

Jot & Tittle

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A Salisbury-Cathedral-centric view of History.

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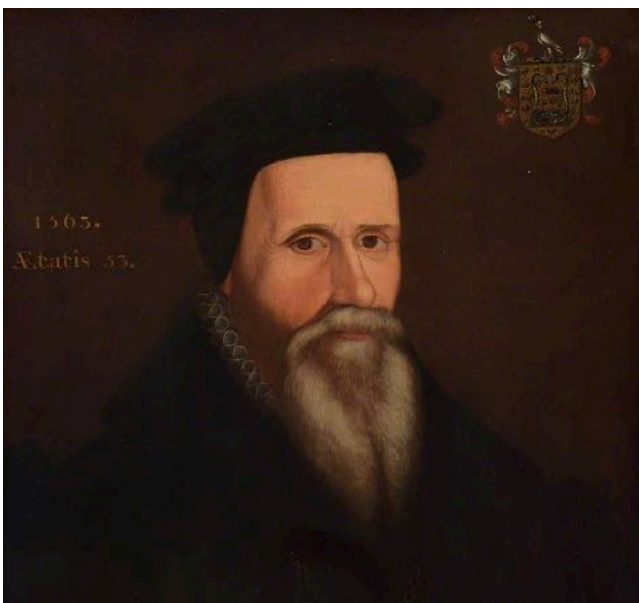
EARLY MEDICINE

The *Herbalist* concerns the story of Nicholas Culpepper (right *courtesy of National Portrait Gallery*) and the fight for medical freedom (Harper Collins 2004). Medicine was an unregulated market with the Church nominally in charge. The first attempt to sort out the mess was the intervention in 1518 by Henry VIII. This controlled medical matters in London and within a radius of 7 miles. Henry removed control from the Church and gave it to the College of Physicians who had to issue a licence to practice, at a cost.



The college was principally a guild, keeping monopolistic power to itself and competing with other guilds. This was confirmed in 1525 by an act of the Common Council and gave the medics control over the apothecaries. Later that year, another act amalgamated the Company of Barbers and the Guild of Surgeons, *perversely in order to separate the two crafts*. Two years later, another act, dubbed the *Quacks Charter*, reacted against the surgeons by allowing anyone to perform surgery *as long as it did not require a scalpel*.

Meanwhile the College of Physicians produced its own statutes under the leadership of their influential President Dr John Caius. His name was really *Keys* but the Latin had more gravitas. However he kept the original pronunciation thereby, along with the likes of Cholmondley, reinforcing the English reputation for linguistic eccentricity. He was of course also Master of Gonville & Caius, Cambridge (their portrait left). The old proverb of *The physician is more dangerous than the disease* rather rankled and Caius did his best to raise standards. The playwright and satirist Thomas Dekker warned his readers that in times of plague *a good physician comes to thee in the shape of an angel*. This was a barbed comment as *Angel* also meant a gold coin. Caius presented the Physicians College with a



silver *caduceus*. This is the mythical wand of Hermes entwined with two serpents. His aim was to stop the members from exercising the roles *with a rod of iron* but to adopt this symbol representing gentleness, clemency and prudence.

The biggest bugbear was the influence of Galen and his system of four humours: *phlegm, black bile, blood and yellow bile*. Galen was born in 129 AD and was a brilliant physician, rising to become doctor to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. As late as 1665 a reformer wrote *an extreme affection to antiquity has kept Physic, till of late years as well as other sciences, low at a stay and very heartless, without any notable growth or advancement*. When the young William Harvey (right) presented himself for examination the answers to all the questions were as per Galen. Harvey (to whom we owe the discovery of blood circulation) received his doctorate at



Padua under Versalius the great anatomist. Versalius - who operated on cadavers as opposed to Galen who only worked on animals - tried to persuade Caius to change his teaching. Caius acknowledge the new facts but could not face overturning 1500 years of tradition. This is a

problem that is still with us; a modern definition of Tradition is 'the last bad idea'.



The brilliant Harvey soon reached the top of the tree, doctoring the king, becoming a *Censor* (examiner) at the College of Physicians and Physician at Barts Hospital; there were only two hospitals and Bedlam. Harvey was one of those who campaigned to get the Apothecaries separated out from the Grocers. They received their charter, albeit as a guild, in 1617.

From now on the apothecaries would have to make their medicines according to the recipes set out in the *London Antidotary*, drawn up by the College of Physicians. This became the *London Pharmacopeia* (above).

