

William Caroe

Born 1857. Architect.

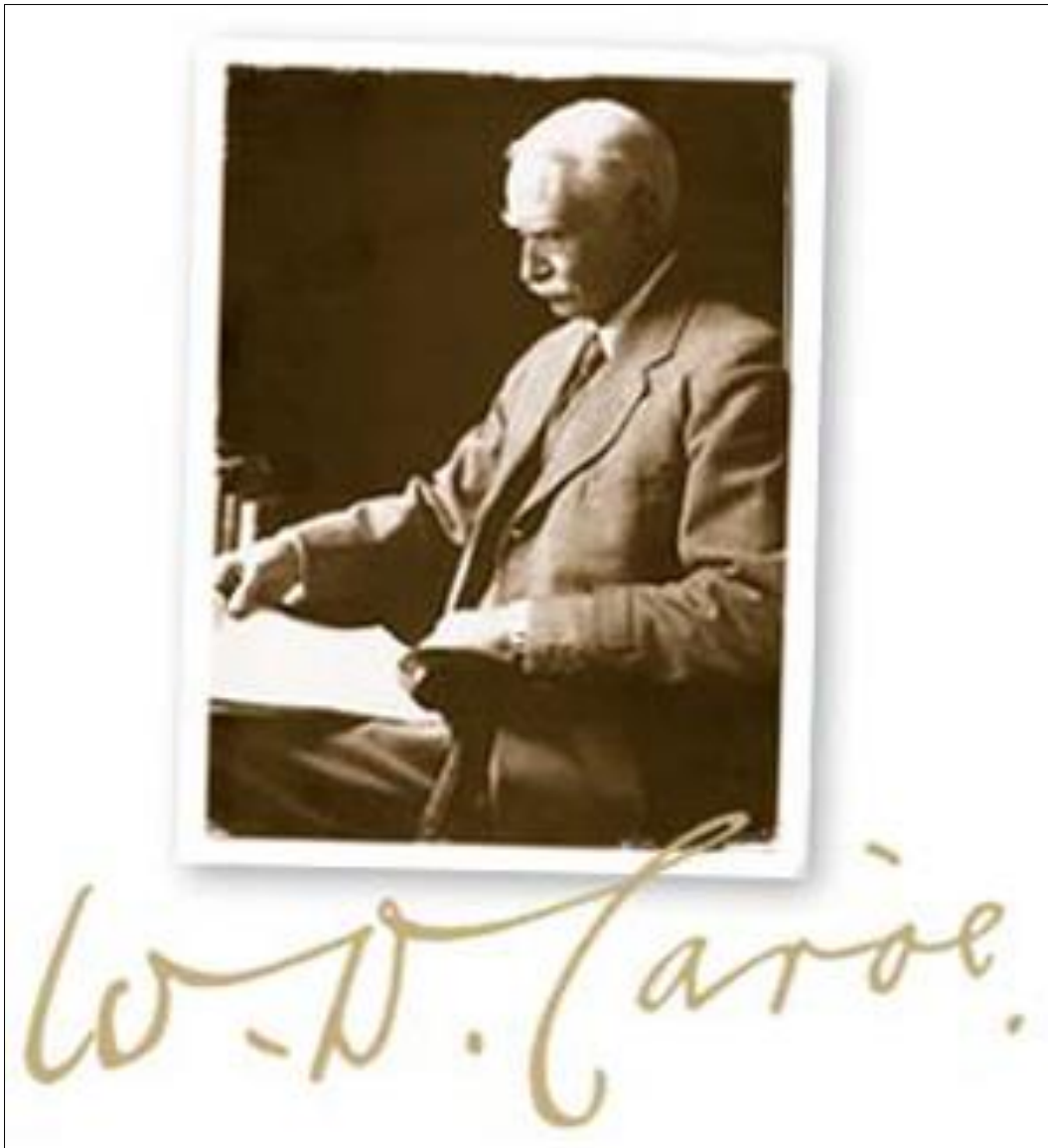
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1. Introduction



The following introduction was archived in 2021, with acknowledgement and thanks, from Wikipedia at www.wikipedia.org.

William Douglas Caroe (1857–1938) was a British architect, particularly of churches. He was born on 1 September 1857 in Holmsdale, Blundellsands near Liverpool, the youngest son of the Danish Consul in Liverpool, Anders Kruuse Caroe (d. 1897) and Jane Kirkpatrick Green (d. 1877). He was educated at Ruabon Grammar School in Denbighshire, Wales before Trinity College, Cambridge, as a senior optime, in the mathematical tripos of 1879 and graduated with a BA in the same year. Caroe was articled to John Loughborough Pearson and wrote the article on Pearson in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, (11th ed., 1911).

He married Grace Desborough (d.1947), with whom he had two sons and a daughter. The couple's elder son was (Sir) Olaf Kirkpatric Kruuse Caroe (1892–1981), who became an Indian administrator; then came a daughter,

Christian Desborough Caroe (1894–1973); and finally a second son, Alban Douglas Rendall Caroe (1904–1991), who followed his father’s footsteps in architecture.

William Douglas Caroe was a major figure in the Arts and Crafts Movement and described as a “Master of spatial painting”. The firm he founded, Caroe & Partners, still specialises in ecclesiastical architecture, especially the restoration of historic churches.

Caroe was architect to numerous ecclesiastical buildings including St David's and Durham Cathedrals, and Tewkesbury and Romsey Abbeys. Although Caroe primarily made his name in church architecture, he was also the architect for the Main Building of Cardiff University, inspired by his alma mater Trinity College.

Caroe also designed additions to his country house, Vann in Hambledon, Surrey.

