from Constantine (306–337) to Henry V (1413–1422) to the left of the big west window, saints and teachers of the church to the right. Further to the right, the window over the north door shows, in its lower tier, the legendary King Arthur and the college’s two founders, Henry Chichele and King Henry VI.

These two founders are much more impressively portrayed by the life-sized sculptures set under the big west window, the king to the left, the archbishop to the right. They are masterpieces by John Massyngham and originally stood over the college’s entrance gate on the High Street – hence the weather damage. Elegant and realistic, they show the contrasting characters of the two men: King Henry VI vertically poised, inwardly rapt and abstracted; Archbishop Chichele moving forward and looking inquisitively



*The founders, Henry VI and Chichele, by John Massyngham*

about him. Getting the king to be his co-founder, demonstrated Chichele’s fervent belief in the union of church and state. It was particularly necessary under Henry VI: a tragic figure who succeeded his heroic father when he was only nine months old and was murdered fifty years later after a disastrous reign in which any effective government was in the hands of his Council, of which Chichele was an assiduous member.

There are modest memorials of early fellows of his college in the floor of the outer chapel: small half-length figures engraved on brass of lawyers both civil and ecclesiastical, of a judge and an archdeacon. These were the sort of men Chichele had intended for his ‘unarmed clerical militia’. The outer chapel’s function as a mausoleum is evident in an abundance of later memorials (discussed on pages 38–46).



## *The Roof*

TWO TALL and amazingly slender pillars in the outer chapel support its roof, which rests on stone corbels projecting from the walls, fashioned as the heads of kings and bishops – that combination again. The timber structure above rises in two stages. The short intermediate horizontal beams are set at right angles to their wall posts, like the head of an upright hammer on its shaft – hence the term ‘hammer-beam roof’. These hammer beams are carved into flying angels, recently gilded by a bursar with a fondness for gold leaf. Roofs of this sort abound in East Anglia but are very rare here in the Midlands. The model for this one at All Souls is the first and original angel-and-hammer-beam roof, constructed forty years before at Westminster Hall in London by the great carpenter Hugh Herland. It would have been very familiar to Chichele as a busy public place housing courts of law. As at Westminster, the angels here carry shields which once bore the heraldic arms of the founders. Chichele would have had two more reasons in favour of these angels. One was that his enemies, the austere Lollards, regarded such sculptures, particularly of angels, as idolatrous distractions from true worship – and Lollards needed to be thwarted. The other, and more sympathetic, reason was that angels and archangels figured in the preface to the Sanctus in the Latin Mass, said over and over at the altars in the chapel. The worshippers lifted up their hearts and gave thanks ‘cum angelis et archangelis cumque omni militia caelestis exercitus’: ‘with angels and archangels and with all the militia of the celestial army’. The recruits for Chichele’s ‘unarmed clerical militia’, worshipping and studying below, had powerful allies above.

The whole chapel, indeed was a representation – even a realisation – of the heavenly realm: Christ on the rainbow presiding at the top of the east (altar) wall, attended by angels, saints and the venerable dead.



*The sedilia*

### *The Inner Chapel*

THE AGED Archbishop Chichele presided over the inaugural sacrament of the Mass here in June 1422. He would not have been facing the present reredos but its predecessor, a sculpted image of the Trinity by John Massyngham. At intervals in the liturgy he would have been glad to rest his old bones on the sedilia provided on the right of the altar for its officiating clergy. These three elaborate seats are original, exquisitely carved in fine limestone, ornately canopied with cusped double-curved or 'ogee' arches, such as Chichele knew from the cloisters at Canterbury.

The little vaults within are finely and variously carved and coloured, playing on the theme of English fan vaulting with superb craft and invention. The double curves of the arches are shallow, even minimal, echoing the little piscina in the wall beyond (its shelf held the bread and wine, awaiting their miraculous



*Vault of the sedilia*

*A misericord*

*A bishop with book by the sub-warden's stall*

transformation at his hands, with a sink below for washing the vessels), and the arched tops of the wooden stalls for the forty fellows which line the north and south walls. These have tip-up seats, carved underneath with an entertaining variety of subjects, entirely unofficial and according to the carvers' fancy. They are called 'misericords' (mercies) because they provided comfortable perches at the many services or 'offices' which punctuated the day. At the same time, being shallower when tipped up, these seats allowed worshippers to turn and face east during the arch-liturgy of the Mass. The carved undersides were, and are, normally invisible. The roof, sedilia, piscina and stalls (notice the crisply carved 'poppy heads' at the ends of the desks, particularly the bishop and the feathery angel furthest west by the screen): these all make up a coordinated set, there from the beginning.



## *The Reredos*

NOT SO, surprisingly, the magnificent reredos<sup>1</sup> which immediately commands the eye. According to Christopher Wilson's recent research<sup>2</sup> it was made sixty years later, c.1502, replacing a carved image of the Trinity: God the Father enthroned with his crucified Son held between his knees, and the Spirit as a dove flying down from his breast. It was by the great John Massyngham who carved the two founders in the outer chapel, so certainly a masterpiece, but is now – like so much of the art of that time – lost. Its successor of 1502 was a brilliant display of coloured statuary (which has gone) and framing (which survives). If you look at the floor of the south-east corner you can see that the reredos overlaps the southern panelled wall containing the piscina and sedilia, and was therefore erected later.

In any case, its magnificence and its turbulent history, under various, violent and over-confident Christian ideologies, make the reredos exceptionally interesting. All the coloured statues from 1502 fell victim to iconoclastic reforms in 1548 and were removed. For over a century the reredos stood empty, side-lined by worship focussed on Bible reading and a central table for 'the Supper of the Lord' (the Mass englished and revised). Such austere liturgy gave no occasion to look east to the depopulated reredos. The return of the monarchy and the church after the failed experiment of the revolution of 1642–1660 changed all that. Hierarchy and eastward worship were back. But not in the old style. The old reredos was ruthlessly hacked about and covered over to support new architectural and pictorial schemes in grandiose classical/baroque style. The second of these survived until it was all taken down so as to recover and restore the 1502 reredos in 1872. Now we see plain uncoloured stone statues of 1872 set in the intricate framework of 1502, meticulously restored by Sir Gilbert Scott and retaining much of its original colouring.

Like the painted triptychs that were popular at the time, it is tripartite. Its central and more dynamic part, ascending from Christ's crucifixion to his last judgement, is flanked by wings on either side.

These wings have niches, all with varied original and beautiful miniature vaults, like the sedilia, and now populated – thanks to

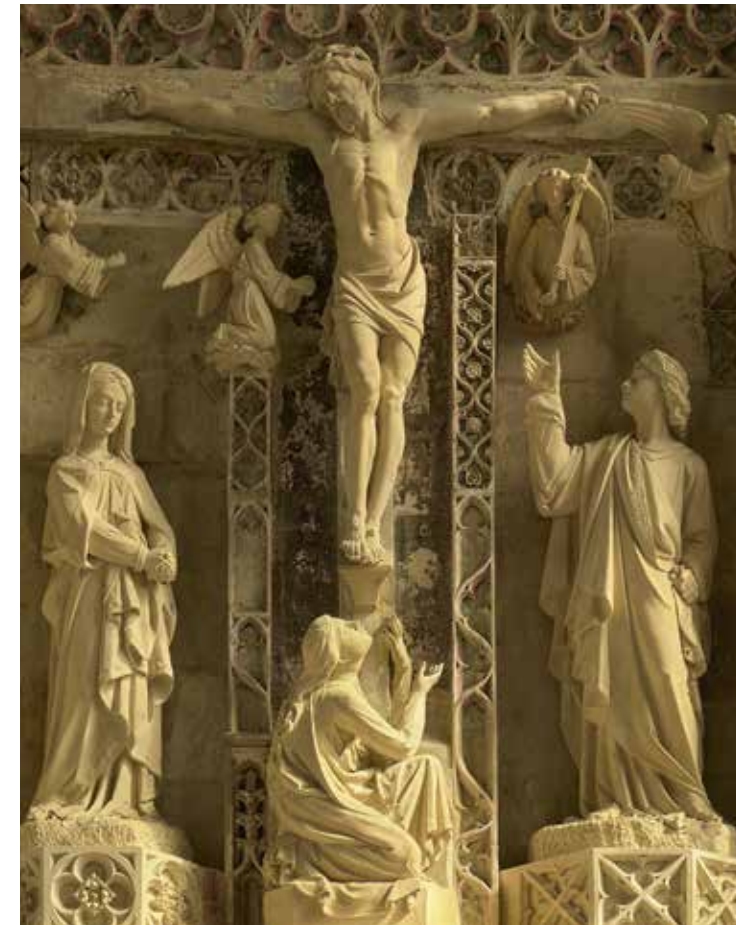
1 From the Old French 'arere' (behind) and 'dos' (back) to denote any backing to an altar, set up behind it.

