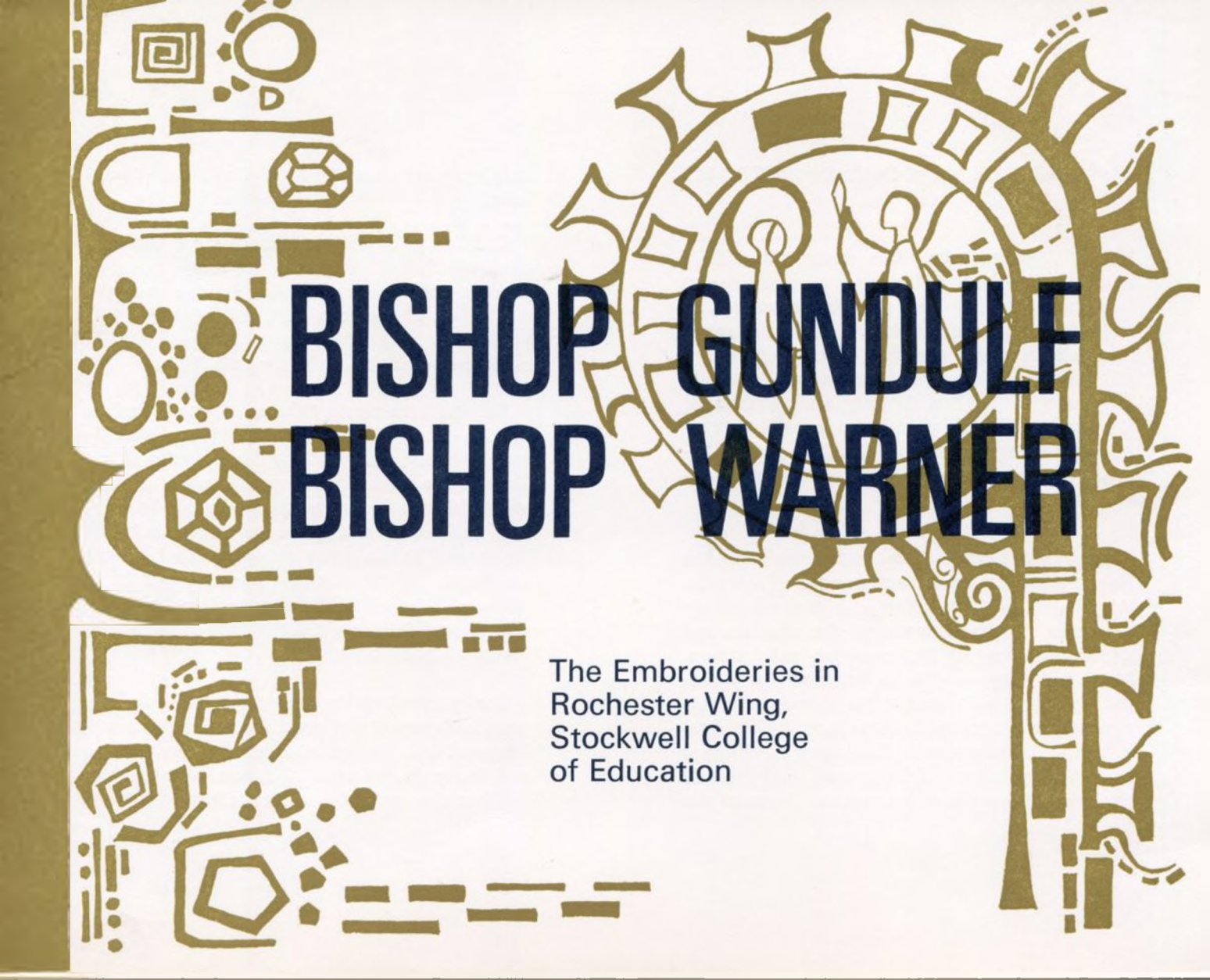




BISHOP GUNDULF BISHOP WARNER

The Embroideries in
Rochester Wing,
Stockwell College
of Education



GUNDULPH, Bishop of Rochester, 1077–1108

When William the Conqueror, in 1067, appointed Lanfranc to be Archbishop of Canterbury he paved the way for the succession of brilliant monks and scholars from the Abbey of Bec in Normandy. Gundulf, a pupil and friend of Lanfranc, accompanied his master to Canterbury and in 1077 was appointed Bishop of Rochester. Throughout the diocese he left an impressive legacy of ecclesiastical and defensive buildings, remains of which still stand to his memory.

