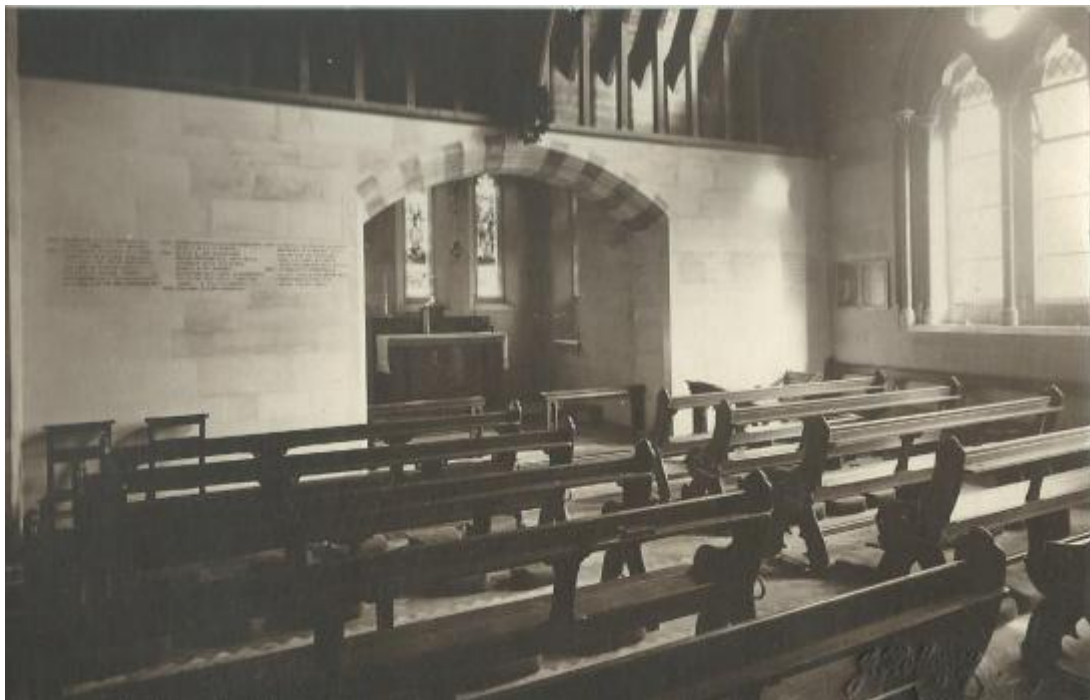

THE WAR MEMORIAL CHAPEL, ST STEPHEN'S CHURCH, TIVOLI, CHELTENHAM

by Brian Torode (copyright Cheltenham Local History Society)

The War Memorial Chapel was created out of the existing South Transept. It was dedicated at 3 pm on Sunday May 9th 1920 by Edgar Charles Sumner Gibson, Bishop of Gloucester. Also present with the Vicar, the Rev Robert Hodson, were the Archdeacon of Cheltenham, former Parish Priest Canon Jennings, and the first Vicar of St Stephen's, the Reverend C. McArthur. The Choir sang the Russian Cantakion for the Departed 'most impressively' and the bishop then proceeded to dedicate first the fabric of the Sanctuary, the Altar, then the windows, and finally all the other gifts. The following morning, 10th May, the Vicar celebrated the first Eucharist in the new Chapel.

The square Sanctuary of the Chapel was cut through the East wall of the South Transept and the Foundation Stone, to be seen beneath the East window outside the Sanctuary, was laid 3rd August 1919. It records quite simply, 'To the Fallen' 1914-1919. Original designs had been drawn for an apsidal sanctuary, but this proved too costly. The architect of that design and the one we see today, was L W Barnard of Cheltenham.



South Transept and Lady Chapel

The War Memorial Chapel has three dedications:

To the Glory of God

In Honour of the Mother of Jesus

In Memory of those who gave their lives for us.

The fabric of the sanctuary was given by Mrs Harrison in memory of her two sons. The alterations were paid for by parishioners and members of the congregation. It was hoped that the Chapel would provide a place for quiet prayer and reflection outside of normal service times.



The Bishop dedicated the Chapel as 'The Lady Chapel', in honour of Mary, Mother of Jesus. The oak altar was the gift of Mrs Beasley and the painted frontal panel depicting the Annunciation of Our Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary, is the work of Mr J Eadie Reid, an Art Master at Cheltenham Ladies' College. The coloured windows were also designed by Mr Eadie Reid, the one behind the altar depicting 'He who is the Resurrection and the Life'. This was given in memory of those from the Parish who died in WWI. The other coloured windows originally filled the present clear glass windows of the sanctuary but were removed to the south wall of the Chapel between 1961 and 1963 when a major refurbishment took place in memory of Rev Robert Hodson the former Vicar who had initiated the creation of the Memorial Chapel and who had been Bishop of Shrewsbury 1944-1959. Ss Patrick and Andrew were given in memory of her son, Lt L H Rawlinson, by Mrs Rawlinson; Ss George and David

were given in memory of her son, Captain S V Trevenen MC, by Mrs Trevenen. Captain Trevenen's likeness is reproduced in the face of St George. The altar rails were donated by Miss Cook and Miss Foster, and the decorated re-table was donated by the Misses Powell. Until 1963 the centre panel depicted the Christ Child holding the world.



