

NEW BOOK FROM PHILLIMORE

IN SEARCH OF NATHANIEL WOODARD

Victorian Founder of Schools

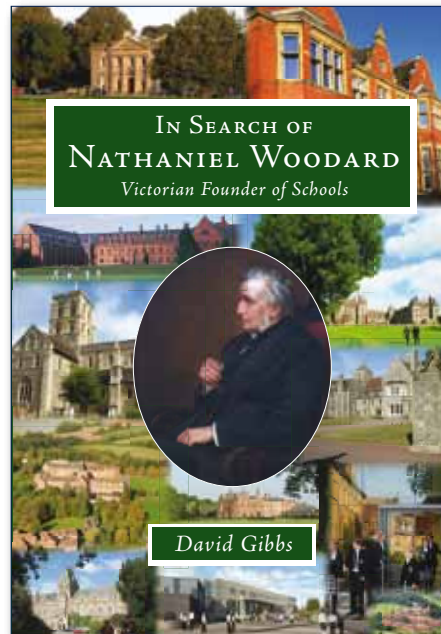
David Gibbs

Immensely energetic, driven, sure of his own faith and destiny, the Reverend Canon Nathaniel Woodard founded ten schools between 1848 and 1890. Surrounded and shocked by social conflict, poverty, deprivation and a lack of godliness, he firmly believed in education as the means for transformation. His grand design was to create a national system of High Church Anglican schools accessible to the tradesmen and lower middle classes.

Today there are 45 schools in the Woodard family. Characterised by their core Christian ethos, the family is unusual in that it embraces the independent and the maintained sectors, as well as primary and secondary levels. Members range from its first born Lancing College with its majestic Gothic chapel high on the Sussex Downs, to its most recent additions, four transformational academies, beacons of hope for young people who have been failed by the educational system. The Woodard schools are a significant part of the national educational landscape, especially in an age when the religious dimension to education is often controversial.

But who was Nathaniel Woodard? Where did he come from? What shaped his outlook? What sort of person was he? Often seen as a divisive force in the Victorian church, he was sacked from his first curacy yet gained the support of many of the great and the good, including two future prime ministers, Gladstone and Salisbury. His achievement in terms of bricks and mortar was enormous.

This quest by an author well versed in the world of Woodard schools marks the 200th anniversary of his birth. It follows in his footsteps from his upbringing in the remote Essex marshes, his Oxford education when the Oxford Movement was in full swing, a curacy in London's East End, before his removal to an obscure Sussex parish from which he launched his life's work. It seeks also to make sense of Woodard's life in terms of his legacy, and to assess his meaning today at the end of the first decade of the 21st century.



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To The Woodard Corporation, Jill Shorthose, Office Manager, Woodard Schools, High Street, Abbots Bromley, Rugeley, Staffordshire, WS15 3BW.

- Please post copies of *In Search of Nathaniel Woodard: Victorian Founder of Schools* by David Gibbs at the price of £16 each with £2.50 p&p (£18.50 in total).

ISBN 978-1-86077-667-0

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