2 'Archbishop Chichele's reredos and its early Tudor reworking' in *The Reredos of All Souls College Oxford* edited by Peregrine Horden, Ad Ilissum 2021

Scott and his sculptor Geflowski – by royalty and aristocracy, theologians and warriors. Some such scheme of statues would have been there originally (Sir Gilbert Scott was learned in medieval architecture) but we don't know what it was. The general effect of the present lay-out is faithful enough. With the central part of the triptych we can be more certain. It would have shown the central drama of mankind's redemption by Christ, and traces of this remained to guide Scott's restoration. It breaks through the horizontal regularity of the wings as it rises up and away from Christ crucified, the world-redeeming sacrifice, to Christ seated on a rainbow at the very summit with naked humans approaching for judgement. The eye is drawn upwards. The heights of the figures are determined by the heights of the niches, diminishing as they go up – perspective is understood. The buttresses carry numerous little figures of saints. The altar was at ground level.

The present altar supports a coloured retable in the 'Arts and Crafts' style of the 1900s, showing Christ dead, buried and delivering the souls in hell. Here, as the founder so firmly believed, bread and wine were miraculously changed into Christ's redeeming body

*The retable  
(Kempe, 1889)*



*Crucifixion*

and blood. Above altar and retable is the central tableau of the reredos. There the same blood is collected by angels (Scott's restorations of fragmentary figures) in chalices from the wounds of the crucified Christ, hung between his mother and St John with St Mary Magdalen crouched at his feet. The cross (but not Christ on it) is original and slightly off-centre, indicating that it might originally have been set in a sculpted crowd scene. At any rate, and despite its disappointingly feeble restoration, this is the largest component of the scheme, representing the transformative threshold between earth and heaven.

The rest of the programme or scheme is Scott's. Chichele and Henry VI are awarded niches next to the crucifix on the sides.



Top of the reredos

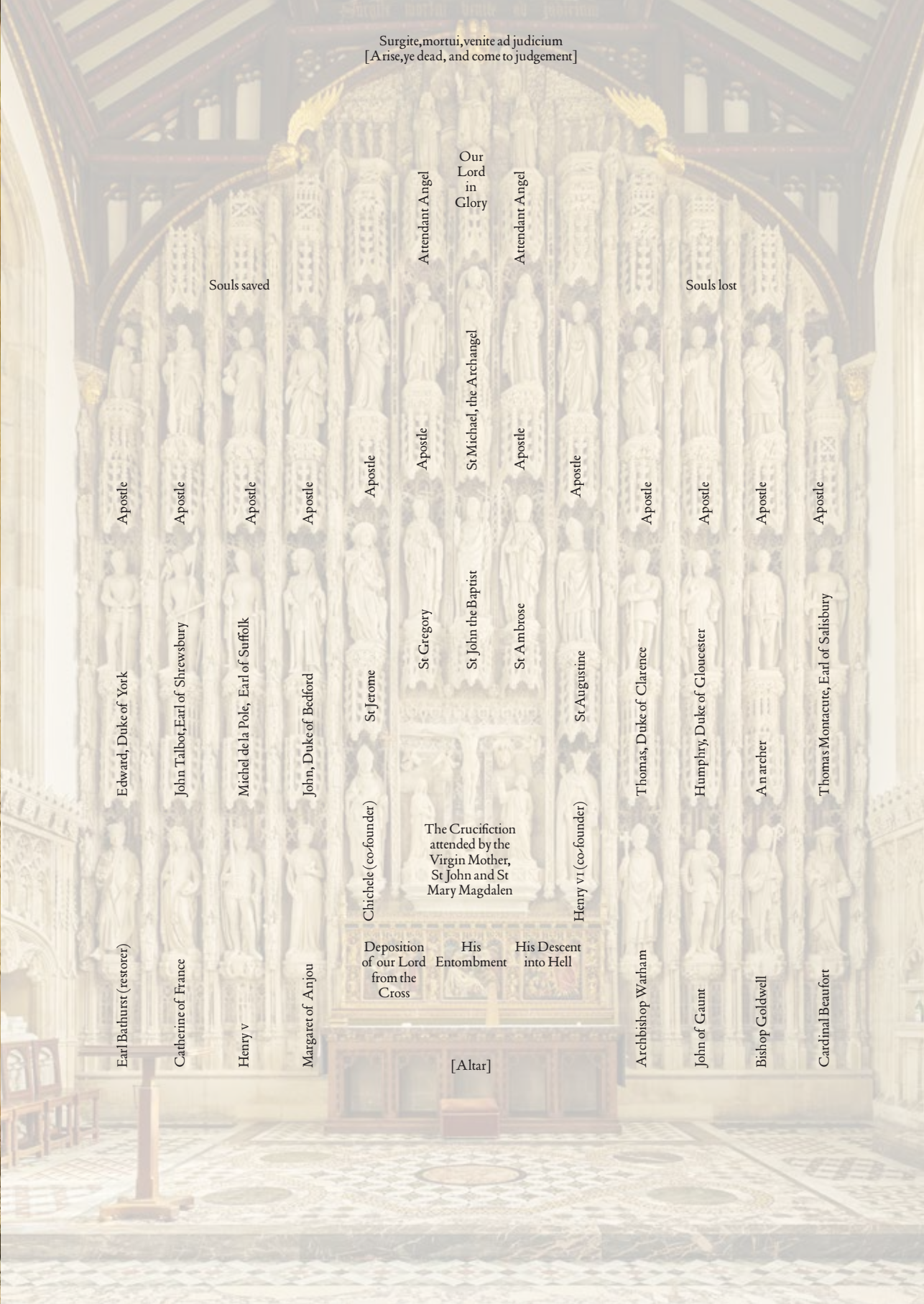
Above the tableau of Christ's death St John the Baptist points upwards. On either side of him stand the four theologians of the western church to whom the chapel was dedicated: Saints Jerome, Gregory, Ambrose and Augustine. Next up, among the apostles, the archangel Michael, supported by six small angels at his feet, weighs souls in his scales. And so up to the end of history as naked human figures approach Christ from either side, obeying the Latin words inscribed at the very top, surviving from 1502: 'Surgite mortui et venite ad iudicium' 'Arise ye dead and come to judgment'.

Scott's 1872 restoration of the battered 1502 original is so good that the reredos is still a telling representation of the western medieval world order: everyone in his or her place in the great society

of Christendom, a hierarchy reaching up to the topmost figure of Christ. Christ's church, rich in custom and ceremony, mediates his authority. Its power and wealth is on lavish display. And this is the second reredos to be put up here, sixty or so years after the first. Such was the enthusiasm of the church's big spenders. The church, with its grip on people's hopes and fears, had accumulated vast wealth and knew how to spend it, delighting, amazing and overwhelming the faithful by feasting their eyes. The 1502 reredos at All Souls was funded at least in part by an alumnus of the college, James Goldwell, the Bishop of Norwich, a generous patron of art and architecture, who had given the great presbytery of his cathedral there a fine stone vault, studding it with his rebus of a golden well. He has his place in the restored reredos, second niche from the right on the lowest level, with mitre and crozier.

All Souls College Chapel has its origins in a form of Christianity which combined with the state to sustain a conservative social order, manifested in rituals which filled the day and the year. It was there to be *seen*, whether at the elevation of the consecrated bread in the Mass or in the translucent figures of saints in the windows. It comforted the faithful with colour, splendour and grandeur.