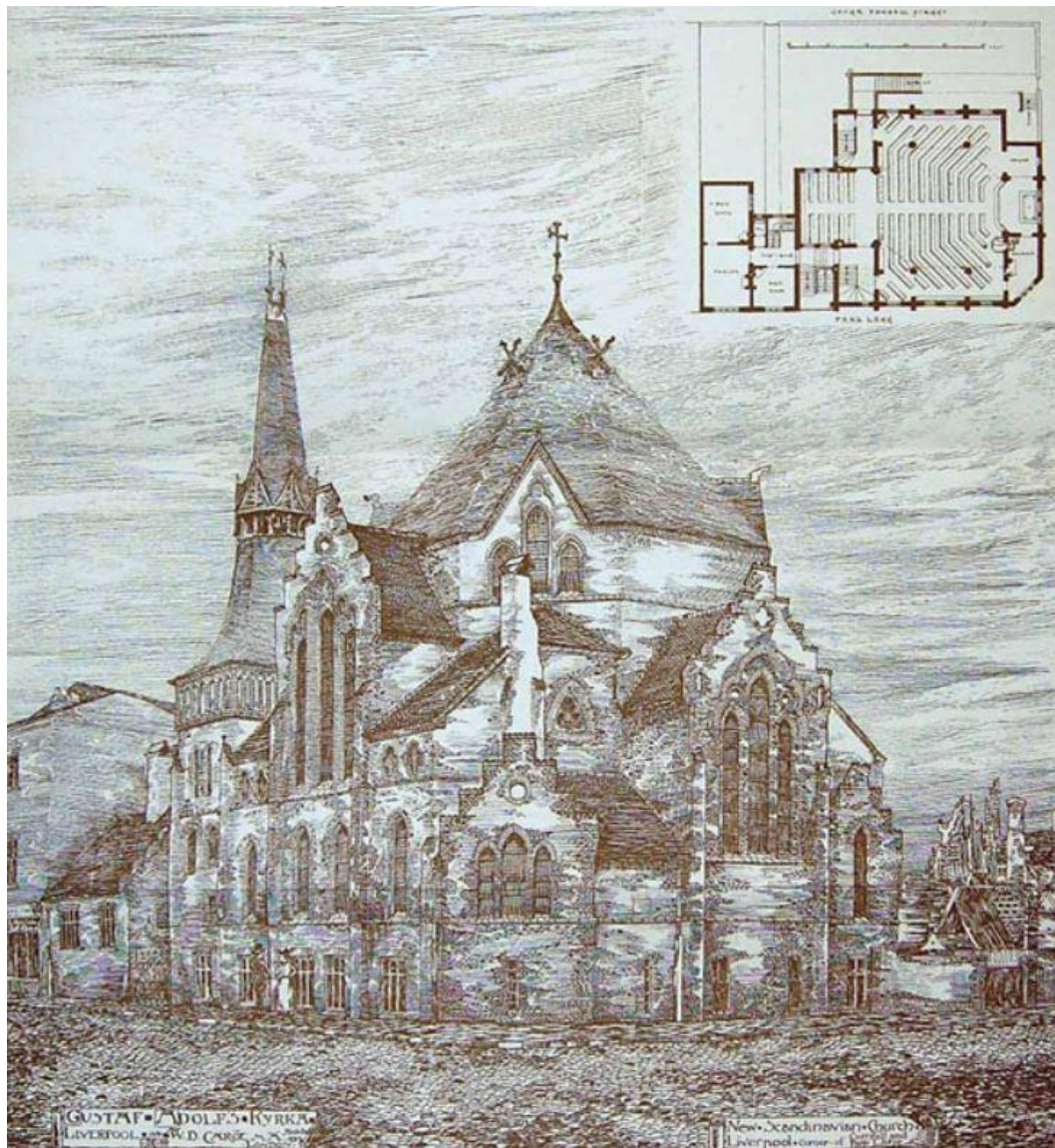


Vann, Hambledon, Surrey. The home of William Caroe, its garden based on designs by Gertrude Jekyll.

The chapters that follow describe, in chronological order, some examples of the work of William Caroe.

2. Gustaf Adolf Scandinavian Church, Liverpool, 1884

This chapter was archived in 2021, with acknowledgement and thanks, from the Archiseek website at www.archiseek.com.



Caroe probably obtained this commission through his father, who was then the Danish Consul in Liverpool, as he was still in his early 20s. His design is a unique building, and contains many Scandinavian features, including stepped gables and a concave sided lead overed spire over the entrance. The building was started in 1883 and completed in 1884.

The church stands today as one of only four octagonal church buildings in the UK and one of around thirty in Sweden. It was also the first Swedish church built overseas, although there were missions operating out of other premises. The church is today Grade II* listed building.



The Gustaf Adolf Scandinavian Church in Liverpool today.

3. St. Barnabas Church, Walthamstow, 1903

The following description of Caroe's St. Barnabas Church in Walthamstow was archived in 2021, with acknowledgement and thanks from the Andrew Pink website at www.andrewpink.org.

The church of St Barnabas Walthamstow is located among streets of modest Victorian terraced houses and owes its existence to the generosity of two philanthropists.

