



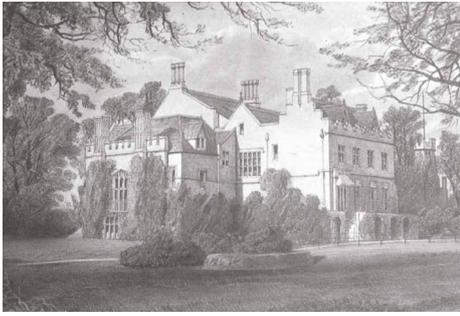
180

1842-2022

CELEBRATING 180 YEARS
OF WOLDINGHAM IN 2022
A SHORT HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL



Berrymead

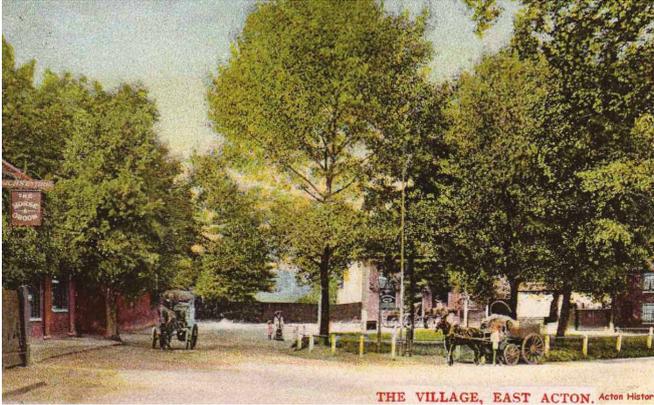


St Madeleine Sophie Barat

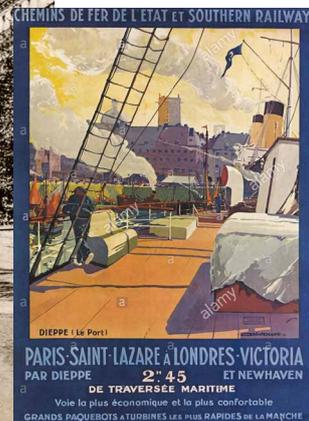


Woldingham School dates back to 1842 when the Convent of the Sacred Heart School was opened in Berrymead, Acton. It is now one of the oldest schools for girls in the UK.

Woldingham was the Society of the Sacred Heart's first school in England and started with six sisters and two girls. Set up by St Madeleine Sophie Barat, who grew up through the tumultuous years of the French Revolution, the Society of the Sacred Heart was established in France in 1800. In the school's early years, lessons were held in both French and English.



THE EARLY YEARS 1842-1850





Marden Park

The school relocated to Surrey after the end of the Second World War when the Marden estate was purchased by the sisters as its new home. The Order and 98 boarders moved to Woldingham in 1946.

By 1955 there were 138 students and 17 sisters. The school continued to grow and by 1966, there were 233 boarders, seven day girls and 75 sisters as it was also the novitiate for the RSCJ sisters.

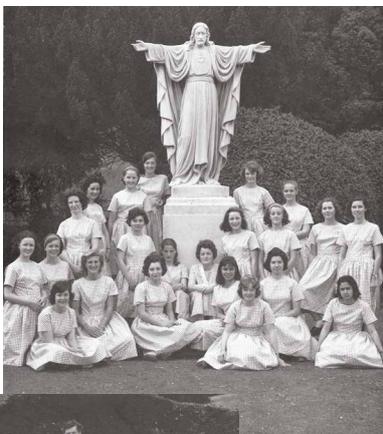
Marden Park's beautiful, landscaped gardens have been maintained and enhanced over the years with improvements and changes to the existing historic buildings including Main House and the quad. New facilities were built too including the swimming pool, originally an open-air pool, opened in 1956 at top of the terrace to the rear of Main House. Marden was built in 1969. The Chapel, opened in 1948, was originally a cow shed and later a gymnasium.

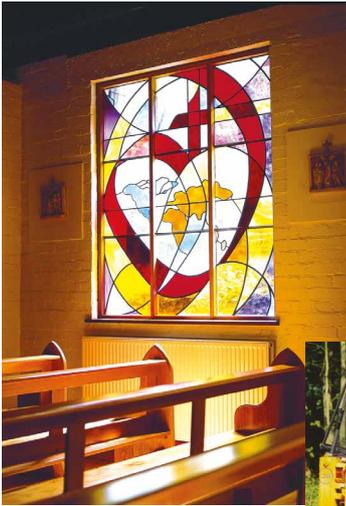
Sister Mary Hinde, who retired in 1985, was the last head who was a religious sister.



SACRED HEART CONVENT AT MARDEN PARK 1946-1985

Marden Park





Chapel window



Dr Philomena Dineen



Millennium Centre excavations

The school changed its name to Woldingham School in 1985 when it was transferred from religious to lay management. Dr Philomena Dineen became the school's first lay head.