Bibliography:

On a Grand Scale, Sir Christopher Wren, Lisa Jardine (Harper-Collins 2002)

Ingenious Pursuits, Lisa Jardine (Little, Brown & Co. 1999)

The Herbalist by Benjamin Woolley (Harper Collins 2004)

A TOMB TO PONDER

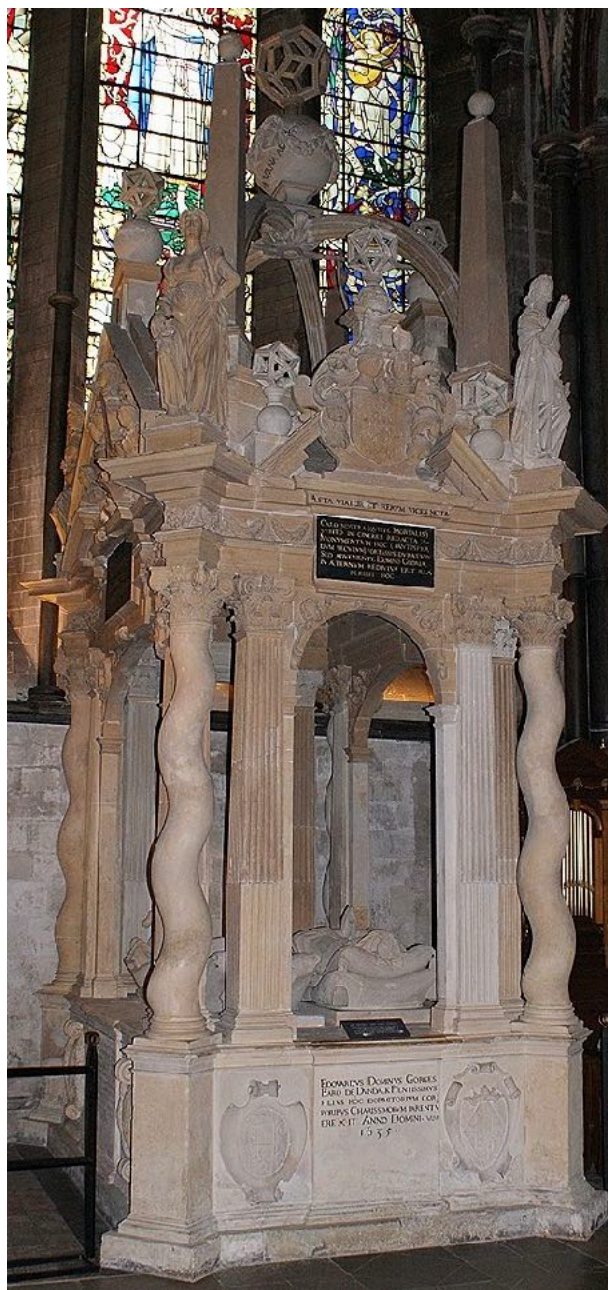
Thursday guide Paul Bailey has written to me recently concerning the symbolism enshrined in the Gorges Tomb. He was interested to get hold of *Monuments in Early Modern England* by Professor Peter Sherlock (based on his PhD thesis*) which Emily informs us is in the Cathedral Library. This tomb has been discussed in J&T Nos. 22, 23 and 68. Being

impatient, I looked the book up on Amazon where some pages are reproduced. I quote a section below to give you a flavour:

The icosahedron represents water, an element related to Thomas and Helena's lives. In 1564 Helena left her native Sweden to travel for a year in an epic journey across 400 miles of water and 750 miles on ice and land to reach England. Thomas was charged with inspecting English ships and undertaking other duties as a Vice-Admiral. More significantly the name *Gorges* refers to water, while the Snachenberg crest is a boat, so these polyhedra could be emblems for the surname and heraldry. Similarly, a cuboctahedron is composed of eight triangles and six squares. As the Marchioness died at 86 years, the cuboctahedra might simply be a play on numbers**.

The age of death was a significant number, in fact Helena's will left *unto soe many poore women as I shall have lived yeares at the tyme of my decease vizt to each woman three yards of blacke cloth at eight shillings the yard and to each of the same women one ell of holland at three shillings the ell*. To push this approach further, if the 20 sides of the four icosahedra are added to the 12 sides of the dodecahedron, then 92 faces can be counted, the number of descendants Helena is thought to have left at her death.