Rochester Cathedral had been founded by the Saxon King, Ethelbert, and consecrated by St. Augustine; and in rebuilding the crumbling structure, Gundulf introduced the gracious and dignified forms of Romanesque architecture. Malling Abbey, which he founded for Benedictine nuns, still retains the character of his work on its outer walls. He founded St. Bartholomew's Hospital in Rochester as a leper hospital just outside the city wall, and this still continues its work as a hospital. Parts of the

chapel beside it are still in their original Norman form.

Gundulf is equally famous for his fortifications which include Rochester Castle and two great fortress towers; the Gundulf tower on the north side of the cathedral, part of which still stands, and the White Tower of London built in his capacity as architect to the King.

Gundulf was also a scholar. One of his first actions was to dismiss the illiterate and worldly secular canons and to introduce monks of the Benedictine order. He was known as the saintly Gundulf, for he ruled his monks with both gentleness and firmness, always subjecting himself to the same disciplines he imposed on them. His crozier is turned inwards to indicate internal authority within his own abbey, and he wears his mitre sideways in the continental style.

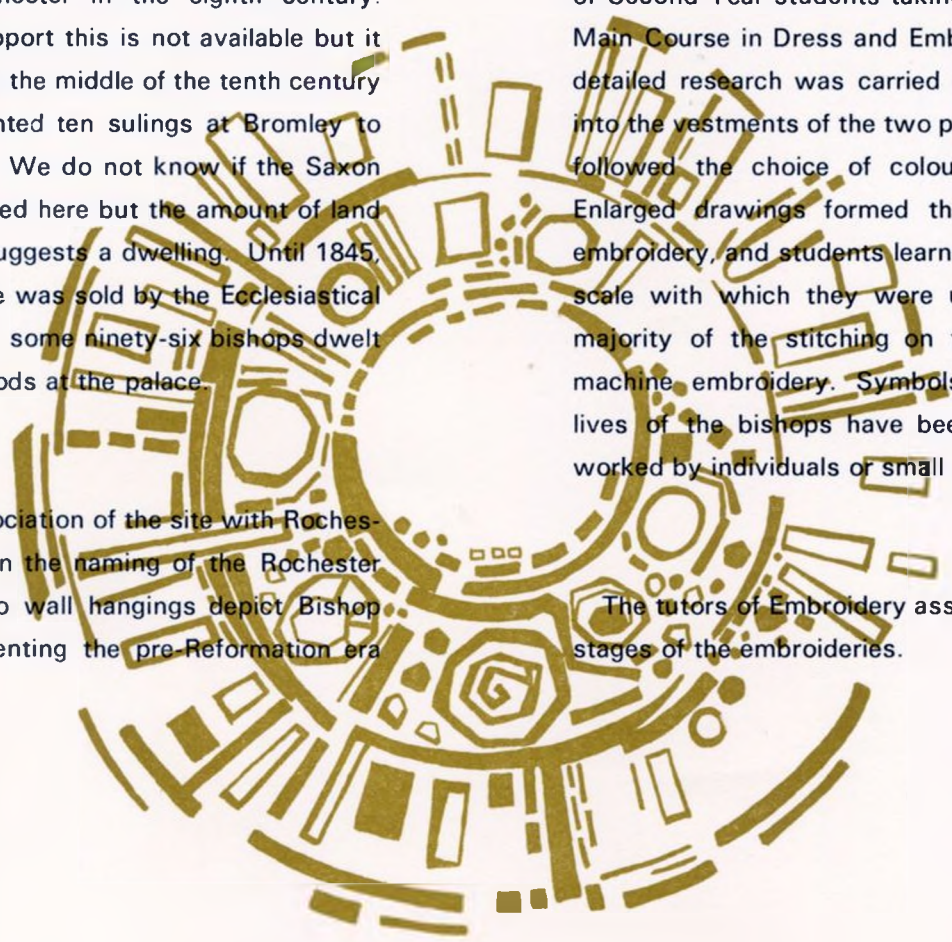
The gifts which he brought to this diocese were both varied and great for he was that rare fusion of the devout ecclesiastic, the scholar and the practical man of action. He died in 1108 at the age of 84, in Rochester.

