

SOUTHWELL: THE OFFICIAL GUIDE c.1938

For some 800 years the worship and work were controlled by a College of Clergy under the authority of the Archbishop of York. In medieval times there were 16 members of the college who had their prebendal stalls in the Minster Choir. The prebendaries were "in residence" by turns, the one "on the spot" being chairman of the Chapter for the time being.

This system continued until 1841 when the College was suppressed, and a Rector placed in charge. Thus the Minster became a mere parish church. Fifteen years elapsed, and the Minster was chosen as the Cathedral Church of the Southwell Diocese (newly created), which included the two counties of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.

A Cathedral Chapter was set up with the Bishop as Dean, the Rector as Sub-dean, with 4 Archdeacons and 16 Honorary Canons, bearing the titles of the medieval prebendaries, to which 8 new titles were added for Derbyshire.

In 1926 the Diocese was divided, Derbyshire being given a Bishop of its own, and the Minster remaining the Cathedral of Nottinghamshire alone; and in 1935 Southwell was returned to the Province of York, from whence it should never have been torn.

Under the Statutes of the Cathedrals Measure confirmed by King George VI on December 18th 1936, the Rector of Southwell was to become Provost, with the dignity of Dean, including the Chairmanship of the Chapter - the Bishop to remain chairman of the statutory meetings of the Chapter and to summon the Canons when desirable for consultation.

On February 2nd 1938 the new Cathedral Statutes were promulgated at the Dedication Festival of the Minster, the Provost, the Very Revd W.J.Conybeare was installed, and the Cathedral Council was inaugurated and recognised.

On this auspicious occasion, the Bishop pointed out that the primary duty of the Cathedral Council was to see that the Minster should be handed on to future generations not only unimpaired by the ravages of time, but carefully enriched.