OUR CHAPELS: The Chapel of St. Paul

The Chapel of St. Paul, fondly known as the Old Chapel, is an 1858 English Gothic chapel (capacity 225) designed by George Snell of Boston. It was the first building constructed at the School following its founding at the summer home of Dr. George Cheyne Shattuck of Boston in 1856. In 1868 this chapel was enlarged to accommodate a growing student body by cutting the building at the intersection of the choir and nave, moving the nave thirty feet toward the pond, and adding transepts on each side. After the consecration of the Chapel of St. Peter and St. Paul in 1888, the Chapel of St. Paul became known as the “Old Chapel” and served as the local parish for faculty families, staff and their families, and residents of Millville, as well as a cherished location for baptisms, weddings, funerals, and occasional services of the School. In 1962, a Noack tracker organ was installed, replacing an older “hand pump” organ, which was donated to the Episcopal Church of St. John the Evangelist in nearby Dunbarton, N.H., and is still in regular use each Sunday. In the early 1970s the Old Chapel was reclaimed for the voluntary Sunday services of Holy Eucharist and midweek services of Vespers. In the mid-1980s, under the Rectorship of the Reverend Charles H. “Kelly” Clark and in cooperation with the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, the decoration and appointments of the Old Chapel were restored to their original nineteenth-century style. In 2002 the infrastructure of the building was similarly updated to preserve it for future generations. The Old Chapel continues to serve as the site of the First Night Service for new students and faculty, the Last Night Service for graduating Sixth Formers, Form Chapel services, voluntary Sunday worship services, occasional midweek services, meditation groups, musical and dramatic performances, and various School meetings. It is open to all persons each day for prayer, meditation, reflection, and enjoyment.

OUR CHAPELS: The Chapel of St. Peter and St. Paul

The Chapel of St. Peter and St. Paul, as it now stands, represents a continuous development from its beginnings in 1886. The original design and building was by Henry Vaughn, a pupil of the English church builder George Frederick Bodley, and represents one of the earliest church buildings in America in the Gothic style. The Chapel was consecrated on June 5, 1888, by Bishop Niles of New Hampshire. The tower, from Vaughn’s original design, was added in 1894 as a memorial to Mary Bowman Coit, wife of the first Rector, the Reverend Dr. Henry Augustus Coit. In 1898 the recumbent funeral effigy of Dr. Coit was added to the sanctuary. In 1928, the noted architect Ralph Adams Cram was charged with enlarging the Chapel to accommodate a growing school, and the building was cut in two, the altar sanctuary moved eastward, and two bays of windows added in the choir section. This same period saw the construction, also under the direction of Cram, of the north porch behind the pulpit, the chantry, and the War Memorial, which is focused around an important sculptural work by Daniel Chester French. The organ, originally built in 1930 as a memorial to James Carter Knox, organist and choirmaster from 1868 to 1928, was enlarged in 1953 by the Aeolian-Skinner Organ Company of Boston, adding an antiphonal organ and moving the console from the choir loft to the choir section of the chancel floor. In 1988, the Form of 1938 gave for its Fiftieth Anniversary Gift a new stained glass window to commemorate the centenary of the Chapel’s consecration. Designed and built by the renowned Hans-Gottfried von Stockhausen, the two main images of this window depict the conversion of St. Paul and the parable of the sower and the seed. In 2002 the infrastructure of the building underwent a significant restoration and refurbishment to preserve it for future generations. The Chapel of St. Peter and St. Paul, with its current capacity of approximately 780, continues to serve as the spiritual center of the School and is the site of Academic Convocation at the beginning of each term, School Chapel four mornings a week, Evensong and Last Night Service each term, a Festival of Lessons & Carols and the Pageant in the Advent/Christmas season, and the Alumni Memorial Service and Baccalaureate Service on Anniversary/Graduation Weekend. The Chapel of St. Peter and St. Paul also plays host to numerous interfaith services and events, other occasional services, musical and dramatic performances, and various School meetings. It is open to all persons each day for prayer, meditation, reflection, and enjoyment.
OUR ORGANS: The Knox Memorial Organ

The new Chapel of St. Peter and St. Paul, begun in 1888 to the designs of Henry Vaughan, originally housed a three-manual Geo. S. Hutchings organ, the console of which was placed in the balcony at the organ’s lowest level. Presiding over this instrument was James Carter Knox, who distinguished his service to Saint Paul’s School over the six decades from 1868 to 1928. In the Chapel choir room hangs an oil portrait of Knox seated at the Hutchings, its mechanical couplers in full evidence.

From 1928 to 1930, the Chapel was expanded to designs of Cram and Ferguson of Boston. Principal changes came in the addition of two bays to the chancel, a new choir room, an expanded organ chamber and sacristy, augmentation of antechapel spaces, and an exterior cloistered arcade. In this expansion, the Chapel received its second organ, Skinner Organ Company Op. 825 of 1930, which was named in honor of Knox. This instrument’s 43 speaking stops were concentrated in the Great, Swell, Choir and Pedal; the fourth manual governed a French Horn and a three-stop Antiphonal housed in an elegant new case in the antechapel. The façade (comprising the basses of the Great 16ft and two 8ft diapasons), the Pedal wood Diapason and Bourdon were retained in the new instrument.