But this was very different from the original Christianity of the Bible's 'New Testament'. And the Bible had acknowledged authority. There St Paul's letters addressed churches which were small household gatherings, sharing a meal in memory of Christ, and insisting on an inward faith which had nothing to do with outward performances such as observing festivals. And the gospels portrayed a Christ befriending the poor, critical of religious authorities and finally their victim. As for the Bible's older Hebrew scriptures or 'Old Testament', the denunciation of images in its pages by prophets, poets and legislators was vehement. The Lollards noticed this as they read their Bibles, hand-written without adornment, in their mother tongue. They were punished for it. But, when the invention of printing spawned presses all over Europe and printed vernacular Bibles proliferated, a religion of sacred words was ready to take over from the religion of sacred images.



Surgite, mortui, venite ad iudicium  
[A rise, ye dead, and come to judgement]

Souls saved

Souls lost

Earl Bathurst (restorer)

Catherine of France

Henry v

Margaret of Anjou

Deposition  
of our Lord  
from the  
Cross

His  
Entombment

His Descent  
into Hell

[Altar]

Archbishop Warham

John of Gaunt

Bishop Goldwell

Cardinal Beaufort

Edward, Duke of York

John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury

Michel de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk

John, Duke of Bedford

Chichele (co-founder)

St Jerome

St Gregory

St John the Baptist

St Ambrose

St Augustine

Thomas, Duke of Clarence

Humphry, Duke of Gloucester

An archer

Thomas Montacute, Earl of Salisbury

Apostle

Apostle

Apostle

Apostle

Apostle

Apostle

St Michael, the Archangel

Apostle

Apostle

Apostle

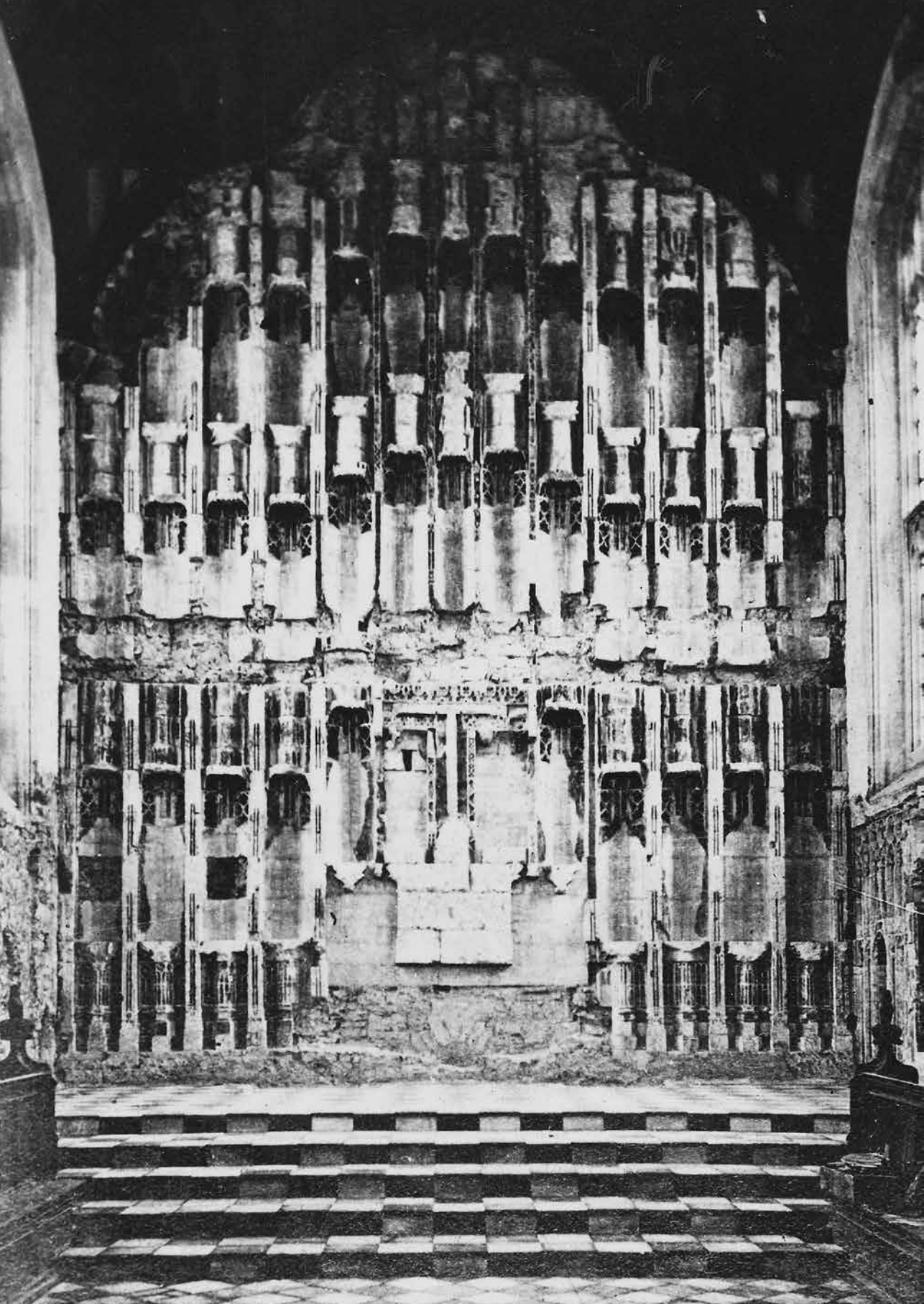
Apostle

Apostle

Apostle

Our  
Lord  
in  
Glory

Attendant Angel



### *Iconoclasm and Reform*

IN 1548, only some forty-six years after it was constructed, the reredos was empty. All its statues had gone, removed by an odd-job man called Plummer to whom the college paid 30 shillings for the work. He put them in a shed. They have disappeared. Why?

Thomas Cranmer was a Cambridge biblical scholar. In 1533 he was made Archbishop of Canterbury, which included heading All Souls as its 'visitor'. This was Henry VIII's reward for Cranmer's tireless (but ultimately vain) efforts to get from the Pope an annulment of the king's marriage to Katherine of Aragon, so that he could marry his pregnant mistress Anne Boleyn and have a legitimate male heir to his throne. Over the next twenty years, half of them with Thomas Cromwell as his colleague, Cranmer led the radical reformation of the independent English Church. They overhauled it from top to bottom. It emerged re-established under the monarch and with a liturgy which turned the Latin Mass into an English 'Lord's Supper' round 'an honest table'. Its theology preferred inward faith over pious deeds ('works') such as pilgrimages to shrines, masses for the dead and indulgences – all of which were stamped out. Monasteries and chantries for the dead were dissolved. Above all, the Holy Bible was supreme: no longer in Latin but in English, no longer in manuscript but printed in multiple copies – and, for all its heterogeneous contents, firmly believed to be 'The Word of God'. The Bible offered strong support for Cranmer's reformation. In particular it denounced images. Cranmer only asked that their removal should be done quietly.

The iconoclastic cause was reinforced by the accession of the precocious seven-year-old Edward VI to the throne. He impressed people by his striking resemblance to the biblical hero of iconoclasm, the eight year old King Josiah who in 640 BCE 'purged Judah and Jerusalem of ... the graven and the molten images ... and hewed down the incense altars'. Chichele's constitution for All Souls had made his successors as Archbishop the supreme authority over his college. So when Archbishop Cranmer issued injunctions commanding the removal and destruction of images nationwide, the fellows were prompt to obey and hire William Plummer and his men, 'to destroy the images above the high altar'.

Reform of liturgy and ritual accompanied iconoclasm. Chantries with their daily Masses for the souls of the dead were outlawed in 1547 as 'phantasising vain opinions of purgatory and Masses satisfactory, to be done for them which be departed'. So Archbishop Chichele's purpose for the chapel, and its main call on the fellows' time and attention, was annulled at one blow. Then in 1549 came Cranmer's new Prayer Book in English, supplanting the daily round of eight 'offices' or said services with just two: morning prayer and evening prayer. Now the fellows of the college need come to chapel only twice a day – a change which they might well have welcomed. They passed the broken altars in the outer chapel which had previously drawn in worshippers from the town. They passed through the screen, from which the surmounting crucifix had been removed, and sat facing one another in their stalls, listening to readings from the Bible, reciting psalms and prayers. Between them in the middle of the chapel was the homely table for 'The Supper of the Lord' which had replaced the Mass. The empty reredos was irrelevant. Their worship was no longer a matter of seeing but of hearing, of words devoutly spoken and heard rather than the enchantment of the eye.

