



CHAPEL OF JUSTICE AND PEACE

New chapel created within Ripon Cathedral

Ripon Cathedral in North Yorkshire dominates the landscape as one approaches the city. It holds a special place in the lives of local people who are proud not only of its 1300 year history but also its more modern claims to fame. In 1918 the poet Wilfred Owen spent his 25th birthday at the Cathedral, composing two of his finest poems during his stay nearby: 'Futility' and 'Strange Meeting'; he was killed later the same year. Today there is a new Chapel which has candles burning for the soldiers of the Royal Engineers based in Yorkshire who are serving in Iraq.

The new Chapel of Justice and Peace is built on the 13th century stone plinth of the Consistory Court at the western end of the north aisle to serve as a quiet space for reflection and prayer. Funds for its creation were raised by members of the Army Chaplaincy, local people and Cathedral staff through sponsorship (including abseiling from the central tower), and the generosity of the principle donor Mr A W Emmerson who also funded a stained glass window in memory of his wife Jean.

• Continued >

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As part of the project, the mediaeval stonework and the monuments within the new Chapel were cleaned by the Cathedral Mason Colin Rickard using the 'Cleanfilm' latex by Stonehealth Ltd. Applied as a paste it cleans the stone without the need for water; a critical factor when working within the Cathedral.

The Chapel, designed by Patrick Crawford and Beate Neumerkel of Caroe & Partners Architects, is primarily defined through its use of natural materials and warm lighting which create an intimate space or sanctuary within the larger space of the Cathedral. The canopy of the former Bishop's throne on the rear wall of the Chapel connects the eye with the image of the Lord depicted in the stained glass panel above. The stained glass, made by God-

dard and Gibbs to the design of John Lawson, is suspended in a metal framework which allows it to be entirely surrounded by open space as if floating in the arch opening between the aisle and northwest tower. Lighting, designed by Bruce Kirk of Light Perceptions Limited, creates a glow of light within the tower space that gives the impression of daylight flooding in, while concealed spots highlight memorials, the altar platform and illuminate the canopy from behind.

The new Chapel is the result of a successful collaboration between the Cathedral and donors as well as designers and craftsmen. So, for example, Frank Boddy of John Boddy Timber donated the oak for the altar platform which was installed by the 38 Engineer Regiment under the guidance of furni-

ture makers Treske of nearby Thirsk. Treske also developed the architects' furniture designs into shop drawings and prototypes which were tested on site to agree details with the Cathedral.

The simple shapes of the furniture which support the beautiful altar rail and table complement the surrounding stonework and anchor the Chapel within the space in a gesture expressing in two dimensions invitation, welcome and blessing.

The altar table, chairs and altar rail are made from solid oak sections held together by bronzed steel. A bronze cross forms the centre of the altar table lending stability, in a literal and figurative sense, to the altar as the heart of worship. There was therefore a special imperative for the final prototype of the altar table to be absolutely accurate since it served as the pattern for the central metal cross to ensure an exact fit when the actual table was made.

All structural details of the timber and metal sections were discussed with and developed by Treske and the metalwork was fabricated by Blacksmith Don Barker, a Fellow of the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths and renowned for his ecclesiastical and restoration work.

The altar rail is fixed via steel pins to a metal plate beneath the floor yet they are part of the aesthetic design of the whole, since they relate to the cross. The curving forms that support the rail and comprise the structure of the table and chairs are pieced together with a special gun-stock joint requiring very accurate machining to ensure the strength of the delicate shapes. Fumed oak (oak that is exposed to ammonia which reacts with acids in the wood), gives the impression of wood that is already beginning to age so that the Chapel has the appearance of not being the newcomer that it is, despite the modernity of the design.

The commitment to imagination and craftsmanship in their respective fields by all those who have contributed ensured that the newest addition to Ripon Cathedral's ancient fabric will inspire those who visit and worship today. The Chapel was ready ahead of schedule and consecrated on 15th October 2006 by the Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu.

PROJECT TEAM:

Client: Chapter of Ripon Cathedral

Concept and Furniture Design:

Caroe & Partners Architects, Beate Neumerkel

Patrick Crawford, Cathedral Architect

Furniture Manufacturer and Installation:

Treske Solid Hardwood Furniture

Lighting Design: *Light Perceptions*

Electrical Installation: *T & M E Jackson*

Stained Glass Window Design: *John Lawson*

Stained Glass Window Manufacture and Installation:

Goddard & Gibbs

Stonework Cleaning & Repairs:

Colin Rickard, Cathedral Mason

Donors:

William Emmerson, Chaplains from HM Landforces,

Frank Boddy of John Boddy Timber

Installation Timber Platform: *38 Engineer Regiment*

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(The images in this advertisement are from a scheme of new windows for St Paul's Church, Aylesbury)

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