

# The hospice of the Beaudelle family of Aire-sur-la-Lys



As for the chapel, designed when the neo-gothic style was all the rage in the middle of the nineteenth century, its dimensions are now much reduced.

The chapel has an extended nave, a choir consisting of an upright bay and an apse in three sections. In front, part of the facade holds two tiny circular rooms which give shelter to the steps at the entrance to the gallery.

Abandoned from 1992 and closed in 1998, the chapel was added to the supplementary list of Historic Monuments, thanks to the establishment of a protection committee.

The town formally acquired the chapel in March 2003 and currently important restoration projects are being carried out.

In his will made in 1855, Jean-Baptiste BEAUDELLE, a bachelor without heirs, left his huge house in the Place du Rivage to the town of Aire. He charged the town with the responsibility of making it a refuge for the homeless in the locality. He also asked that an inscription on the door of the new establishment should read, " Maison Beaudelle – refuge for the unfortunate. "

We do not know much about the life of Jean-Baptiste BEAUDELLE. He always claimed to have been born in Aire, but his deed of baptism has not been found. His death certificate, dated 1<sup>st</sup>, September, 1857, in Wandonne in the commune of Audincthun, showed that he was 84 in 1857.

Jean-Baptiste BEAUDELLE had made a huge fortune and had acquired the former convent of Conceptionists in Aire, so the town placed on his tomb in the cemetery of Aire a simple stone carrying only his name.

The buildings of the former convent were hurriedly repaired and the new hospice was inaugurated on 11<sup>th</sup> July, 1864.

The first stone of the chapel was laid on 16<sup>th</sup> February, 1869 and building work was finished by 10<sup>th</sup> August. A bell was installed in 1871. The chapel was designed by Louis Mayeur, an architect of Arras.

With the exception of the chapel, the buildings of the BEAUDELLE hospice were destroyed to make way for the present rest home which was established in 1977.

Beside the chapel are several buildings once annexes of the Convent of the Conceptionists.



[Text by the Cultural and Historical Association of Aire-sur-la-Lys]