



# Divinity House



Divinity House was constructed in 1891 “to enable Theological students to have a building of their own, where they could keep certain devotional rules, and lead a more disciplined life in preparation for the ministry.”

There was no verandah across the front at the beginning and, because of the rather austere appearance, the building came to be nicknamed “The Shed.” In 1904 a verandah was added and this was considered “a much needed addition.” The oratory, added in 1907, was financed by Margaret Stewart Mackenzie as a memorial to her great uncle Bishop Charles James Stewart, second Bishop of Quebec. The Oratory was dedicated to the Venerable Bede, a Benedictine Monk who lived in the Seventh Century.



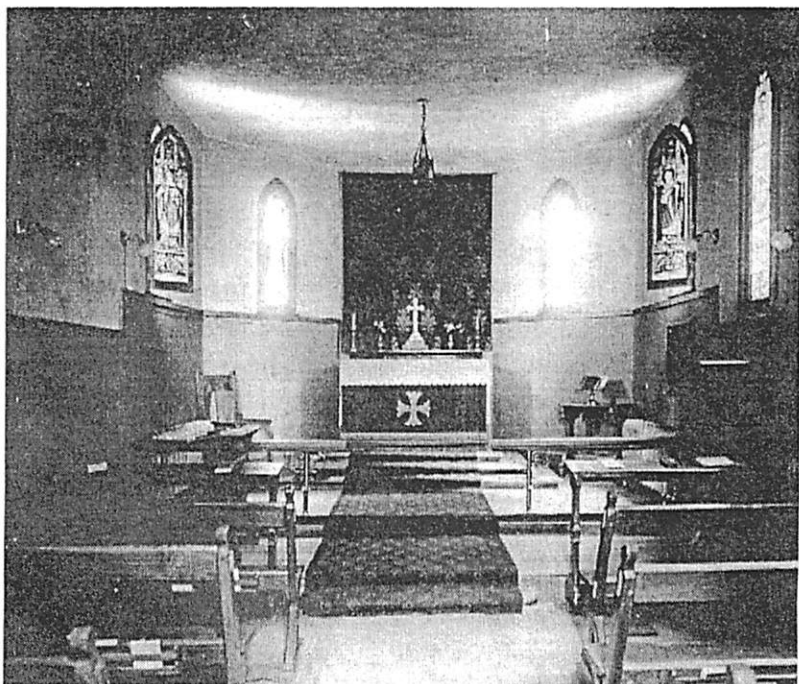
c. 1925



1970

## The Oratory

The 1907 Mitre has the following description of the new oratory: "It is a beautiful structure and we owe a deep debt of gratitude to Professor Dunn (member of divinity faculty), for it is largely through his instrumentality that it was built. The new organ adds to the furnishings and altogether presents a very dignified and reverent place of worship." The basic furnishings at its origin included an altar communion rail, pews and an organ. Over the years many improvements were made to the Oratory. A year after the Oratory was built the Reverend Harold Hamilton, the warden of Divinity House, founded the Guild of the Venerable Bede. The purpose of the Guild was "to form a bond between the Divinity Faculty and its past and present members." The members of the Guild also raised money to support various missionary causes.



The Oratory in Divinity House

## **The Students**

When Divinity House was first built, 17 Divinity students and the warden and his family lived in the building. In later years as numbers increased some of the Divinity students were housed in the “Old Lodge.” During the building campaign of 1949, Divinity House was renovated and re-furnished and was able to accommodate 20 students. It was renovated again in 1962.