Opus 825 was revised several times in the 1930s and 40s, first with the relocation of the console from the original gallery to the chancel floor, and later with revisions to the Swell reed chorus. In 1953, during Channing Lefebvre’s tenure as organist and choirmaster, Aeolian-Skinner undertook a comprehensive rebuild. Pressures in the Great and Swell were lowered; all but two stops in the Great were provided new; the Swell retained the softer 1930 material, but with new principal and reed choruses; the Choir was somewhat revised; and the Pedal was thinned out with greater independence. The Diapason, Octave and Tromba of the Antiphonal were replaced with a Gedackt, Octave and Mixture. The most dramatic visual and musical change was the introduction of a Positiv on the Gospel-side canopy just inside the chancel arch. A new, low-profile four-manual console was provided. Aeolian-Skinner thought enough of the installation to feature it in advertisements and on one page of a promotional brochure, showing the Positiv beneath the fine Clayton & Bell window.

The 1930 chamber expansion had created temperature inequality and stratification, and the organ needed plenty of regular tuning to keep pace with the shifting climate of the tempestuous New Hampshire winters. Perhaps one goal of the change in Antiphonal stoplist was to remove the need to tune reeds (access is gained through a hinged panel on the face of the façade) and in general to stabilize its tuning. Such was not the result, alas; moreover, the installation of the Positiv had tuning problems of its own. Originally voiced on 2-1/2” wind pressure, the installers could find no way of providing the department with adequate wind, owing to inadequate apertures from basement space up and behind the canopy. Eventually two smaller flexible windlines had to be made to do for one of sufficient capacity, but still there was not enough. The solution came in raising the pressure, initially to 4” and finally to 5”, undermining the notion of the lightly-blown, crisply speaking gentle foil to the Great chorus. Even then, the department remained chronically underwinded, its tuning compromised as a result, not helped by unpredictable cold drafting off the stained glass.

Perhaps the greatest result from the 1953 rebuild was its scaling back the organ’s output. Jack Bethards and Nelson Barden both surveyed the organ in 1991, offering recommendations for mechanical and tonal renovation. Robert Leslie assumed the curatorship and oversaw a multiyear renovation that saw to basic rebuilding while boosting the organ’s tonal output and variety. The Antiphonal tuning issue was handled by providing electronic voices there (tunable from the console), and bringing those stops into the Choir to create a chorus; the Positiv was strengthened by three stops inside the main case; digital 32ft and 16ft tone strengthened the bass line; and pressures and output were raised to give the organ a greater presence in the nave. Capping the project was an imposing new four-manual console, provided by Copeman-Hart. Following English precedent, stopknobs governed all voices and couplers, and an elegant lozenge, carved by David Nugent and featuring an image of Saint Paul, was fitted into the music desk.

With the arrival of Linda Morgan Stowe as organist and choirmaster in 2002, focus was retrained upon the organ’s mechanical standing and streamlining its tonal forces. The Positiv pipework and Nave Trumpet were removed during the renovations of 2001-02; the Positiv pipework was not reinstalled at that time. Spencer Organ Company was named curators in that year. Beginning in the summer of 2003, aspects of the mechanism that had not been handled in the 1990s work were seen to, including more in-depth releathering; eventually the Swell and Choir were overhauled entirely, pressures established at the 1930 levels, and pipes cleaned and re-regulated. The Nave Trumpet was re-voiced in 2004, and new Swell chorus reeds (patterned after the 1930 models, but louder) were installed in 2005.

When Colin Lynch succeeded Ms. Stowe in 2007, the console had grown increasingly unreliable. Additionally its height and position had proven unworkable for ready communication between organist and conductor. Eventually another chapter of the project formed, combining an effort to reinstate the 1953 console (which the School had wisely stored), a new solid-state switching system, and removal and sale of the Positiv. The renovated console arrived in 2008.

Future work will concentrate upon further streamlining of musical and mechanical forces in the Great and Pedal.
OUR ORGANS: The Houghton Memorial Carillon (Gillet and Johnson, 1933)

The tower of the Chapel of St. Peter and St. Paul houses one of the few intact instruments in the United States by British foundry Gillett and Johnston. In 1925, Alanson Houghton, Ambassador to Britain and founder of Corning Glass, joined Princess Beatrice, Queen Victoria’s youngest and ninth child, on a visit to the Gillett and Johnston foundry, where she came to see the forging of the Park Avenue Baptist Church bells. This visit led to the donation of the 23-bell Houghton Memorial Carillon to St. Paul’s School, which was dedicated in 1933. Each bell is inscribed with a phrase of Psalm 122, the text of the School anthem “O Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem,” which was written by James Carter Knox, the School’s first organist. The largest bell weighs 2,000 pounds. The carillon is still played by a mechanical clavier. The quarterly Cambridge (Westminster) chimes are played through a removable pneumatic device, installed in 2009 by Chimemaster, which plays the clavier directly. Other carillons of note by Gillett and Johnston include those at Princeton University Chapel, Riverside Church in New York City, Rockefeller Memorial Chapel at the University of Chicago, and Grace Cathedral in San Francisco.

CARILLON SPECIFICATIONS
Traditional carillon of 23 bells
Pitch of heaviest bell is E in the middle octave
Transposition is up 4 semitones
Keyboard range: C C