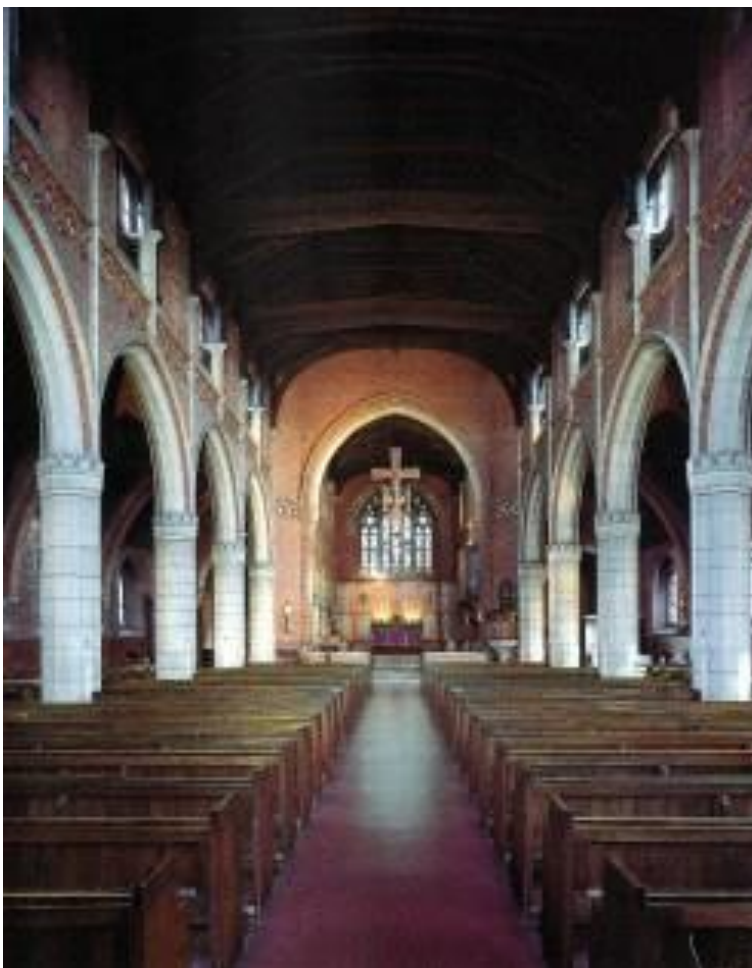
The first, Henry Casey (c.1834-1914), was a merchant in the City of London and the owner of much of the local building land and freely gave the land on which the church is built. The second was Richard Foster (1822–1910), another wealthy City merchant, who paid not only for the construction of the church but also for the construction of the vicarage and the hall that is now named after him.

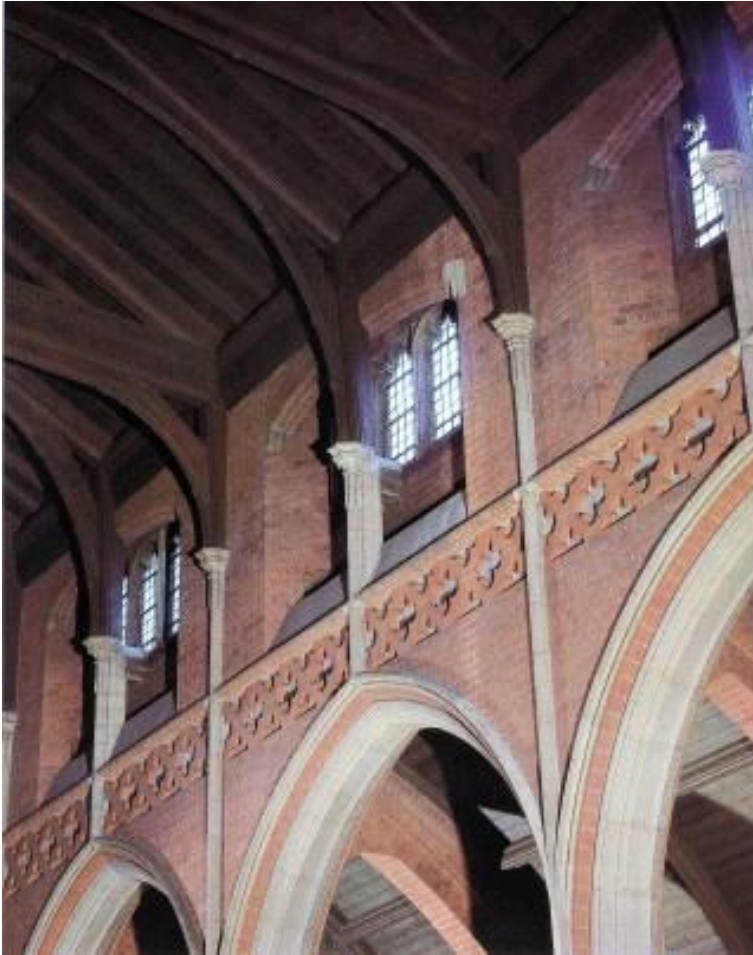


Stafford Hall, London E17. (Source: Wikimedia).

The first church building was a temporary corrugated-iron building that was set up in 1900 as a chapel of ease within the parish of St Saviour Walthamstow pending the creation of the separate parish of St Barnabas.

That iron building is still *in situ* and is in use as a community centre called Stafford Hall.





By 1901 the separate parish of St Barnabas Walthamstow had been created, the advowson of the vicarage being vested in the diocesan bishop. The present church was opened in 1903. The architect of the church, the vicarage and the hall was William Douglas Caroe (1857–1938), son of a Danish diplomat based in the UK. It was the intention that the church should be “a typical specimen of a simple and not expensive place of worship suitable for erection in less wealthy outlying districts where funds

are most difficult to come by.” (Saxby, 16-17) The building, which cost £20,000, is mostly of red brick with stone dressings, a small spired turret at the north-west corner and windows in a late-Gothic style.