Reformation was stopped in its tracks and reversed for five years when Edward VI died. He was succeeded by his fiercely catholic sister Mary. This was a fatal turn of events for Cranmer, who was tried for heresy in the university church next door to the college, convicted and burned alive outside the town. The protestant reformation was restored when Mary's half-sister Elizabeth succeeded her in 1558.

For more than a century, apart from the destruction of an organ and the parapet of the screen – both in line with austere reformation principles – there were no great changes to the chapel's fabric. But in the country at large revolution and counter-revolution tore everything apart for two decades. In 1642 animosities between crown and parliament, puritans and churchmen, burst into civil war. Oxford, at the centre of England, was occupied – first by the king, then by parliament. In 1648 the warden of All Souls, the high churchman Gilbert Sheldon, was violently ejected from his lodgings by parliamentary troops and marched out of the college.

It was a humiliation he would not forget. When monarchy and his wardenship were restored twelve years later he showed himself more royalist than the king – and more vengeful. He frustrated the more genial Charles II's inclination to forgive and tolerate the losers. He was a bitter man but also, in the spirit of Chichele and Goldwell, a big spender and an enthusiastic builder. Rapidly promoted from All Souls to be Bishop of London and then Archbishop of Canterbury, he gave the princely sum of £12,200 to build a theatre to accommodate the university's assemblies and ceremonies – the Sheldonian Theatre.

To design it he called on a young man of royalist family, a former fellow and bursar of All Souls: Christopher Wren. In 1663, the year of Sheldon's election to Canterbury, Wren had begun work on his Oxford theatre while simultaneously designing Pembroke College Chapel in Cambridge. Wren admired 'the Roman manner' as having 'the attribute of eternal, and therefore is the only thing incapable of new fashions'. He believed it to be 'founded upon the experience of all ages'. His 'Roman' screen in his college's chapel emphatically divided inner from outer chapel with solid doors at its centre. Components of it, notably the fluted columns, survive in the present screen, made fifty years later.

In 1664 the diarist John Evelyn visited Oxford and was surprised to see

the wall over the altar at All Souls, being the largest piece of fresco painting (or rather an imitation of it, for it is oil of turpentine) in England, not ill designed by one Fuller. Yet I fear it will not last long. It seems too full of naked for a chapel.

He was right. This vast and exuberant Last Judgement by Isaac Fuller (1606–79) didn't last long – only some fifty years in fact. Deterioration or embarrassment may have motivated its replacement. Large remnants of Fuller's additional paintings on the ceiling are hung high up on the south wall of the outer chapel: sprawling 'naked' which would have been in extravagant contrast to the Roman sobriety of Wren's screen. After an absence of more than a century, figurative religious art had returned with a vengeance and was on dashing form. No more confinement of the figures within niches and order. They fly free through space with



*From Isaac Fuller's roof*

reckless energy, swooping and gesticulating. Rough and ready anatomical drawing is buoyed up by sheer energy. Fuller was popular in his day – the heady days of monarchy restored – and did other large schemes for Magdalen and Wadham Colleges. Putting up his scheme at All Souls entailed grave damage to the remains of the 1502 reredos. Deep and broad channels were cut across it and its projections hacked off to secure the wooden boards on which Fuller painted. The resulting wreckage (see the photograph on p. 24) was hidden for two centuries.

Fifty years on the college's fellowship included a capable and well-to-do architect called George Clarke, an energetic participant in the heyday of Oxford building in the early 1700s. In 1706 he built – and occupied until his death – the house on the High Street for the warden. In 1713 he turned his attention to the chapel, giving it 'a noble ornament of marble at the east end and the north and south sides'. The altar was flanked by pairs of Corinthian pilasters supporting a triangular pediment. Marble panelling extended from either side. This was the first stage in Clarke's scheme. The next year he got rid of Fuller's work and called in James Thornhill (1675–1734) to replace it. Clarke knew Thornhill from his vast murals of the triumph of Britain in Wren's Royal Naval Hospital at Greenwich, where Clarke was a commissioner. At All Souls Thornhill took on another airborne subject: a mural painting occupying the rest of the east wall depicting the apotheosis of the founder. In



*18th-century view of the East wall with Clarke's 'noble ornament of marble' and Thornhill's mural painting*

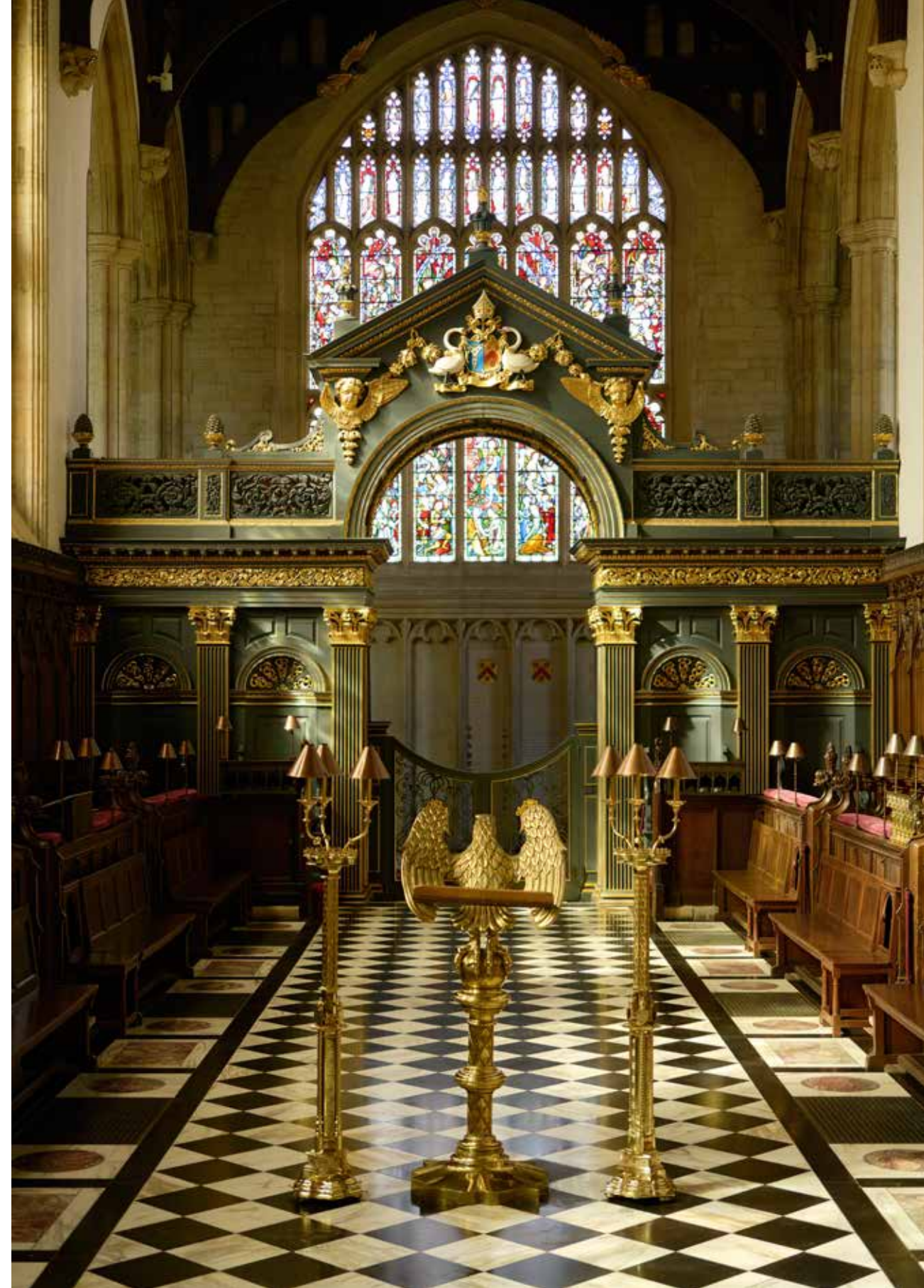
contrast to the cool stability of Clarke's own marble arrangement below it, Thornhill showed Chichele borne diagonally up into heavenly light, his robes billowing, enthusiastically welcomed by St Peter and various saints and angels. That was not all. On either side westwards were representations of the four doctors, or theologians, of the early western church – to whom the chapel was dedicated – of the co-founder Henry VI and of his brothers the

Dukes of Gloucester and Clarence in full armour. The medieval roof was filled in with a ceiling of canvas panels of gilded roses. In 1769 the college added to this scheme by commissioning a painting from the internationally famous German painter Raphael Mengs, resident in Madrid. Installed centrally above the altar, it represented the encounter of Mary Magdalen with the risen Christ from chapter 20 of The Gospel of John: a scene called 'Noli me Tangere' after the Latin of Christ's warning to Mary. Thrift seems to have inspired the college's choice of subject – it entailed only two figures. More dignified than affecting, it suited its context and remained in place for a century. (It is now on loan to Campion Hall.) Religion was settling down.