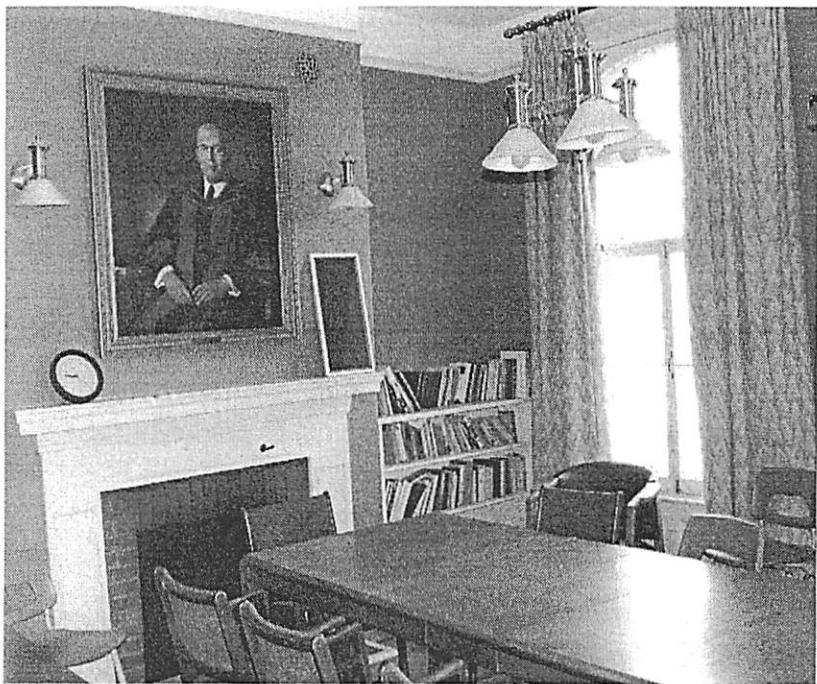
The 1962 edition of the Quad noted that “the secular world had been added to the Shed with the addition of some students who were “non-divine.” The original inhabitants felt somewhat threatened by the new additions. Students in The Shed considered themselves closer and more loyal to each other than those in other residences. This, they believed, was due to their common interests, which included “drinking coffee, playing ping pong, conducting bull sessions and dropping water on souls using the only telephone.”

## **Faculty of Divinity closes**

In 1970 the Faculty of Divinity was closed and the oratory in Divinity House was deconsecrated. Divinity House became a residence for undergraduates and one year later became the first co-ed residence on campus.

In 1988 Divinity House was converted to offices and became the headquarters for the *Learning for Life Capital Campaign*. After the McGreer Hall restoration was completed in 1993 and all administrative offices were moved there, Divinity House was converted to faculty offices. The Oratory was converted to a classroom and is used as a Writing Centre where students can get help with written assignments. The conference room was named the Tony Preston Room in honour of the much respected former professors, Principal and Vice Chancellor. (1969-1970)

Today the building continues to stand at the front of the campus in a rather dilapidated but dignified state — waiting for restoration that has been planned for years but never seems to happen.



The Preston Room 2007

## **Memories of St. Mark's Chapel and The Shed**

Many of those who lived in The Shed may remember the old fashioned banister that was used as a clothes rack and notice board or the fuses that blew whenever more than one coffee pot was started. Some may even have had nocturnal visits from certain small rodents.

**Sid Davies '38** remembers how he managed to sneak into The Shed during after hours. Apparently there was a loose brick under one of the windows at the rear of the building. This brick was carefully removed and one could insert a foot and hoist oneself up and enter unnoticed via the window. He also remembers the water fight on the second floor when the water seeped into Warden Elton Scott's living room below. Sid Davies recalls that Elton Scott's grandfather Canon Scott sometimes visited The Shed and gave readings from his poetry or from other works.

**Philip Rowswell '56** recalls 1. the wafting unholiness of camembert cheese rotting in the heat vent one morning. 2. the professor who called loudly at Evensong after the student had announced the location of the lesson in the Scriptures - "No, it isn't there!" 3. the D.C. Masters family trooping into Mass following Daddy Masters - all 8 I think!