It is evident that the precise meaning of the polyhedra is not yet known, if indeed there ever were one. They do fit, however, into the Gorges monument's overall message about the transformation of the dead and the relationship of earth and heavens. They also fulfil the important function of attracting attention, promoting discussion that keeps the memory of the dead alive.... For the style of the Gorges tomb is innovative, even beyond its time for an English monument, and the visual impact demands engagement.



Photo, above, courtesy of Wikimedia, creative commons.

* Sherlock's tutor was a Mr Holmes!!!!

** Lisa Jardine's *Worldly Goods* (Macmillan 1996) demonstrates how maths crept into art so as to appeal to the merchant class. I presume this would equally apply to those cognoscenti stimulated by the Renaissance and the rise of science.

PRINCE RUPERT

Prince Rupert of the Rhine, Duke of Cumberland, KG, PC, FRS was an English army officer, admiral, scientist, and colonial governor. He first came to prominence as a Royalist cavalry commander during the English Civil War. Rupert was the third son of



the German Prince Frederick V of the Palatinate and Elizabeth, eldest daughter of King James VI and I of Scotland and England. His portrait (left) dated 1641-2 is by Gerrit van Honthorst and is courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery.

I am sure you know of his military side but perhaps not so much of his scientific interests. During this period Rupert became closely involved in the development of mezzotint, a "negative" or intaglio printmaking process which eventually superseded the older woodcut process. Rupert appears to have told a range of associates that he had conceived of the mezzotint process through having watched a soldier scrape the rust from the barrel of his musket during a military campaign. John Evelyn credited Rupert as the inventor of the technique in 1662, and Rupert's story was further popularised by Horace Walpole during the 18th

century. Considerable academic debate surrounds the issue, but the modern consensus is that mezzotint was instead invented in 1642 by Ludwig von Siegen, a German lieutenant-colonel who was also an amateur artist. Siegen may or may not have met Rupert: Siegen had worked as chamberlain, and probably part-tutor, to Rupert's young cousin William VI, Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel, with whom Rupert discussed the technique in letters from 1654.

Rupert did, however, become a noted artist in mezzotint in his own right. He produced a few stylish prints in the technique, mostly interpretations of existing paintings, and introduced the form to England after the Restoration, though it was Wallerant Vaillant, Rupert's artistic assistant or tutor, who first popularised the process and exploited it commercially. Rupert's most famous and largest art work, *The Great Executioner* (right with the head of John the Baptist, *courtesy of the British Museum*), produced in 1658, is still regarded by critics such as Arthur Hind and Antony Griffiths as full of "brilliance and energy", "superb" and "one of the greatest mezzotints" ever produced; other important works by Rupert include the *Head of Titian* and *The Standard Bearer*.



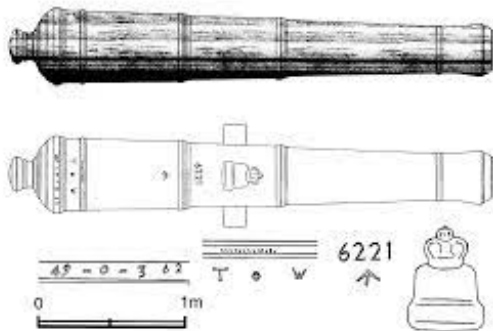
After Rupert's retirement from active seafaring in around 1674, he was able to spend more time engaged in scientific research and became credited with many inventions and discoveries, although some subsequently turned out to be the innovative introduction of European inventions into England. Rupert converted some of the apartments at Windsor Castle to a luxury laboratory, complete with forges, instruments, and raw materials, from where he conducted a range of experiments.

Rupert had already become the third founding member of the scientific Royal Society, being referred to by contemporaries as a "philosophic warrior", and guided the Society as a Councillor during its early years. Very early on in the Society's history, Rupert demonstrated *Prince Rupert's*

drops (right) to King Charles II and the Society, glass teardrops which were amazingly hard but exploded when the tail is cracked; although credited with their invention at the time, later interpretations suggest that he was instead responsible for the introduction of an existing European discovery into England. He demonstrated a new device for lifting water at the Royal Society, and received attention for his process for "painting colours on marble, which, when polished, became permanent". During this time, Rupert also formulated a mathematical question concerning the paradox that a cube can pass through a slightly smaller cube; Rupert questioned how large a cube had to be in order to fit. The question of Prince Rupert's cube was first solved by the Dutch mathematician Pieter Nieuwland. Rupert was also known for his success in breaking cypher codes.