Clarke and Thornhill's self-conscious, even self-regarding, scheme lasted longer than any of its predecessors: 160 years, in fact. Two features of it still survive *in situ*.

Facing one another across the outer chapel are the matching monuments of Clarke and Dodington Greville (a Tory parliamentarian opposed to the extension of religious toleration who helped with funding): each with his urn, a sarcophagus and a laudatory Latin inscription in ponderous combination (see p. 40). Clarke's bears the poignant afterthought, in the learned obscurity of ancient Greek, 'God forgive my sins' in tiny Greek capital letters.

The other survival is the screen, a superb classical intruder in the medieval interior, an adaptation of Wren's earlier work. It is impressive in sheer size and is richly adorned with vigorous floral friezes, pinecones, crossed palm leaves, and winged cherubs with gigantic baby-faces, and flaming lamps. On its eastern aspect, life-size and lifelike swans support Chichele's shield (the archbishopric of Canterbury combined with his own: gold with a chevron between three red flowers). Thornhill took up with Wren's 'Roman' style for his own purposes. These were to make the screen grander and diminish Wren's obstruction of the view from the outer to the inner chapel. Wren's doorway was changed into a wide gateway supporting a high arch. Thornhill wanted Clarke's 'noble ornament of marble' at the far end of the chapel, and his own sumptuous wall-painting above it, to be seen by everyone and not just the fellows.



### *Mere Repair trumped by thorough Restoration*

BY THE 1870s, Thornhill and Clarke's scheme was not to the taste of many Oxford churchmen. In the previous generation a revival of piety and orthodoxy as it was before the reformations of the 1500s, had stirred up religion along with religious anxiety and controversy. Sensationally, its leading intellect and spell-binding apologist, John Henry Newman, left the Church of England in 1845 to find in Roman Catholicism a safer stronghold against advancing liberalism. His friend Pusey at Christ Church remained in the Church of England, having explained the movement (which had come to be known after him as 'Puseyism') as sacramental, authoritarian, retrograde, deferential to bishops and tradition, and as having regard for the visible part of devotion, such as the decoration of the house of God, which acts insensibly on the mind.

It was this aspect of the 'Oxford Movement', as it came to be called, that had the widest appeal. Church restoration and neo-medieval church-building flourished. At the same time Oxford was loosening its ties to the Church of England and becoming a modern, secular university. In All Souls there were churchmen (including the warden and Montagu Burrows, the first Chichele Professor of Modern History, who had a previous Naval career and was known in college as 'The Commander'), and secularists (including the librarian and Charles Robarts, who presented Henry James to the Reform Club).

The two tall brass candlesticks on either side of the lectern (1842, see p. 31), finely decorated and given by two of the fellows in 1850, are to a design by Pugin, the fervent apostle of the unity of late medieval style and catholic Christianity. Their function of lighting the Bible (originally by large candles, later adapted to electricity with three shaded branches) inured them from controversy. But there was trouble in store.

Churchmen and secularists were set at odds with one another when in 1869 the south wall of the chapel was found to be in urgent need of repair. The warden was Francis Leighton. He was, like all his predecessors, a clergyman and an old-fashioned scholar. He was also a friend of the Bishop of Oxford, Samuel Wilberforce, who notoriously spoke against evolution in 1860. An aesthetic



*Francis Leighton by  
George Richmond  
Bathurst by Geflowski*

traditionalist rather than a militant Puseyite, Leighton saw the pressing need for repair as an opportunity to restore the chapel to its original fifteenth century glory. It took him three years of patient management to realise most of his dream.

Leighton began by trying to persuade his college to set up a committee to 'engage an architect to survey the Chapel and prepare plans for its restoration'. The college deleted the word 'restoration'. Leighton went ahead and engaged the well-known architect Henry Clutton to survey and report. Clutton was a Roman Catholic: in sympathy with Warden Leighton's ideas about restoration – and out of sympathy with the more secular-minded of the fellows. The Chapel Restoration Committee, usually occupying the middle

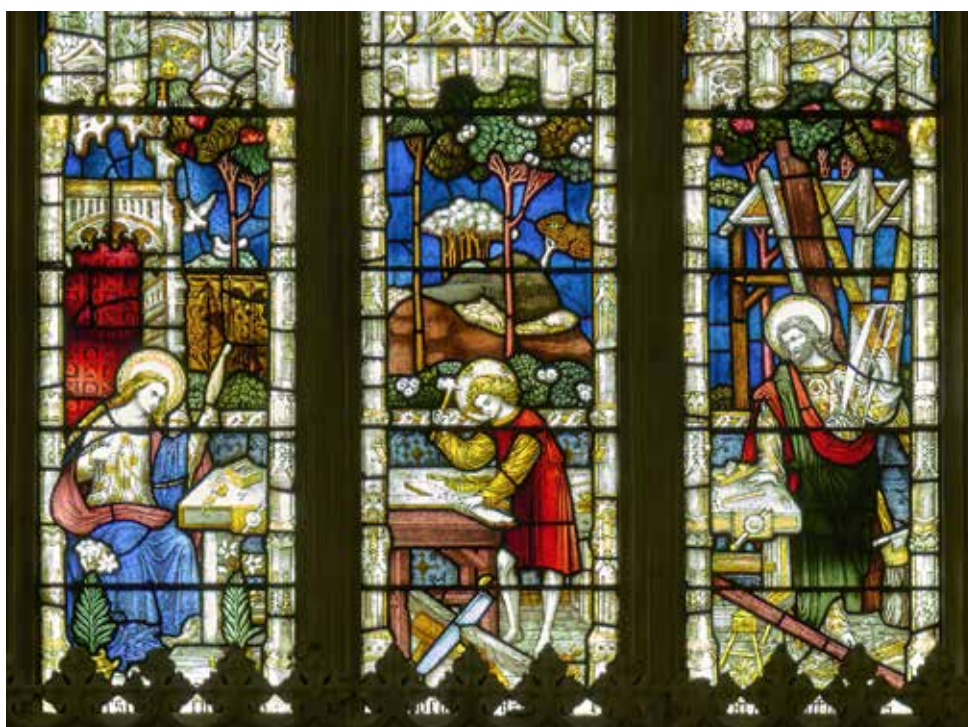
ground between Warden Leighton and his opponents among the Fellows, stopped Clutton removing the Wren /Thornhill screen. The reredos proved Clutton's undoing. The Chapel committee, supported by the warden, recommended its uncovering, involving the removal of Thornhill's vast painting, Mengs's picture and Clarke's marble 'ornament'. The 'singular and delicate' carving of the reredos could then, the warden told the college, although 'it has suffered from the violence of misdirected zeal and bad taste ... be restored with the exercise of ordinary professional skill'. He had gone too far. At a meeting on 2 April 1872 the college threw out the proposal – and Clutton with it, on the mendacious and prejudiced grounds that they had not realised when they appointed him that he was a Roman Catholic. The secularists had prevailed.

On 21 May the college met again. It was agreed to uncover the reredos, but no more. Then William Anson, a young law fellow and a moderniser, proposed that money should be raised for further (unspecified) work on the chapel, thus keeping the door open for restoration. This was the cue for the senior fellow, the stooping and aquiline octogenarian William, Lord Bathurst, to rise from his seat. He was a bachelor of vast wealth, antiquarian in his interests and stalwart in his churchmanship. He also enjoyed restoring churches in his Gloucestershire domains. He promised to pay for the restoration of the reredos from his own deep pocket. This astounding *coup de théâtre* was immediately followed by a unanimous vote of thanks and the resolution that the college apply to 'Mr G. G. Scott to supply design for its restoration, and to obtain an estimate of its probable cost'. The old aristocrat had not only cut through the tangled knot of college politics. He had procured, along with the very best architect for the job, the services of the best firms in masonry (Farmer and Brindley), in stained glass (Clayton and Bell), and the capable Polish-born sculptor Edward Geffowski (1834–1898). All these were Scott's satellites.