**Hilary Alflatt '64:** I have very fond memories of the chapel where I not only worshipped at three services each day but often officiated. A couple of memories stand out, particularly, the occasion of the fire in the chapel. I vividly remember standing outside talking with Mrs. Anido, wife of the Warden of Divinity House, who was close to tears. At the time we had no idea of what was going on inside and how bad the damage might be. I remember, after the damage had been repaired and the chapel renovated, being one of a work party called together by Dr. Sydney Jellicoe, Dean of Divinity, to put the chapel back in order. I do not remember the date but I imagine it was in 1963. The restoration and re-opening of the chapel was a joyful occasion.

The other memory is of a very different kind. The thermostat which controlled the chapel heating was situated near the organ and accessible to anyone. There were two opposed groups among regular

chapel users - those who wished for a high temperature and those desiring a much lower. The result was that for a while the thermostat would be change by somebody from one group or the other and the chapel either very warm or very cold. Tiring of this, one I day set the thermostat to what I considered a reasonable temperature and removed the control knob. Unfortunately a day or so later I was given a lift home by a fellow divine - one of the hot brigade - who railed at the unknown culprit who had removed the knob. I returned it the next day! But the temperature battle was not resumed.

**Clayton Menchions '66:** I remember St. Mark's Chapel very well. It was such a beautiful place to worship.

**David Fearon '59:** St. Mark's Chapel has a very warm place in my heart as part of my spiritual development and growth. It was my practice to attend the 20-minute Office of Mattins at 8:30 a.m. each morning before lectures and, since then, I have attended numerous services and events in our most beautiful and worshipful St. Mark's Chapel. If I happen to be in the general area at the time of the celebrations (which I do not foresee, but who knows what the future brings), I would plan to attend some of the special events. I send special greetings to my clerical colleagues who are members of the Guild of the Venerable Bede, and prayers for the future mission and ministry of St. Mark's Chapel.

**Sam Purdy '53:** The student lector was being very careful as he pronounced some of the Hebrew Names. For the moment he forgot where to end the assigned passage. He read on . . . looking for a convenient verse to conclude the reading. Finally, he made his decision: "HERE endeth the first lesson." Fellow students overheard one faculty member say to his neighbour, "The gentleman might well have said, "Here endeth the BIBLE."

Dean Jellicoe made the following announcement during lunch in Dewhurst Dining Hall: "I would like the Divines to meet with me after Sext in the Dining Hall."

Several students bore the label, "Subversive Society." Their challenge was to "one-up" Mr. Tribble. One night they formed a human ladder and climbed the Science Building and reached the

location of the Chapel bell. They removed the clapper, brought it down and deposited it in a drain in the Quad. The following morning Mr. Tribble pulled the bell rope to invite all to “come to church, come to church.” Alas, there was no resistance when Trib pulled. Terribly upset, but faithful to his duties, Trib went around like the town crier, inviting and reminding students that it was time to get to the Chapel.

Remember the catch phrase: “Don't trouble Tribble until Tribble troubles you.”

Basketball practice ran late. Several of us decided to go directly to the Oratory for Compline. We would be late. We attended in our sweatsuits. After Compline, the Dean asked if I would wear my sweatsuit in the presence of the President of the USA. In that awkward moment, and with too much hast, I responded, “Mr. Dean, I would wear anything in front of HIM.”

Brainstorming memories include:

- + Playing the “old” Cassavant organ
- + Putting up my OAK TAG to indicate my study time
- + Afternoon teas in the Scott's apartment
- + Taking my shower after basketball practice, sometimes quite late! I like singing in the shower. Running water gurgled down the pipes, occasionally waking fellow students. Several concluded: “When Purdy doesn't sleep, no one sleeps!”
- + As a new student, wearing my name tag. Met Dr. Jefferies in the Quad. He stopped me, confirmed my name, sighed, looked up and said, “Oh my, another Purdy.” (My brother graduated Bish in 1936).

**James Purdy '36:** I remember Dr. Claude Sauerbrei “reading” OT lessons at Evensong while he cleaned his glasses on his tippet — he actually recited them.