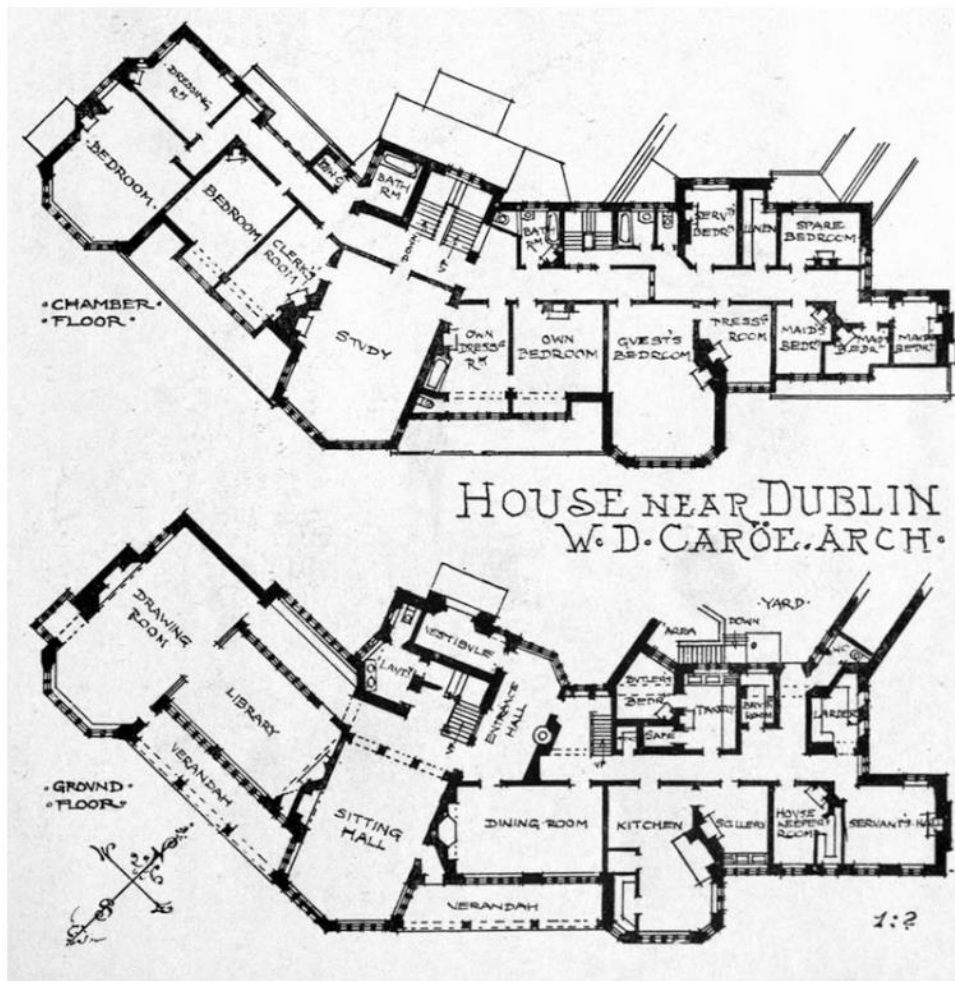
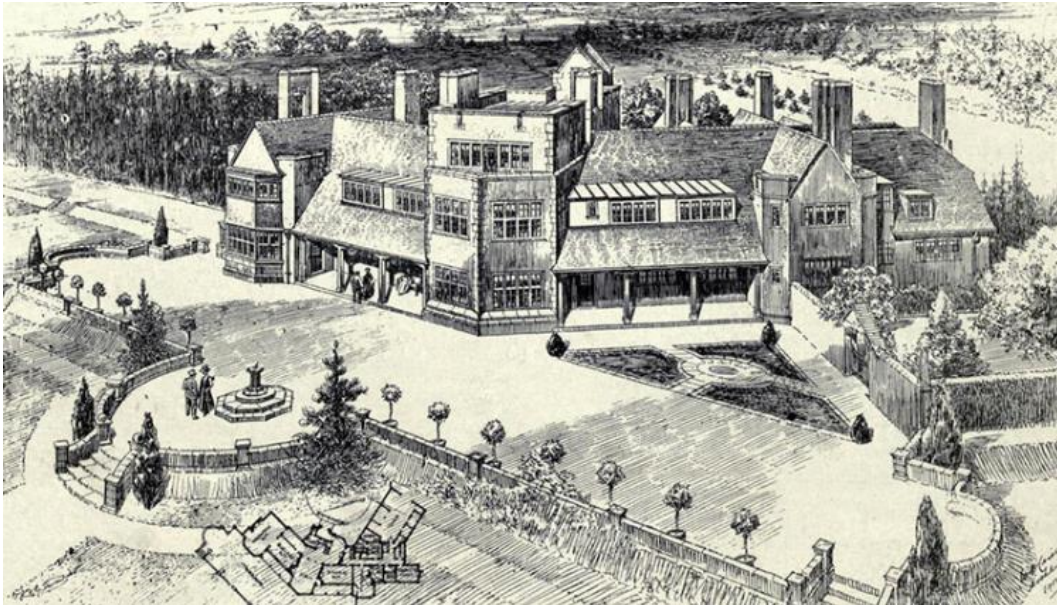
The church has a number of splendid fixtures and fittings many of which are not original to the church but contemporary with it and acquired in the closing decades of the twentieth century. A few are shown here:



The two-manual organ (1904) by the company of Walter J. Fisher of Oxford is thought to incorporate work by Eustace Ingram of London and is located on the south side of the chancel at ground level even though Caroe, the church’s architect, has provided a first-storey gallery for it. The organ case is to the design of W. D. Caroe and was carved by Dent & Francis of Crediton, Devon, who worked on other oak fittings in the church.