Many of Rupert's inventions were military. After designing the *Rupertinoe* naval gun (left, more accurate but too costly), Rupert erected a watermill on Hackney Marshes for a revolutionary method of boring guns, however his secret died with him, and the enterprise failed. Rupert enjoyed other military problems, and took to manufacturing gun locks; he devised both a gun that fired multiple rounds at high speed, and a "handgun with rotating barrels". He is credited with the invention of a form of gunpowder, which when demonstrated to the Royal Society in 1663, had a force of over ten times that of regular powder; a better method for using gunpowder in mining; and a torpedo. He also developed a form of grapeshot for use by artillery. Rupert also focussed on naval inventions: he devised a balancing mechanism to allow improved quadrant measurements at sea, and produced a diving engine for retrieving objects on the ocean floor. While recovering from his trepanning treatment Rupert set about inventing new surgical equipment to improve future operations.



Other parts of Rupert's scientific work lay in the field of metallurgy. Rupert invented a new brass alloy, slightly darker in hue than regular brass involving three parts of copper to one part of zinc, combined with charcoal; this became known as "Prince's metal" in his honour—sometimes also referred to as "Bristol Brass". Rupert invented the alloy in order to improve naval artillery, but it also became used as a replacement for gold in decorations. Rupert was also credited with having devised an exceptional method for tempering Kirby fish hooks, and for casting objects into an appearance of perspective. He also invented an improved method for manufacturing shot of varying sizes in 1663, that was later refined by the scientist Robert Hooke, one of Rupert's Royal Society friends during the period. Left, the decayed remains of Prince Rupert's house near the Barbican c1800. Charles II would visit here and join in the experiments.



What is fascinating in this seminal scientific period was the mix of status. The King and Prince Rupert from royalty, John Boyle and Sir William Petty from the aristocracy, Bishops John Wilkins and Seth Ward from the Church and Christopher Wren and Robert Hooke from the impoverished but well-educated - incidentally Wren and Hooke were lifelong friends and neither married. There were also a number of medical men. One also must not forget the input of the two eminent diarists: John Evelyn and Samuel Pepys. These amateur experimentalists were the founding fathers of the Royal Society of *London for improving Natural Knowledge* (founded November 1660 and thus the oldest continuously existing scientific academy in the world). This started life in what Boyle termed *the invisible university* with experiments at Wadham and Gresham Colleges and the formation of the Oxford Philosophical Club.



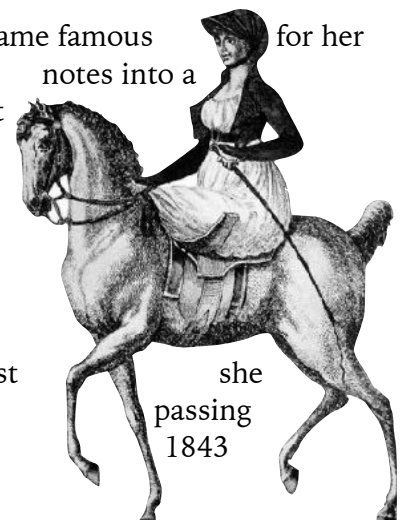
Above, the twelve founder fellows of the Royal Society at a meeting in Crane Court off Fleet Street; Isaac Newton is in the chair and note the mace given by Charles II. Wood engraving by John Arthur Quartley courtesy of the Wellcome Trust, creative commons attribution.

Recommended Reading:

- Prince Rupert: The Last Cavalier* by Lord Charles Spencer (Phoenix 2008).
- The Royal Society & the Invention of Modern Science* by Adrian Tinniswood (Head of Zeus 2019)
- Inside Pepys' London* by Jonathan Bastable (David & Charles 2011)

