

# Droxford Church Lady Chapel Poster

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The Lady Chapel may originally have been built early in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and enlarged to its present size about a century later. It contains some of the most significant medieval features of the church.

The figure of a woman to the left of the altar is thought to be part of a memorial erected early in the 14<sup>th</sup> century by John de Drokensford in memory of his mother. He was the son of a local squire, and at times Rector of Droxford, Keeper of the King's Wardrobe to Edward I, Chancellor of the Exchequer to Edward II, and Bishop of Bath & Wells.



A pre-Reformation piscina, used for washing communion vessels, was uncovered to the right of the altar during restoration of the church in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

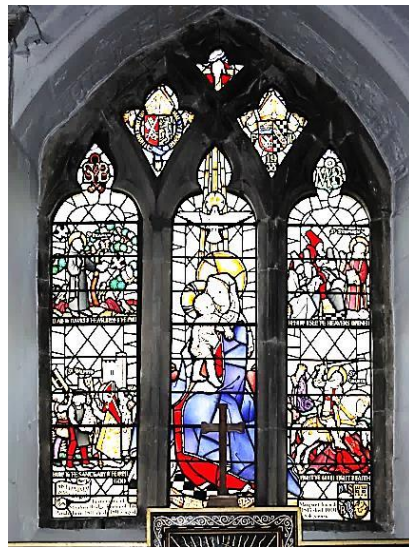


To the left of the altar is a stone niche with an ogee shaped canopy, probably dating from the late 14<sup>th</sup> century. The niche shows traces of medieval painting. It would originally have contained a statue, probably of the Virgin Mary, which would most likely have been removed at the time of the Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The arch from the Lady Chapel into the chancel rests on two carved heads, which probably date from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Their identity is unknown, but they may represent local personalities of the period.



From more recent times, the stained glass of the east window was installed in 1938 as a memorial to Stephen Bridge, Rector of Droxford from 1868 to 1886, and his wife Margaret. It was designed by Martin Travers, who was at the time chief instructor in stained glass at the Royal College of Art.



The Virgin and Child are depicted at the centre of the window. On the left St Wilfrid, who may have founded the first church at Droxford during his mission to the Meon Valley in 681 to 686, is shown with the builders of the church, which is shown in the background.

When Dr Neville Lovett, the first Bishop of Portsmouth from 1927 to 1936, retired to Droxford in 1946, he found the Lady Chapel to be in a neglected state, fitted with rows of Victorian pews facing into the chancel, and used as a store for paperwork and other odds and ends.

Dr Lovett was determined to restore the Lady Chapel to a more appropriate condition. This was eventually achieved shortly after his death in 1951. A memorial to him is mounted on the south wall.



The Lady Chapel is now a well-used and much-loved space. Traditional services are held every Thursday, and an informal all-age service takes place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month. It is also used by wedding couples when they sign the marriage register.

Upholstered oak chairs, funded by a grant from the Diocesan Mission Opportunities fund, and donations from members of the congregation, were recently installed.



Until recently the paintwork of the Lady Chapel was in a poor state of repair, but it has now been restored with funds contributed by the Friends of Droxford Church, collections at 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday services, a coffee morning given by Nicola and Anthony Hulbert, and other generous donations.