4. Kilteragh, Foxrock, Co.Dublin, 1905

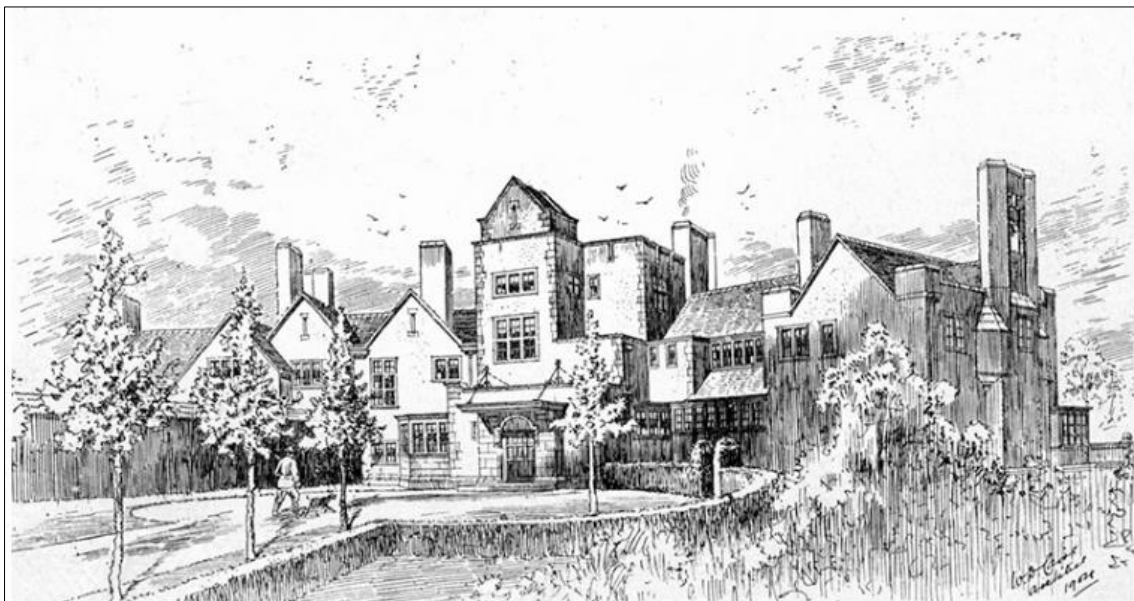
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Kilteragh was designed for Sir Horace Plunkett in 1905 in an Arts and Crafts style. Plunkett was involved in the agricultural co-operative movement and was an MP for South Co. Dublin. He later became in 1922 a Free State Senator.

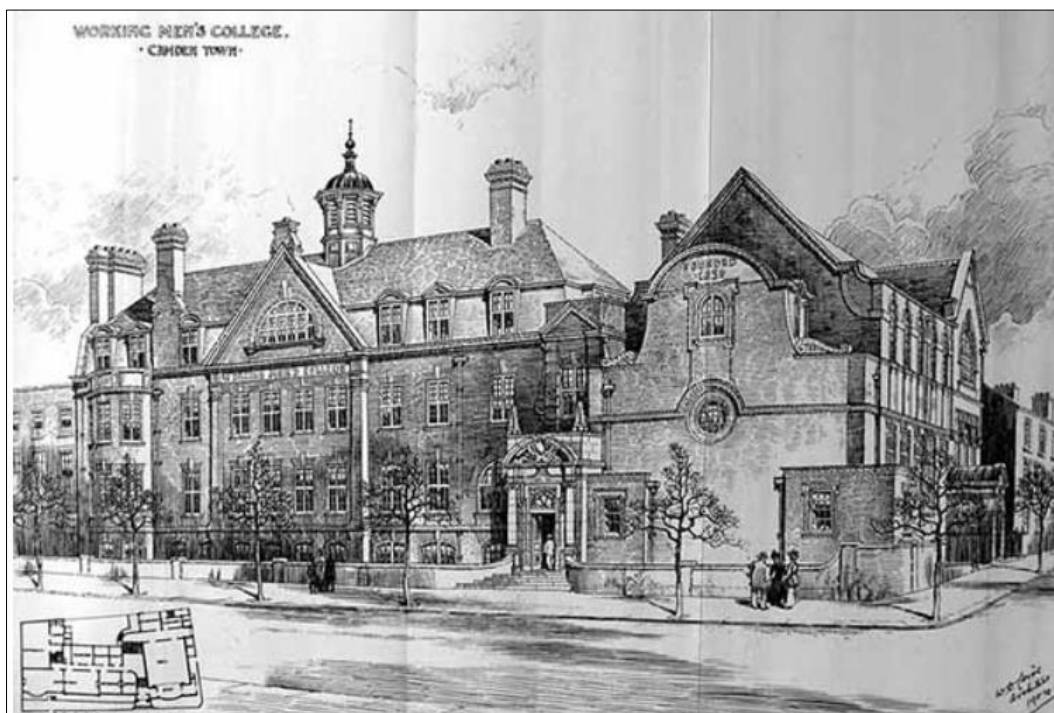
The house was white-washed with Ballyknockan granite dressings, putting it stylistically within the English Arts and Crafts tradition. The Irish Builder (January 8 1910), which at this time had poor reviews of work by 'foreign' architects, was surprisingly complimentary. 'The design is a striking, in many respects a peculiar, one. Many persons have adjudged it as an eccentric striving after originality, but everything considered it presents many points of interest and cleverness ... presents gleaming an sparkling effect in the sunshine and a distance extremely picturesque'.

On the night of 30th January 1923, while Sir Horace was in the United states, the house was set ablaze and destroyed. The fire destroyed many of the records of the Plunkett family, which Plunkett had collected to prepare a work on the subject. After the fire he wrote that 'the healthiest house in the world, and the meeting place of a splendid body of Irishmen and friends of Ireland', had been destroyed. Afterwards the 90-acre estate was sold off for building.