In the History of Kent by Hasted, 1797, it is stated that land at Bromley was given to a bishop of Rochester in the eighth century. Evidence to support this is not available but it is known that in the middle of the tenth century King Edgar granted ten sulings at Bromley to Bishop Elfstan. We do not know if the Saxon bishops ever lived here but the amount of land owned rather suggests a dwelling. Until 1845, when the estate was sold by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, some ninety-six bishops dwelt for varying periods at the palace.

The long association of the site with Rochester is recalled in the naming of the Rochester Wing. The two wall hangings depict Bishop Gundulf representing the pre-Reformation era

and Bishop Warner the post-Reformation period. The project was undertaken by a group of Second Year students taking the Advanced Main Course in Dress and Embroidery. Much detailed research was carried out, particularly into the vestments of the two periods, and then followed the choice of colours and fabrics. Enlarged drawings formed the basis of the embroidery, and students learned to work on a scale with which they were unfamiliar. The majority of the stitching on the hangings is machine embroidery. Symbols depicting the lives of the bishops have been largely hand worked by individuals or small groups.

The tutors of Embroidery assisted in the final stages of the embroideries.



**JOHN WARNER, Bishop of Rochester,
1638–1666**

The son of a merchant-tailor, John Warner, was baptised at St. Clement Danes in 1581. He was elected Fellow of Magdalen College in 1604, was later rector of St. Michael's, Crooked Lane, London, and then prebendary and canon of Canterbury Cathedral. He was rector of two more parishes, Hollingbourne in Kent, and St. Dionis Backchurch in London, before becoming chaplain to Charles I, and Dean of Lichfield. In 1637 he was appointed to the bishopric of Rochester.

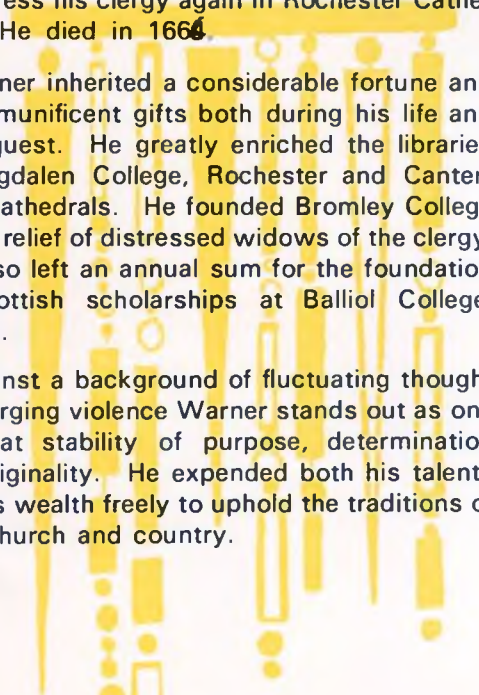
His outspoken sermons against the Puritans and rebels brought him often into conflict with Parliament. For supporting the Declaration of Bishops in 1641 he was impeached and committed to prison. His brilliant defence caused the impeachment to be withdrawn. The next year he defended the rights of the peers in the House of Lords. This resulted in the sequestration of his lands and goods. He left his Palace in Bromley in disguise and for three years led a wandering life in the west country.

After the execution of Charles I he preached and published in protest a sermon entitled *The Devilish Conspiracy*.

At the Restoration Warner, and eight surviving sequestered bishops resumed the government of their dioceses. In 1661 parliament recalled the bishops to the House of Lords and in 1662 Warner, at the age of 86, was able to address his clergy again in Rochester Cathedral. He died in 1666.

Warner inherited a considerable fortune and made munificent gifts both during his life and by bequest. He greatly enriched the libraries of Magdalen College, Rochester and Canterbury Cathedrals. He founded Bromley College for the relief of distressed widows of the clergy, and also left an annual sum for the foundation of Scottish scholarships at Balliol College, Oxford.

Against a background of fluctuating thought and surging violence Warner stands out as one of great stability of purpose, determination and originality. He expended both his talents and his wealth freely to uphold the traditions of both church and country.





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