

## THE FIVE CHAPELS

By Mary Skinner

[extract from fact sheet no 168 – Southwell Minster the building]

Four of the chapels are an integral part of the quire, being at the eastern end of the north and south quire aisles and in the two small eastern transepts. The style is Early English. It should be noted that where the pillars come at outside corners, the size and number of the slender columns is different from the main pillars. (The vergers say that some of the bats roost in the narrow gaps between these columns).

**THE CHAPEL OF CHRIST THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD** in the south eastern transept has also been known as The Blessed Walter Hilton Chapel, the Southwell Saints Chapel and the Boys' Chapel. There is an aumbry in the east wall, a double piscina in the south wall. (As early as the 9th century Pope Leo IX ordered that there should be a basin near each altar for the washing of hands and sacred vessels. In the 14th century it was decreed that there should be two basins, one for washing the priest's hands and another for washing the sacred vessels, but in the 15th century one basin again became the rule). There is also a tomb niche in the south wall. The sedilia built into the west wall has 3 seats, the rest of the space being taken up by a doorway to a spiral staircase. The door is hidden by the prayer request board. The east windows are by Christopher Whall and the west window by Burlison and Grylls. The chapel is dominated by the statue of *Christ the Light of the World* by Peter Ball and the votive candle stand designed by Martin Stancliffe. The two plain chairs are used by the Archdeacons and the two 18th century chairs by the Lord Lieutenant and his lady; the cushions on the latter were made for these chairs when they were in the old Airmen's Chapel, and they match the kneelers in the present Airmen's Chapel. Two of the prayer stools are the Provost's property. The remaining chair with the mitre is popularly known as the Bishop of Sherwood's chair, but it is older than that post.

**ST OSWALD'S CHAPEL**, situated at the east end of the south quire aisle, is dedicated in honour of St Oswald, 10th century Bishop of Worcester and Archbishop of York, NOT of King Oswald of Northumbria. The chapel has a very small aumbry and a small, projecting single piscina in the south wall. There are traces of paint above these. The windows are all by Kempe. The reredos is of bleached oak; the figures were gilded in 1990 at the expense of Mr Eric Freckingham. The red frontal which is on the altar for most of the year is by John Piper, but the symbol of the raven is that of the wrong St Oswald! The credence table is by Robert Thompson, with an incised mouse: the altar rails were given in memory of John Haxley, Canon of Norwich, who was at the Minster from 1883 to 1900. The red kneelers were embroidered in 1982 by a group of ladies led by Mrs Josephine Wakeling, wife of the 7th Bishop of Southwell.

**THE AIRMEN'S CHAPEL**, situated at the east end of the north quire aisle, has been suggested as the site of the Chantry chapel founded by Richard Sutton in 1283 and dedicated in honour of St Peter and St Paul. It was also, possibly, the site of Archbishop de Corbridge's tomb. It became the Airmen's

Chapel only in 1984 when it was dedicated on Sunday 11th March. There is an aumbry space in the north wall and a double piscina set into the east wall of the chapel. All the windows are by Kempe.

The altar which was made at Coal Aston. Aerodrome, home of No.33 Squadron, and was originally used at Norton Woodseats (the same place, apparently) was given to the Minster in 1919; it is made from wood taken from aircraft which crashed in France during the First World War. The panels are made from broken propeller blades, the cross from the cylinder, (the vases from the aluminium, and the plates from the copper used in aeroplanes). The oak kneeling desk was made at RAF Cranwell in 1926, £20 having been collected by the RAF to pay for it. The Communion rail was made at RAF Newton in 1984. (It was made by Senior Aircraftsman Kim Tansley and Corporal Pete Milne, whose initials appear - quite unknown to the powers that be! - on the under side. Kim drafted the original design "on the back of a fag packet" before producing his official drawing. The CO paid £400 for the teak top, on which is carved the albatross design - not an eagle! Most of the work was carried out at Newton, though the legs were turned by a specialist at East Bridgford). The silk ensign was replaced in 1984 by RAF Newton. The wooden plaque comes from the 12th Squadron HQ. The carpet was given in 1941 by the comediennes Elsie and Doris Waters, "in thanksgiving for the devotion and bravery of the RAF in the present conflict". The kneelers were designed by Professor Anne Morrell, and were embroidered by local ladies. The altar rail kneelers, the three designs on the small kneelers and the cushions on the two chairs which are now in the south eastern transept show aircraft wings and angels wings. The aircraft wings (with the red, white and blue roundels) were researched in the Science Museum, and the Angel wings are based on the Sion Cope and other ecclesiastical embroideries in the Victoria and Albert museum. The thin black lines represent the airflow going round the wings and being stopped by them. Some of the kneelers can be put together so that these tines fit together jigsaw-wise. The Triptych which forms the reredos was painted in 1988 by Hamish Moyle of the Little Gidding Community, and was inspired by Edith Sitwell's poem, Still Falls the Rain, which is written in the upper part of the closed panels. A miniature of the paintings, with the words of the poem on the back, stands on a small table