5. Working Men's College, Camden, London, 1906

This chapter was archived in 2021, with acknowledgement and thanks, from the Archiseek website at www.archiseek.com.



The Working Men's College in Camden is the oldest surviving adult education institute in Europe. It was founded in 1854 and was associated with the Co-operative Movement and the Christian Socialists, stemming from the same tradition that led later to the Worker's Educational Association.

The physical structure of the building was designed to reflect that found within university colleges. Large common spaces, a library, a common room, and hall, and a museum, promoted social and intellectual interaction between student, teacher and staff members of the College. There was not separate staff room. Specialist rooms such as science laboratories, arts and craft studios, lecture theatre, and gymnasium, were added in the 1930s, reflecting a desire to provide a broad educational experience.

The Working Men's College foundation stone inscription reads: 'This first stone of the new home of the Working Men's College was laid by H.R.H. The Prince of Wales on the 16th July 1904, the Jubilee Year of the College. In memory of Frederick Denison Maurice and of those who worked with him and followed in his footsteps. Albert V. Dicey KC Principal / Reginald J. Mure MA, Chairman of the Building Committee / William D. Caroe MA Architect. (Published in The Builder February 8th 1906).

Since 1964 the building has been Grade II listed.



The foundation stone of the 1906 building of the Working Men's College, designed by William Caroe.



The Caroe building of the Camden Working Men's College, still in active use for the same purpose today.

6. Cardiff University, 1909

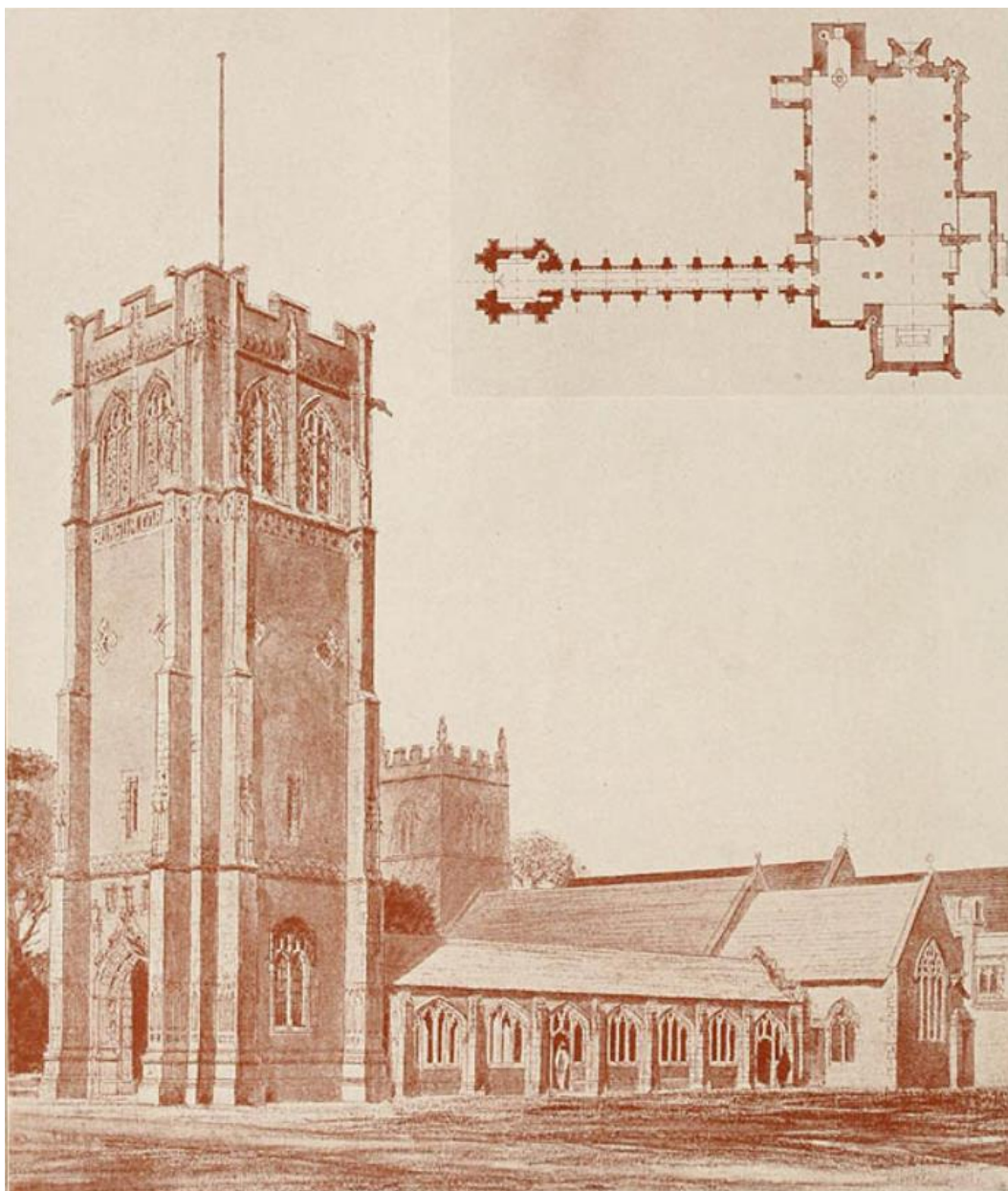
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Building work on the Caroe building for Cardiff University started in 1905, the first stage being completed in 1909. The final completion of the south wing took place in 1960. Caroe sought to combine the charm and elegance of his former college (Trinity College Cambridge) with the picturesque balance of many of the University of Oxford colleges. After the completion of the first state in 1909 money ran short for the project. Although the side wings were completed in the 1960s the planned Great Hall has never been built. Prior to then, from its founding in 1883, the university was based in the Old Infirmary on Newport Road, Cardiff. This is now part of the university's Queen's Buildings.