This was a happy outcome for Warden Leighton (who must surely have set it up with Bathurst and very likely with Anson too) and for posterity. Scott was well known in Oxford for his Martyrs' Memorial and Exeter College Chapel and nationally for his Albert Memorial in Kensington Gardens opposite the

Albert Hall, opened by the Queen the year before. At this time he was working on his astounding masterpiece, St Pancras Station in London. In August 1872 he was knighted. He was England's most learned proponent and practitioner of medieval architecture, royally approved, a loyal and moderate churchman, with a large office in London and connections to the best craftsmen. Above all, he had worked for the Bathurst family on their churches in and around Cirencester. At All Souls he confronted the reredos and 'the lamentable manner in which the tabernacle work has been hewn down' and had it restored with intelligence and scrupulous skill. Bathurst was a hands-on benefactor and nominated the sculptor Edward Geffowski to carve statues to fill the empty niches. Like Scott, Geffowski had worked for Bathurst in and around Cirencester. Bathurst had brought more than money to his enjoyable project. All Souls was in luck. It had been delivered from internecine wrangling and secured the services of the ideal architect, a capable sculptor and the best stonemasons and glaziers.

Farmer and Brindley had worked with Scott as carvers on the Albert Memorial. At All Souls they made the floor of the sanctuary, its intricate patterns of multi-coloured marbles echoing medieval pavements in Canterbury Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. Scott considered Brindley 'the best carver I have known and the one who best understands my needs'. They cooperated with Henry Terry on the particularly sensitive and refined restoration of the reredos at All Souls, where their work is so fine that the joins between their work and the original are hard to discern, even close to. Clayton and Bell had worked on the Albert Memorial too, designing the lavish mosaics which were made in Venice by Salviati.



## Windows

SCOTT HAD HIS DOUBTS about Clayton and Bell. They were too busy and successful to always produce ‘real art’. Certainly there is better Victorian stained glass in Oxford, such as the Burne-Jones windows in the Cathedral. But Clayton and Bell got the job at All Souls and the result, though not marvellous, is good. The tone is just right, suffusing the building with clear but softened light.

The narrative scheme of Clayton and Bell’s ten windows in the inner chapel, five along the north wall and five along the south wall, is laid out in the appendix (see pp. 50–51). It is biblical: heroes of the Bible in the upper lights, incidents from biblical history in the lower lights. The Bible itself is arranged as a giant history book, the subsidiary books within it – all the legends, chronicles, prophecies, poetry, gospels and letters – chronologically arranged and contained in a great span from the world’s origin to its end. That history provides the time-line for Clayton and Bell’s windows. Starting with the beginnings of human history on the north-west by the screen, it advances eastward on both sides until it reaches the reredos where the end of the world is displayed in stone.

Beyond that there is no coordinated system, donors apparently choosing their own subjects, apart from the easternmost windows on either side of the high altar. There the lower and the upper lights have scenes stretching right across each window. In the lower lights of both windows are scenes from Christ’s childhood. On the right or south side the precocious child is seen conversing among the teachers in the temple, with the inscription ‘All that heard him were astonished at his understanding and his answers’. On the left or north side is the subsequent scene from the Gospel of Luke with the inscription ‘He went down to Nazareth and was subject to them [his parents]’. Christ is seen at work in his father’s carpentry shop, ominously making a cross. This scene, with subtler symbolism, had been made famous a generation before by Sir John Everett Millais’s painting ‘Christ in the House of his Parents’ (1850, Tate Britain) with a realism which gave widespread offence at the time, not least to Charles Dickens, but was admired thirty years on. In the upper lights, again right across the windows, are Christ transfigured on the left or north, and in agonised prayer before

*The boy Christ teaching  
in the temple*

*The boy Christ working  
in his father’s shop*

his crucifixion on the right or south. All this clearly amounts to a thought out scheme in itself, and was likely the first stained glass to be installed.

Next on the north side is another window with an inscription which tells that it was put up in 1878 by Warden Leighton and Montague Burrows, two proponents of the restoration, in memory of the anti-Darwinian defender of orthodoxy, Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford. This is an interesting dedication. Wilberforce, who had died five years before, was not a fellow of the college and is the only outsider to be commemorated in its chapel. But he was a particular friend of Leighton, using the warden's lodgings as a *pied à terre* when visiting Oxford from his palace up at Cuddesdon. The dedication proclaims the orthodox allegiance of the donors.

Also interesting is a window at the other end, in the north wall next to the screen, in memory of Warden Leighton himself. Its source is Genesis, the first book of the Bible, concerned with origins. The top lights are occupied by figures from the remotest antiquity: Adam's son Abel, the murdered shepherd; Enoch who was 'taken' by God; and Melchisedec the priest-king of Salem who offered the patriarch Abraham bread and wine. The lower lights show three still more obscure characters: the father-originators of three occupations from Genesis 4.20–22:

Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have cattle. His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe; ... Tubal-Cain; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron.

These three originators of herding, music and smithery are rarely represented. But they were familiar in Oxford in the 1870s when the chapel was being restored, thanks to John Ruskin (incidentally, no friend of restorations). Ruskin's popular lectures in the University Museum on the history of art in Florence, recycled in his chatty guidebook *Mornings in Florence*, included praise of the relief sculptures of these three originators on the cathedral's bell-tower. He believed them to be Giotto's work: 'painter's work, not mere sculptor's'. He admired them all, particularly Jabal looking out over his flock from the parted curtains of his tent, just as he does at All Souls. Tubal-Cain – seated at his anvil as at All



*Jabal, Jubal and Tubal-Cain*

Souls – appealed irresistibly to Ruskin's socialism and admiration of craftsmen and labourers (this was the time when he got some undergraduates, including Oscar Wilde, to join him in paving a road in the deprived and muddy village of North Hinksey):

The workman's face is the best sermon on the dignity of labour yet spoken by thoughtful man. Liberal Parliaments and fraternal Reformers [like Ruskin himself] have nothing essential to say more.

In 1881, the year of Warden Leighton's death, Ruskin published fine photographs of all the sculptures on the bell-tower with the title *The Shepherd's Tower* (Ruskin liked the story that Giotto was a shepherd boy, discovered by Cimabue drawing a sheep on a stone). He closed his Preface by recommending his readers to attend to 'Giotto's foundation of civic morality in these sculptured myths of human Art and Harmony'. Some fellows of All Souls did so attend and decided that they were appropriate in a memorial to Francis Leighton.

## Memorials

THIS SECTION of the guide is long and chatty. Readers may choose to skip. But the reason for the length is fundamental and historical. Hundreds of fellows (nearly all men until recently) have passed through the chapel and prayed and pondered in it. They have been the life and spirit of the material building. There are memorials to a few of them and some of these testify to vivid lives.

Praying for the dead in purgatory stopped decisively in 1547. But remembering the dead went on in the Church of England with an abundance of sculpted and inscribed memorials. At All Souls, as in other Oxford colleges, they are in the outer chapel. But two are in the sanctuary at the east end of the inner chapel.

A brass tablet on the north wall recalls Lord Bathurst's 'outstanding munificence and piety'. More strikingly his statue occupies the nearby niche in the reredos among the good, great and divine whose restoration he had funded and fostered (see p. 33). Clad in the robes of the peerage, he presents the spectator with his benefaction with a lordly gesture of his left hand. His noble head with its mutton-chop side-whiskers is surmounted by his earl's coronet. An All Souls contemporary of his occupies another niche on the other side of the altar. The abundantly bearded figure standing in for John of Gaunt (1340–1399) is the high church layman and paternalist Tory statesman Lord Salisbury (1830–1903). Elected to an All Souls fellowship in 1853 and to parliament in 1854, a steady opponent of reform and an effectively practical Secretary of State for India, he was Chancellor of Oxford University at the time of his college's restoration of its chapel. At the time, these two statues gave rise to criticism and mirth in the university. Now they are engaging.