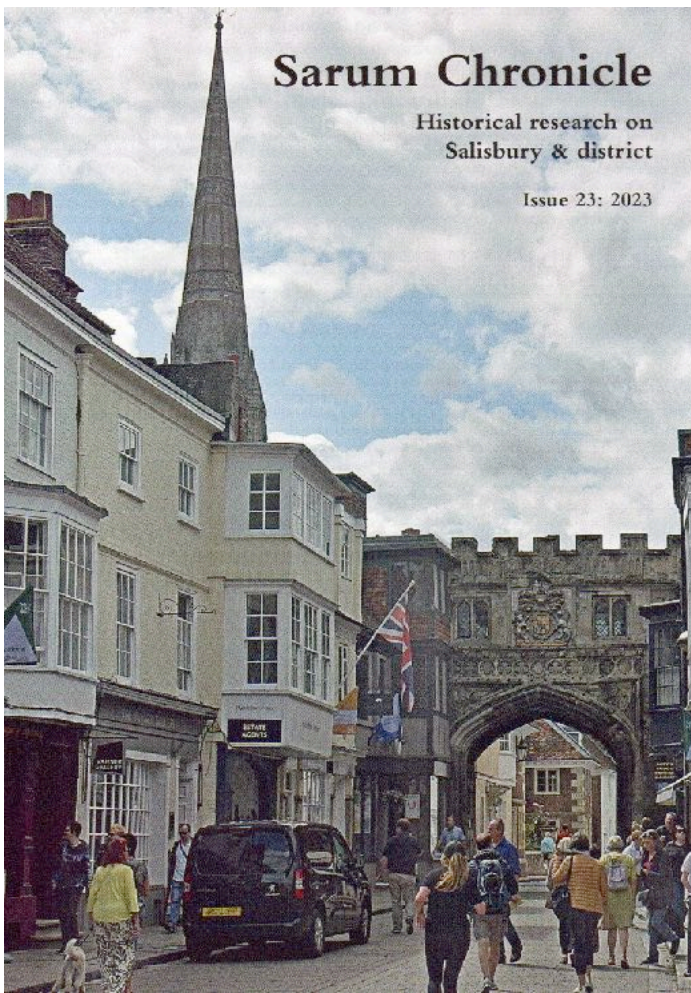
BORN AT BOURNE

Celia Fiennes was born at Newton Tony in June 1662 and became famous for her horseback exploration of England. She worked up her travel notes into a memoir in 1702 but did not intend it for publication. Robert Southey published extracts in 1812 and *Through England on a Side Saddle* appeared in 1888 followed by *The Journeys of Celia Fiennes*, a scholarly version, in 1947, since when it has remained in print. She was interested in the production and manufacture of each town, anticipating the *economic tourism* pioneered by Daniel Defoe.



she passing 1843

She never married and died at Hackney in April 1741. At her request was interred at St Andrew's Newton Tony and a simple note of her was added to the family memorial stone. The church was rebuilt in but luckily the memorial was transferred.



The 2023 edition of **Sarum Chronicle** is now available for purchase - details set out below.

If you are not already a reader, let me heartily recommend that you become one. John Elliott insists on a very high standard of printing and publishing, so it is a joy to read.

The articles are not only extremely interesting but written to a critically high academic level and many accompanied by Roy Bexon's excellent photographs.

The Chronicle is expanding its area of interest to cover Hampshire, Dorset as well as all of Wiltshire; so to all you budding authors, why not submit an article?

The **Annual Sarum Chronicle Lecture** is always worthwhile, especially as there is wine and nibbles beforehand.

This year, Sidney Blackmore will be talking about *Fonthill Fever*. The eccentric and wealthy connoisseur, William Beckford, decided to sell-off his amazing estate and its artistic treasures in 1823.

This caught the public imagination - especially as the extraordinary saga unfolded. To learn the rest of the story, why not join us at St Francis' Church (Museum room is out of action) on 2nd November.

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Recent historical research on Salisbury and district
Issue 23: 2023

We are pleased to announce the latest issue of Sarum Chronicle. Published annually since 2000, each Chronicle contains a wide range of illustrated articles exploring the history of Salisbury and the surrounding areas. This year's Chronicle has something for everyone, from the architect Augustus Pugin's Salisbury connections, to the Salisbury maps by William Naish from the 1700s, to the original Bshopsdown Farm in the nineteenth century, and Downton Brass Band - still going strong after 170 years. Other articles investigate subjects such as the sculptor Margaret Roberts, Salisbury Public Library and multi-millionaire Andrew Carnegie, recent Salisbury benefactor Peter M Devenish Bradshaw, as well as the work of talented embroiders in the 1950s whose cushions illustrate over 700 years of history at Salisbury Cathedral. Additionally, there is new research on the life of the 17th century apothecary Philip Read, Salisbury local politics during the 1923 General Election, and Salisbury music festivals in the 1700s.

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(a free lecture for subscribers to Sarum Chronicle)

"Fonthill Fever"

Sidney Blackmore, Secretary of the Beckford Society

Date: Thursday 2 November. From 6.30 pm; Lecture starts at 7.00 pm.

Enjoy a glass of wine and nibbles followed by the lecture

Venue: St Francis Church, Beatrice Road, Salisbury, SP1 3PN.

See Sarum Chronicle website, page 'Annual Lecture', for parking information and further details.

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