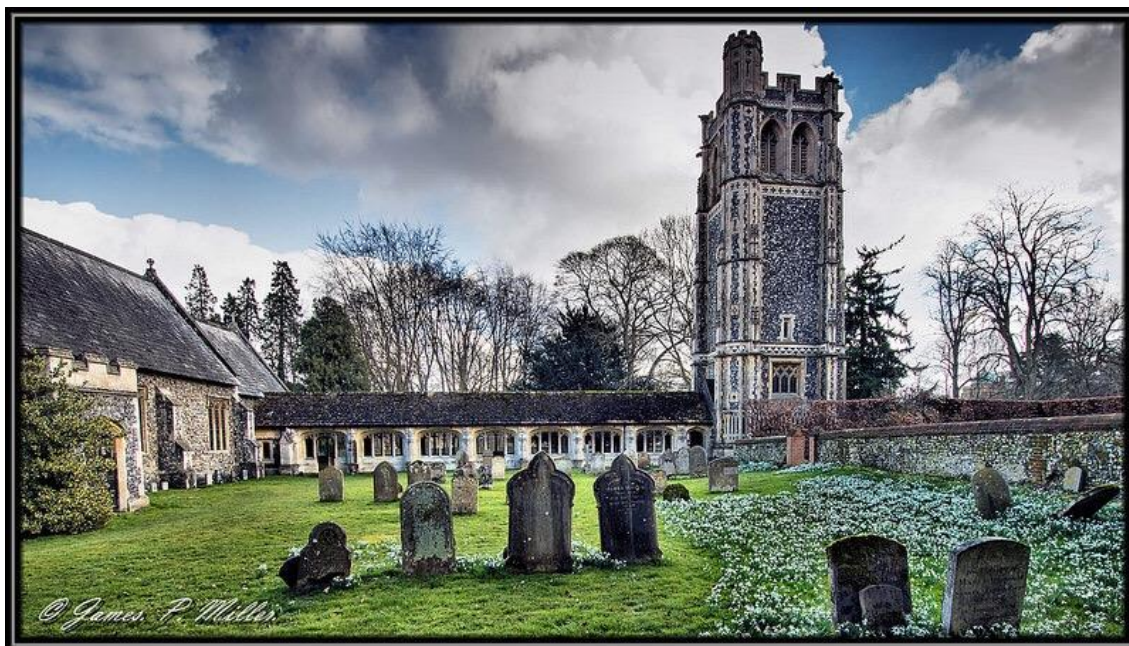
7. Memorial Campanile and Cloister, Elveden Church, Suffolk, 1922

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After Edward Cecil Guinness, first Earl Iveagh, took over the Elveden estate, he appointed William Caroe to build an entirely new village church beside the old. It would be of such a scale that the old church of St. Andrew would form the south aisle of the new church. The size may have reflected Iveagh's visions of grandeur, but it was also to accommodate the staff of the estate, as attendance at church was compulsory.

The Memorial Campanile was built in 1922 as a memorial to the wife of the first Earl Iveagh. Caroe installed eight bells, dedicated to Mary, Gabriel, Edmund, Andrew, Patrick, Christ the Father, and the King.



The Caroe cloister and campanile at Elvedon Church, Suffolk.

8. Vann



In 1907 William Caroe leased and made his home at an ancient house called Vann in Hambledon, Hampshire. He had permission to extend the house at his own expense, which he did, eventually buying the site in 1930.

The house has since passed down through the Caroe family. Its garden, based on designs by Caroe's friend and neighbour Gertrude Jekyll, is a remarkable feature of the property, and is listed Grade II. The following description was archived in 2021, with acknowledgement and thanks, from the website of the National Gardens Scheme at www.ngs.org.uk.*

For fifty years the garden at Vann in Surrey has delighted National Garden Scheme visitors. Its natural informality and rural setting exude the best of English country gardens, roses clamber across the roof and walls of the old house, wisteria festoons the pergola, formal planting is complemented by wild interlopers left to add colour and exuberance and a rill, lake and wooded stream garden add interest and tranquillity. It's little wonder that film makers have adored the garden; BBC's *Howards End* and Disney's *Christopher Robin* were filmed here.

A five acre English heritage Grade II* listed garden which surrounds and complements a historic family home dating from the 16th century, and added to each century since, giving a series of garden rooms of great variety, from the formal old "cottage garden" at the front, with delightfully informal planting, continuing south past a hedge of sweet smelling azalea pontica, to a robust pergola of Bargate stone by W.D.Caroe, leading to the enlarged field pond, recently dredged. W.D. was Martin Caroe's grandfather, he and his wife were friends with their Surrey neighbour, Gertrude Jekyll.