In the north wall to the left of the altar there is what looks like a medieval easter sepulchre. It is in fact the cenotaph (unoccupied tomb) of William Anson, the man who appears to have opened the way to Bathurst's momentous intervention in the college meeting of 21 May 1872. He went on to succeed Leighton as the college's first lay warden for the next thirty three years. A liberal politician and a legal scholar, he reformed the college in his own image to be high-powered in academic and public life. His life-sized marble



*Anson's cenotaph by Blomfield*

effigy, slim and diminutive, shows him with his hand on his heart and his books (one on contract and one on the constitution) at his feet. He reposes serenely in a carved stone tabernacle designed by the versatile Sir Reginald Blomfield (architect of Regent Street, London and Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford) to harmonise with its late gothic surroundings. But the thickness of its mouldings are at variance with the delicacy of the adjacent reredos and, still more, the sedilia opposite.

Apart from the commemorative stained glass, the rest of the memorials are in the outer chapel. The medieval brasses in the floor have already been noticed on page eleven and the twin memorials to Clarke and Dodington Greville which face one another across



Urns on the monuments  
of Clarke and Grevile

the outer chapel have been noticed on page 28. A black marble floor-slab with a floriated cross marks the grave of Francis Leighton, the patient proponent of the Victorian restoration. Two other memorials in the floor solicit attention. It is good to know that Thomas Sergeant, a fellow for more than fifty years, was '*hilaris et jucundus*' (merry and jovial). More rueful thoughts are provoked by a black marble slab in the south east corner, bearing the single name Codrington. It marks the grave of Christopher Codrington, fellow of the college, (1668–1710) who inherited large plantations in Barbados, worked by slaves. He had literary pretensions and bequeathed enough money to the college to build a new library – known until recently as the Codrington Library – and supply it with his books. In these last years the college has exerted itself in making reparations to those still disadvantaged by the injustices of slavery and to explain the Codrington legacy in the library.

All of the inscriptions on the memorials have been transcribed in *Monumental Inscriptions in All Souls College Chapel Oxford*, edited by F. E. Hutchinson and M. A. Screech. Here is a selective tour, going round clockwise from the south door.



Warden Hovenden

Deservedly first comes Robert Hovenden (1544–1614), a serious man in cap and gown addressing us over a cushion, one hand resting on a skull, the other holding a book with a finger between its leaves to keep his place and resume his prayers or studies. Hovenden was elected warden as a young fellow of twenty-seven and held office for forty two years of precarious peace in church and state. He sorted out the college's finances and estates in a hundred maps, refurbished the (old) library and kept a firm disciplinary grip. He was not afraid to take on Queen Elizabeth I in disputes over property – and win.

From achievement to tragedy. Under the central west window, and between John Massyngham's fine statues of the two founders, the wall is carved with the names of the college's war dead. Being a small college with no undergraduates, All Souls has had fewer

names to record than other colleges. There is a fuller treatment of them in *A Sermon Preached by the Warden on 11 November 2018*. Among the names of those who died in the war of 1914–1918 is Raymond Asquith, son of the Prime Minister, described by his friend John Buchan as

debonair and brilliant and brave, he is now part of that immortal England which knows not age or weariness or defeat.

The name of Patrick Shaw-Stewart follows. He was Raymond Asquith's handsome rival for the love of Lady Diana Manners (later Cooper), generally held to be the most beautiful young woman in England. Classicist, poet and banker, Shaw-Stewart was described by Evelyn Waugh:

The brilliant and beguiling youth who had never failed in anything, for whom life's prizes seemed to wait his taking, had little wish to outlive his friends. He now used all his charm and influence in high places to get into the firing line.

He was killed in France, having been in charge of the firing party at the funeral of his fellow-poet Rupert Brooke on Skyros. Lady Diana survived both Asquith and Shaw-Stewart to marry the diplomat and philanderer Duff Cooper and be the mother of the writer John Julius Norwich.

Way down the social scale from these two scions of the elite is the last name on the list, Lewis Heath. He lived in college as a messenger and was killed while coming back from delivering a message to headquarters at the front in 1917. 'A better lad one couldn't find ... everyone liked him' his friend Lance Corporal Pipe wrote to his parents. Pipe was himself killed within two weeks.

Two names are recorded for the 1939–1945 war, contrasting with the eleven for 1914–1918. Their epitaph at the bottom of their memorial is from Psalm 139 in Latin. In English:

*If I take the wings of the morning  
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea  
Even there shall thy hand lead me,  
and thy right hand shall hold me.*

These beautiful words were evoked by Bill (as he was known in college) Davies's death in the Java Sea in 1942 and the loss of Richard Latham's observation plane off the Norwegian coast in

1943. Both these men were politically on the left in the struggle against fascism. Latham, a lawyer, spent the summer of 1937 delivering relief supplies to the republicans in Barcelona, was in Berlin in 1938 helping Jews to get out and in 1939 was working for Polish refugees in the Foreign Office. In 1941 he joined the Royal Air Force. An All Souls friend wrote of him that he was motivated by opposition to

brutal abuse of power which threatened both the freedom of intellectual life and the decencies of common life. He believed in both. In defence of both he offered not only his intellect – for him that was not enough – but himself.

Bill Davies was the eldest son of the Dean of Worcester, a classicist and a member of the communist party. He served on the destroyer HMS *Electra*, joined in the hunt for the *Bismarck* and rescued survivors of the *Hood*. His death in the Java Sea is commemorated in a panel of clear glass in the cloister of Worcester Cathedral.

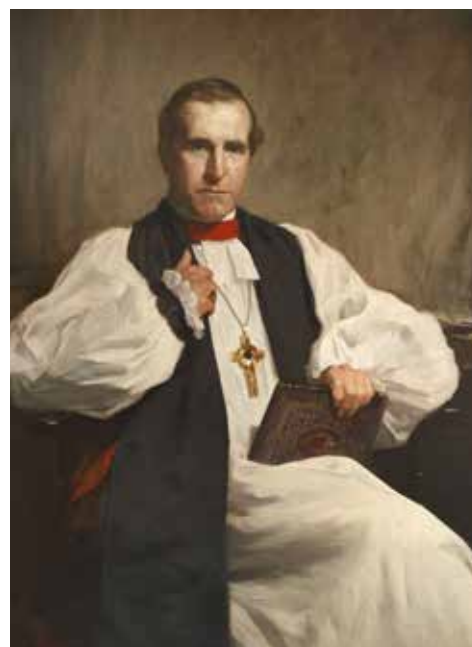
The story goes that Archbishop Cosmo Gordon Lang (1864–1945), the subject of the next memorial to the right, nicely designed by Ninian Comper, was showing a portrait of himself to a group of admirers which included another fellow of All Souls, the acerbic Hensley Henson, Bishop of Durham. 'Some people say' said Lang, 'that it makes me look pompous, proud and prelatical'. 'And to which of these epithets' Henson chimed in 'does your Grace take exception?' Such was Lang's reputation and this monument, with its abundance of heraldry and prolix inscription (including Lang's 'MIRA SVAVILOQVENTIA', marvellous smoothness of speech) reflects it. But there was more to Lang than all this and it should be recorded.

He was quick to condemn both the rise of European antisemitism in the 1930's and the bombing of civilians in German cities in the 1940s. He helped Prime Minister Baldwin to force Edward VIII to choose between marrying the twice-divorced Mrs Simpson and abdicating before his coronation – thus saving the country from having a Nazi-sympathiser on the throne. Three days after Edward's abdication and his affecting speech to the nation, Lang himself made an unfortunate broadcast denouncing the departing Edward. 'From God he received a high and sacred trust ... yet by his own will



Monument to Cosmo  
Gordon Lang by  
Ninian Comper

*Cosmo Lang by George  
Fiddes-Watt*



he surrendered the trust' out of 'a craving for private happiness'. This was unnecessary and vindictive, but telling because it shows Lang's deep conviction (breaking out of control) of the moral and political necessity of church and state holding together: Archbishop Henry Chichele's own conviction five centuries before and his motive in founding All Souls. Lang's reproach of Edward's 'craving for private happiness' was to rebound on him. In his latter years, after a lifetime of absolutely chaste and blameless celibacy, he fell in love (again absolutely chastely) with the young, married actress Ann Todd. She was kind to him. He died, aged eighty, outside Kew Gardens Station on his way to see her.

