

## The Chapel Reredos

day, and the college archives are particularly rich in evidence for its current form, which dates from 1888-1892 and was the work of the sculptor Nathaniel Hitch to designs by John Loughborough Pearson.

According to the wall of the College Chapel (that is to say, the stone wall dividing and separating that same Chapel and the College Hall) and provided one practical reason why stones, balls, or any other objects of any kind against these same walls, and above all leaping or dancing (*saltus*), fighting, ... incautious and rough games were prohibited in Hall or Chapel. Exactly how many statues and what they represented is unknown, the Statutes simply

Crucified Christ, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, and many other representations of the Saints, in sculpture... still survive scenes from the life of the Virgin

The ups and downs (mainly downs) of the reredos since the sixteenth century and its fate at the hands of the Reformation zealots, who smashed the carvings and plastered over the niches, the rediscovery of fragments of statues in 1696 (when they were moved out into the cloisters and apparently built into the cloister walls) before Henry Cook plastered over the east end again and installed his extraordinary Verrio-type mural, the re-rediscovery of the now empty niches, still bearing traces of gold and deep blue pigments, by James Wyatt and James Pears as they redesigned the Chapel in the 1780s and their restoration of the niches in plaster, and Richard of five new carved alabaster panels (still there today) at the base of the reredos in 1793; all these events are described in Gervase Jackson-



beam roof, completed in 1878, also gave urgency to the need for work on the east end, as there was now nothing to fill the gap above the reredos caused by the raised roof level. An East End Restoration Appeal was launched, the stonemasons Egglestone and Morris came in to carry out essential work on the niches, and the stage was set for college to commission John Loughborough Pearson to complete the reredos by installing statues in the niches once more. Pearson at that time was working at Westminster Abbey, and bursar Robinson naturally took soundings and may have wished he had not. A letter in dean

of British sculpture so excellent that that amount of its work should be set up in that place to last for ever? Was the whole number of statues originally undertaken and completed at one  
ose there will  
be nearly a gross of them) can help being paraded in its general effect by that dreary  
monotonous mediocrity that really is characteris (NCA 3236,  
letter dated 8 Sept. 1888). Charles Pritchard

In one letter to Robinson,



The Trinity  
surrounded by angels

Kneeling  
Angel with  
censer

Angel with  
trumpet