***ST THOMAS' CHAPEL***, situated in the north eastern transept, was possibly the site of the first Chantry Chapel, founded in 1241 by Robert de Lexington and dedicated in honour of St Thomas the Martyr (Thomas Beckett). While some people still regard this chapel as named for St Thomas of Canterbury, others (including the Time Travelling team) think of it as the chapel of St Thomas the Apostle.

The south wall of this chapel is given over to a five seated sedilia. There is an aumbry in the north wall and a double piscina in the east wall. All of the windows are by Kempe. A photograph exists of a tomb in the north wall. The chapel was at one time used as a vestry.

This chapel is set aside for private prayer and the Sacrament is reserved in die aumbry. The sanctuary lamp was given in memory of Canon Leeper; Mrs Weil made the curtain in memory of Canon Weil.

The altar is half of the original nave altar by Robert Thompson (the other

half is situated behind the High Altar). The Cross and candlesticks are also by Thompson, as are the kneeling benches and the prayer desk. The kneeling desks, with their kneelers were given by the Diocesan Mothers' Union and Young Wives for the millenary in 1956. The Credence table was given in 1926 in memory of Mrs E.A.Merryweather. The blue curtain was given by the Friends of Southwell Minster.

This chapel was also known for a time as the Girls' Chapel. The cross and candlesticks here had a red design, while the cross and candlesticks in the Boys' Chapel on the other side of the church were blue.

**THE PILGRIMS' CHAPEL**, situated on the east side of the north transept, was built shortly after the quire and replaced the Norman apsidal chapel. The striking Norman arch has been divided by two pointed arches of unequal size which rise from an early English pillar which is not centrally placed. Entrance to the chapel is gained, these days, through the smaller of these arches. The larger is filled by a wooden screen, the lower part of which was designed by Caroe. (When the old part of the screen was dismantled a pencilled message was found: "This screen was erected by G Arterton and B Hollis, May 1904 for Cornish and Gaymer, North Walsham, Norfolk). The top part of the screen was designed by Ronald Sims and made by Houghtons of York in 1984; it was delivered the day before the Queen came!

On the inside the pillar which unevenly divides the screen on the outside now divides the chapel into two equal sections with equal vaults. The outline of the Norman apse is marked on the floor just inside the door. The windows, which were enlarged in the 14th century are not identical; two have three quatrefoils at the top and the third has one quatrefoil and two trefoils. The window in the north wall is by Nicholson; a full description is available. There are two aumbries and two piscinas in the chapel. It was at one time the site of two, undivided, chapels, possibly the chantry altars dedicated to St Nicholas and to St Stephen. Near the east wall at the south side of the chapel consecration crosses can still be seen in a stone on the floor; possibly the top of a medieval stone altar. Graffiti have been scratched onto the north side of the east wall.

Now a chapel for private prayer, this chapel has, at various times, been the Choir School, the Library (with entrance where the strong room is now) and a Vicars' vestry. It has been called St Eadburgh's Chapel and was the original site of the Airmen's Chapel. It was dedicated as the Pilgrims' Chapel in 1984. The modern furnishings were designed by Ronald Sims and made by Houghton's. The chair by the door was made in the 19th century in Ottery St Mary, Devon, and was given to the Minster by Canon Bailey. The picture on the north side of the entrance is of St Catherine and is said to have come from the former Chapel of St Catherine, Westhorpe. The statuette of the Holy Family was sculpted by Cecilia Webb in memory of the parents of Dr Mary Elliott of Cropwell Bishop. Mr Bruce Coleman, who was the model for the child Jesus, still visits the Minster occasionally. The Tapestry on the south wall is the work of Geraldine Brock and was given by the Nottinghamshire Constabulary in 1990 to commemorate 150 years of policing in the County; a full description is available. The green kneelers with designs of ivy and oak were made in Grimsby by a group of embroiderers, one of whom was sister to Mrs Edna Dixon.