Still moving to the right, the monument to John Meredith, Warden 1661–5, records that he was conscious of succeeding the great Gilbert Sheldon, now Archbishop of Canterbury (no mention of John Palmer, Warden during the interregnum), that he was good to the poor, had agreeable albeit old-fashioned manners, rescued the chapel from decay and adorned it with marble (this was the restoration for which Isaac Fuller was the painter: see pages 25–26).



The Nibletts' monument  
Sumner by David  
Wynne



The adjoining (north) wall, past Dodington Greville's big monument (see page 40) and to its right, is the first monument since Hovenden's to include a portrait bust. This is Marow Knightley, who died young and was 'the darling of this foundation' (*Hisce sedibus nuper delicias*). On the east wall, which has the screen in the middle of it, are three striking monuments: Viscount Tracy's with its emphatically Grecian ornamentation and, on the other side of the screen, Montague Bernard with his abundant side-whiskers (designed by Jackson, the architect of the Examination Schools and much else of Victorian Oxford); and Stephen and Elizabeth Niblett. This last is original in two ways. It is the first and only memorial of a woman in the chapel. And its design is bold and unique. To the right of two lamps an academic gown is cast over a pile of books, all superbly sculpted in white marble. The Nibletts lived in the warden's lodgings for forty years and died within fifteen months of each other.

On the south wall, dominated by Clarke's monument (see page 40), there is an arresting monument to Warden Sumner, his fine protruding head finely sculpted by David Wynne. The

inscription describes him as *Vir egregio aspectu severis moribus*, a man of outstanding appearance and severe character. Isaiah Berlin, a fellow at his time, thought him ‘a bogus middlebrow’ and ‘a very dismal man, though good-looking in an El Greco way’. Berlin much preferred his predecessor Henry Adams who is recorded on the list of wardens to the right on the west wall. Berlin found him ‘a thoroughly nice man, like an old farmer ... kindly and courteous’.

Facing the door on the wall of the vestibule is a tablet commemorating the conservative grandee (much more than a politician and a little less than a statesman) Edward Frederick Lindley Wood, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Halifax. Lean and six feet five inches tall with a prosthetic left hand, a devout Christian and a keen rider to hounds, he had fought bravely in the war of 1914–18 and did everything he could as Foreign Secretary to prevent the war of 1939–45, even proposing negotiating terms of peace after Dunkirk. Churchill opposed and defeated him, then shrewdly made him ambassador to Washington in 1941, where his ‘sweet and Christian nature’ (Harold Macmillan) and aristocratic probity helped to persuade the USA to join Britain’s desperate war against Hitler’s Germany.

Worship in the chapel nowadays keeps to the Book of Common Prayer of 1662 and the Bible authorised by King James I in 1611. The chapel’s origins are respected in the use of a prayer for the dead by Lancelot Andrewes (1555–1626):

*Remember, O Lord God, all spirits and all flesh  
whom we have remembered and whom we have not remembered,  
from righteous Abel unto this day that now is.  
Thou which art Lord at once of the living and of the dead;  
Whose are we whom the present world yet holdeth in the flesh,  
Whose are they withal whom, unclothed of the body  
the world to come hath even now received:  
Give to the living mercy and grace,  
to the dead rest and light perpetual;  
Give to the Church truth and peace,  
and to us sinners penitence and pardon.*



## APPENDIX

## *The Stained Glass Windows in the Inner Chapel*

### *Subjects and References*

The bays in which the windows are set are numbered from west (the screen) to east (the reredos and high altar). This follows the course of biblical history, with references to the relevant chapters in the biblical books for each person or incident depicted.

#### *Bay 1 North*

*Top lights:* Abel the shepherd (Genesis 4) Enoch 'God took him' (Genesis 5) Melchisedek, priest and king (Genesis 14)

*Lower lights:* Jabel the first nomad (Genesis 4) Jubal the first musician (Genesis 4) Tubal-Cain the first smith (Genesis 4)

#### *Bay 1 South*

*Top lights:* Patriarchs: Jacob (Genesis 25–50) Isaac (Genesis 21–35) Abraham (Genesis 12–25)

*Lower lights:* Joseph before Pharaoh (Genesis 41) Joseph provides corn (Genesis 41) Noah builds the ark (Genesis 6)

#### *Bay 2 North*

*Top lights:* Aaron the priest (Exodus 4–40) Gideon the warlord (Judges 6–8) Elijah the prophet (1 Kings 17–2 Kings 2)

*Lower lights:* Aaron offers a sacrifice (Exodus 8) Gideon recruited by an angel (Judges 6) Elijah resurrects a widow's son (1 Kings 17)

#### *Bay 2 South*

*Top lights:* Job the sufferer (Job) Hannah, Samuel's mother (1 Samuel 1–2) Samuel the prophet (1 Samuel 2–25)

*Lower lights:* Praising God (Psalm 150) Samson destroys the Philistines' temple (Judges 16) David and chorus (Psalms)

#### *Bay 3 North*

*Top lights:* Hezekiah King of Judah (2 Kings 18–20) Ezekiel, prophet (Ezekiel) Manasseh Son of Hezekiah King of Judah (2 Kings 21)

*Lower lights:* Preaching the Law (Nehemiah 8) Young King Josiah hears the newly-discovered book of the law (2 Kings 22) The prophet Jeremiah dictates to the scribe Baruch (Jeremiah 36)

#### *Bay 3 South*

*Top lights:* Daniel the prophet (Daniel) Jonah the prophet (Jonah) King Solomon, builder and sage

*Lower lights:* Building the temple (Ezra 3) Ezra interprets the law (Nehemiah 8) Cedars of Lebanon carted to build Solomon's temple (1 Kings 5)

#### *Bay 4 North*

*Top lights:* Barnabas apostle and companion to St Paul (Acts of the Apostles 14) Mark evangelist (Acts of the Apostles 25) Apollos missionary to Corinth (1 Corinthians 3)

*Lower lights:* The young St Paul taught the law by the great Jewish teacher Gamaliel (Acts of the Apostles 22) The Virgin Mary taught to read by her mother (apocryphal) St John writing down his vision on Patmos (Revelation 1)

#### *Bay 4 South*

*Top lights:* Cornelius devout centurion (Acts of the Apostles 10) Stephen deacon and martyr (Acts of the Apostles 7) John the Baptist (Mark 1)

*Lower lights:* St Philip baptises the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts of the Apostles 8) Widows mourn Dorcas and show her needlework (Acts of the Apostles 9) St Luke the evangelist and his emblem, the ox from Ezekiel 1.10

#### *Bay 5 North*

*Top Lights:* The Transfiguration of Christ (Mark 9)

*Lower lights:* The young Christ in Joseph's carpenter's workshop (deduced from Matthew 13.55)

#### *Bay 5 South*

*Top lights:* Christ prays in agony before his arrest (Mark 14)

*Lower lights:* The young Christ arguing with the teachers in the temple (Luke 2)

#### COVER IMAGES

*Front cover* The Inner Chapel: view to the east.

*Inside front cover* Mary Cleopas: Window in the Outer Chapel.

*Inside back cover* Boy Christ: Window in the Inner Chapel.

*Back cover* The Inner Chapel: view to the west.

#### PHOTOGRAPHY

Chichele's tomb, Canterbury Cathedral, p.2: Robert Greshoff.

Reredos, photograph of 1872, p.24: Bodleian Library, G. A. Oxon. a. 48, p.61.

Isaac Fuller, ceiling painting, p.28: Art UK.

18th-century view of the east end by 'Green', p.29: Art UK.

George Richmond, portrait of Francis Leighton, p.33: Art UK.

George Fiddes-Watt, portrait of Cosmo Lang, p.46: Art UK.

All other images: Colin Dunn (Scriptura Ltd).

#### COPYRIGHT OF THE TEXT

©All Souls College, Oxford, and the author.

#### COPYRIGHT OF THE IMAGES

Chichele's tomb, Canterbury Cathedral, p.2: ©Robert Greshoff.

All other images ©All Souls College, Oxford.

Designed and typeset in Garamond by Scriptura Ltd.

Printed on Novotech Digital Silk and bound by Westerham Print Ltd.

Published by All Souls College, Oxford, 2024.