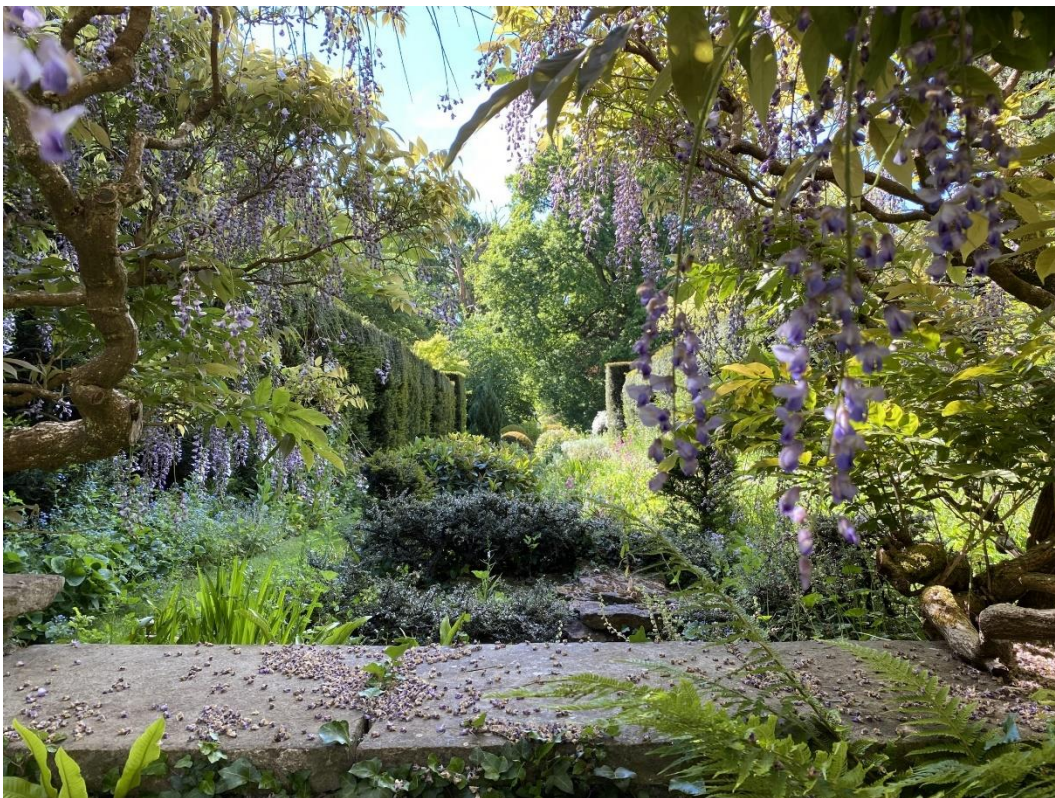
The unique Water Garden by Gertrude Jekyll (1911) comprises a succession of small ponds is crossed by stone paths and bridges, and planted with many damp-loving plants that she supplied. They include ferns, leucojum, gaulteria, pulmonaria, trachystemon, peltaphyllum,

rodgersia, and caltha, to which more recent re-planting has added newer varieties of hosta, hemoracallis hellebores and astilbe among others.

Three 'Island beds' have been made to give added interest in the old orchard and allow use of more 'modern' plants. Double borders have been created in the vegetable garden for the 150th Jekyll celebrations in 1992, the north border using her colour gradients, the south border an opportunity to use plants of special interest.

A stream runs through the garden from the north, enclosed by large yew hedges (1909) recently reduced in width. Originally planted as a rose garden the depredations of the wild deer meant the roses had to be removed and replaced with foliage plants to give year round interest.

A crinkle-crankle wall behind the greenhouse supports newly replanted peaches and pears. A 'centenary garden' was created in 2008 to the south of the greenhouse with yew 'pavilions', seats locally made from planked oak from trees on the Vann property, and floored with glass bottles to reflect the medieval glass-works in the adjacent Glasshouse Copse and locally made metal arches for climbers.



The garden at Vann.



The wisteria-clad stone pergola, designed by William Caroe.



A view across the lake to the house.

9. Generations of Architects

The architectural practice which William Caroe founded has passed through three further generations and thrives today as conservation and heritage architects under the name Caroe Architecture. The practice is led today by Oliver Caroe, great grandson of William Caroe. The generational chain is described below:

William Caroe

William Douglas Caroe (1857-1938) was a major figure in the Arts and Crafts Movement and described as a “Master of spatial painting”. Caroe was architect to numerous ecclesiastical buildings including St David's and Durham Cathedrals, and Tewkesbury and Romsey Abbeys.

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Alban Caroe, son of William Caroe

Alban Douglas Rendall Caroe OBE FSA FRIBA (17 April 1904 – 11 December 1991) was an architect. He was the son of W. D. Caroe and brother of Sir Olaf Caroe. Sir Olaf was an administrator for the Indian Civil Service and the Indian Political Service.

Alban Caroe married Gwendolen Mary Bragg, daughter of William Henry Bragg. His son, with whom he worked, was Martin. His daughter, Lucy Caroe, historical geographer, married Lord Adrian. Alban Caroe's notable work includes the south extension to University of Wales Building, Cardiff.



Martin Caroe, grandson of William Caroe

Martin Bragg Caroe (1933-1999) was a partner in Caroe & Partners from 1963 until his death. He had a strong link with Wales as England, being architect to the Deans and Chapters of Brecon and St David's Cathedrals as well as Rochester. He worked at Kingston Lacy, one of the National Trust's most important recent acquisitions. From 1991 he worked at the Tower of London, including the feasibility study for the possible re-flooding of the moat. He engaged in programmes of environmental monitoring at Rochester Cathedral and his old school, Winchester College. He wrote, with his father Alban, the authoritative book *Stonework: Maintenance and Surface Repair* (right).



Oliver Caroe, great grandson of William Caroe

Oliver Caroe is one of the UK's foremost ecclesiastical architects. Residential projects, pure conservation and major commercial refurbishments are part of his repertoire, with particular emphasis on the sustainability of existing and historic buildings.

He was appointed as architect to Ripon Cathedral in 2010, where he has led several significant projects. These include the design and installation of a major new Narthex porch, and a long-term masterplan. Since 2012 Oliver has been the Surveyor of the Fabric to St Paul's Cathedral. In 2020 he was appointed as the next Surveyor to the Fabric of York Minster.