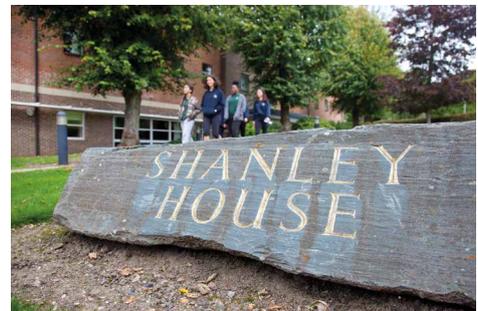
The school embarked on an ambitious development plan. The purpose-built Science Block opened in 1988, the Sports Centre in 1995 and the new Art Centre in 1998. The Millennium Centre, Woldingham's home for performing arts, opened in 2000. In 2002, Shanley House was built to provide boarding for the Upper Sixth and the Chapel was refurbished with new stained-glass windows designed by Alexandra Le Rossignol, depicting the five goals of Sacred Heart Education. The Exam Centre followed in 2012 and the refurbishment and modernisation of the Science Centre completed in 2015.

The school continues to develop, with exciting plans for a new Sixth Form Centre and library, new swimming pool, sports pavilion and to reinstate the kitchen garden.

WOLDINGHAM SCHOOL AT MARDEN PARK FROM 1985



Refurbished Science Centre



Shanley House



WILLIAM
WILBERFORCE MP
(1759-1833)
SLAVE TRADE AND
SLAVERY ABOLITIONIST
LIVED HERE
AT MARDEN PARK
1821-1823



The original mansion at Marden Park

Woldingham has been based at Marden Park in the Surrey Hills near Oxted since 1946. The Society of the Sacred Heart bought the estate from its owner, Sir Peter Greenwell, after it was requisitioned by the Canadian Army as its base during the Second World War. Evidence of the Canadian Army's residency at Marden Park can still be found in the school's estate as well as replica trenches built for training from the First World War.

Marden estate was purchased by Sir Robert Clayton, Lord Mayor of London and Director of the Bank of England, in 1673. The history of the area can be traced back to Saxon times and the land around is mentioned in the Domesday Book.

One of Marden Park's most famous residents was anti-slavery campaigner William Wilberforce MP. A blue plaque at the entrance to Main House marks Wilberforce's life at Woldingham.

Unfortunately, the house Wilberforce lived in burned down in 1879. The current Main House, which replaced the original building, dates from 1883 although the quad and walled gardens survived the fire and are part of the original buildings at the centre of the Marden estate which still exist today.

Woldingham's beautiful steps at the front of the school were a later addition when the one-sided front staircase was extended into a double staircase in 1911.

MARDEN PARK

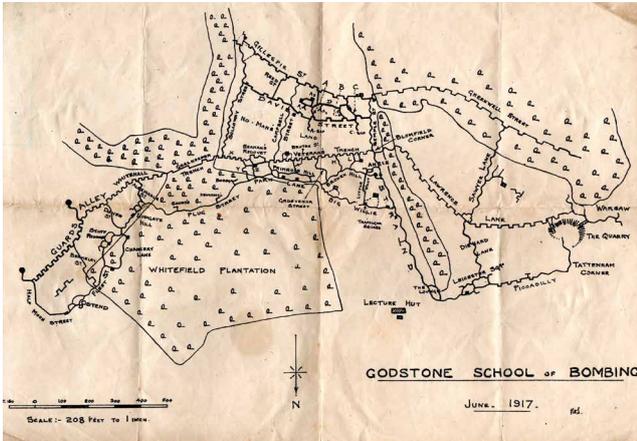


Main House today

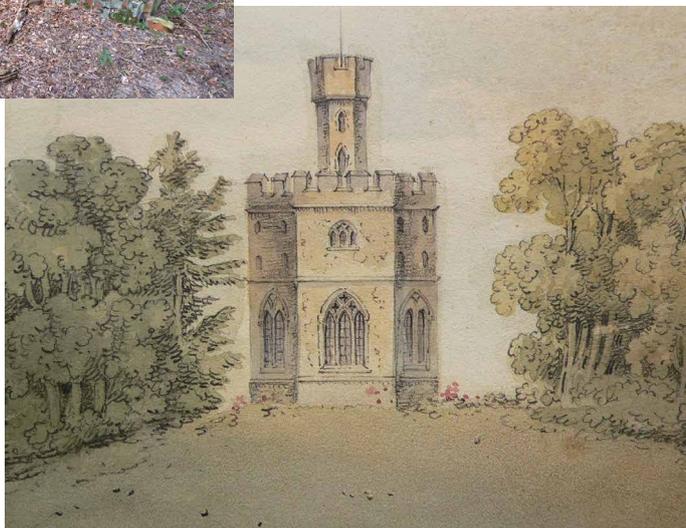
Marden Park's long history and Woldingham's past is evident throughout the school's buildings, parkland and surrounding estate. Many of the buildings and school traditions are named after the founding sisters, key staff and benefactors including the Dineen Auditorium, Berwick House and the Nicholson Room. The school's four houses – Barat, Digby, Duchesne and Stuart - are named after the sisters who founded and developed the school.

In World War 1, the Godstone School of Bombing was based at Marden Park and air-raid shelters from World War 2 still exist behind the Sports Centre. There was a Marden Castle in the grounds too until it was used for target practice by the Canadian Army in the Second World War.

The graveyard behind Shanley is the resting place for some of the sisters who lived and taught at Woldingham, as well as former students and staff.



THE SCHOOL'S SECRET AND NOT SO SECRET HISTORY



Marden Castle then and now



School grounds



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