Annunciation by J. Eadie Reid

The wooden panelling in the Sanctuary, designed by W. E. Ellery Anderson, was added in 1930 together with the carved door for the aumbrey, and the wooden statues under canopies. These were all the gift of Miss Bagnall-Oakley. The statues represent from left to right, St Michael the Archangel, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St John the Evangelist and St Francis, the latter by special request of the donor.

Furnishings for the Chapel, altar silver and vestments were also donated by parishioners and clergy. Two silver plated candlesticks were donated by Mrs Brown in memory of her two sons, the matching silver plated cross was given by Miss Wakefield and two plated vases were donated by Miss Appleford. All these items bear enamel medallions depicting Christ's Titles and symbols of His Passion. The present hanging Sanctuary Lamp by George Hart of Chipping Campden, was given in 1954 by Miss Schuster and replaced the original one donated for the opening of the Chapel.

Carved into the stone of the Sanctuary's north wall are the memorial details of the fabric and the windows. Also on the north and south walls are two wooden crosses – one marked the grave in France of Captain K A Brooke-Murray who died of wounds at the Somme and the

other was on Captain Trevenen's grave in Cheltenham cemetery until 1945 when it was given to St Stephen's. A Union flag is kept in the archives, and was used by the Vicar, the Rev Robert Hodson, when he served overseas as a temporary Chaplain for a few months. He used the flag on the Western Front as an altar cloth. Today, it is draped over the Litany Desk in the South Aisle for the annual Act Of Remembrance on Remembrance Sunday.

On the walls either side of the entrance to the Sanctuary are carved the names of members of the Parish and friends of parishioners, who gave their lives in the Great War.

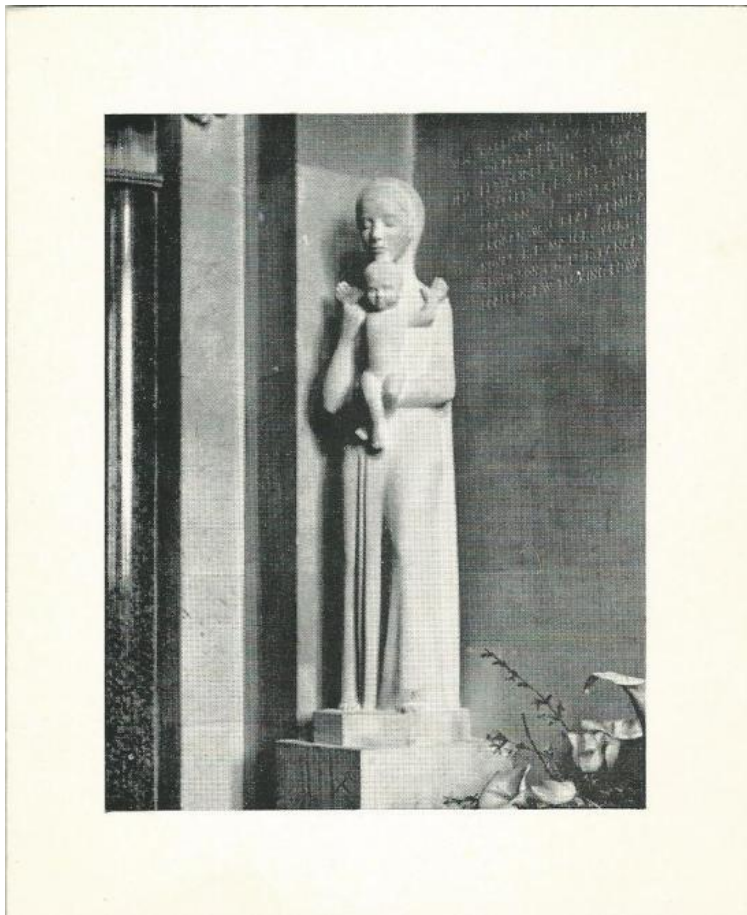


At the entrance to the Lady Chapel, one can see a desk on which rests the Liber Vitae, the Book of Life, recording the names of those from the parish who served or worked for King and country in WWI. The framed Holman Hunt's 'Light of the World' and the desk itself were given in memory of Hugh Rowdon, Priest and Curate of this Parish. The memorial tablet near the

entrance to the Vestry, records the circumstances of his death. The desk and framed Light of the World were originally positioned on the West wall of the Chapel.

Other memorial donations include the copy of the Wilton Diptych, given by George Woof in memory of his fallen comrades and the carved wooden screen at the entrance to the Chapel erected in memory of Mr Hylton Jessop in 1926. He was a former Churchwarden.

The window in the west wall, near the serving hatch, was originally on the East wall before the new Sanctuary was started. It was moved to its present position in 1920. The window depicts the Good Shepherd and was donated in memory of Muriel Robinson who died aged 8 years in 1888. The modern statue of Our Lady and Child was paid for out of a legacy left for the purpose in 1955. It is the work of Mrs Ulrica Lloyd of Woolstone near Faringdon in Oxfordshire. The smaller, original model for the statue was in the Sanctuary of the Anglican Priory Chapel at Burford until the Community moved to new premises in 2008.



Statue by Ulrica Lloyd