

# Jot & Tittle

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*A personal selection of  
Salisbury, Wessex,  
British and world, history*  
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A friend gave my wife a collection of buttons which were exquisite. The pearl ones Sue forwarded to the Cockney Museum as The Pearly Kings and Queens (above, Pearly King of Royal Kensington and Pearly Queen of Borough!) have difficulty in sourcing pearl buttons nowadays. This made me wonder what the history of Cockney was. As I understand it, the name applies to Londoners and especially (but not exclusively) those from the East End. It is a dialect that has been around for a long time. More recently, Londoners tend to speak *Estuarine English* which is in between Cockney and Received Pronunciation. Even more recent still is *Multicultural London English* but it still has a base of Cockney.

Cockneys were supposed to be born within the sound of Bow Bells (St Mary-LeBow). This was a practical possibility when London just comprised the old walled City. You could say that it

tended more to the eastern part as the prevailing wind was from the south-west. The earliest record of the term Cockney is in *Piers Plowman* by William Langland written in 1362. It used to mean a small misshapen egg or a cock's egg which became *cokeney*. Also the mythical land of idleness and luxury, *Land of Cockaigne*, dating from 1305 became humorously associated with London.

Cockneys often use Rhyming Slang (apples and pears = stairs, so *stairs* would be changed to *apples*). That is fairly simple but it could become quite convoluted. *Arse* is rhymed with *bottle and glass* then *bottle* was rhymed with *Aristotle* which was then shortened to *Aris*. Their dialect includes a strong influence from Yiddish; examples being *shtum* (mute) and *kosher* (legitimate). Another influencer was Romani: examples being *wonga* (money) and *cushty* (good). Rhyming slang is not confined to London. The 'Fifth Beatle', Brian Epstein was known as the *Aintree Iron*. *Iron* not only rhymes with *Brian* but *iron hoof* = *poof!* (For those who like connections, the song *Aintree Iron* was recorded by The Scaffold, a trio that included Paul McCartney's younger brother).<sup>9</sup>

Cockneys also use what linguistic experts call *th-fronting* in which *th* is pronounced *f* or *v*. *Three* is pronounced *free* and *further* is pronounced *fervour*. Costermongers are street sellers of fruit and vegetables from carts. The name comes from a type of apple called a *costard*. It is from among the costermongers that the Pearly Kings and Queens are drawn. They do wonderful work raising money for charity and especially hospitals. The original Pearly King was Henry Croft; his funeral in 1930 was attended by 400 followers and received national media coverage.



#### FLORAL ROYALTY

I am sure you all know the story of the symbols that became a war. the great white rose (*Rosa alba*) was the emblem of Eleanor of Provence and her son, Edward I, made it the design for his seal of state. His brother Edmund took the red *Rosa Gallica* for his emblem. These badges became synonymous with the houses of York and Lancaster during the *Wars of the Roses*.



The final victor became Henry VII (Lancaster) who married a Yorkist, thus uniting the two clans. Of course his emblem had both the red and white, known to us as the Tudor Rose (above).



Heraldry abounds in floral symbols such as Broom (right<sup>2</sup>) which has the Latin name *Planta genista* from where we get Plantagenet. The lily is supposed to be the origin of the heraldic Fleur de Lys although I read that Flag iris, *Iris versicolor*, was chosen by Louis VII when he went on crusade. This plant became stylised as *fleur de Louis* and then *fleur de lis* - I wonder if he was a boy-scout?

#### THE LOST PREBEND

**W**e have discussed prebends before - the parish churches whose tithes made up a canon's income - but Blewbury is one that passed me by. It is near Didcot, originally in Berkshire. The manor house was given to Reading Abbey by Empress Matilda but there were two smaller manors. One was called *Nottingham Fee* and is commemorated today in a street name. It belonged to a family called Nottingham and it represented a quarter of a *knight's fee* under the feudal system.

The third manor was given to Bishop Osmund in 1086 and became a prebend of Salisbury Cathedral. In 1516 though it was given by the king to the order of St John of Jerusalem, then under Wolsey to Cardinal's College, Oxford after which it passed to St George's Chapel, Windsor. In 1536 the king gave it to his new protégé, Thomas Cromwell who held it until his attainder in 1540 when it went to a courtier, one Thomas Paston. In 1541-2 an Act of Parliament at last returned it to Salisbury but in the Civil War it was sold to one of the Regicides, John Dove. At the Restoration it returned again to Salisbury, where it stayed until transferred to the Ecclesiastical Commission in 1865, finally being lost completely when the village was transferred to Oxfordshire in 1974. St Michael & All Angels, Blewbury, is shown, right<sup>3</sup>.



It is fascinating to think of the demon Protestant, Cromwell, being a canon of a Catholic Salisbury but alas there is no record of him ever attending the Cathedral.

### COINING IT

The word Mint meaning a place where money is coined, is 15<sup>th</sup> century and comes from Old English *mynt* and Old Saxon *munita*, which in turn stems from Greek *minthē* via Roman *moneta*. Did you know that the difference between production cost and face value is called *seigniorage* and helps fund the mint.

The oldest coins were cast in a conical mould and marked on one side with a die hit by a hammer. This gave way to heating a blank and placing between two dies before being struck. With the coming of iron the blanks could be struck unheated. The old Catalan character (right<sup>4</sup>) is using a *trussel* to mark the coin. This gave way to a monkey-press powered by a falling weight but in 1553, the French engineer, Aubin Olivier introduced the screw press.



Matthew Boulton introduced a steam-powered press in his Soho factory in 1788. His presses were still used by the Royal Mint in 1881. They could strike 70 to 84 coins a minute. The blank coins were called *planchets*. Boulton's firm sent 20 million blanks to Philadelphia to be turned into cents and half-cents by the US Mint. His coins were sophisticated with an incised rim and *incuse* (sunken letters) that beat the counterfeiter. Boulton eventually was given the Royal Mint contract in 1797. His first steam produced coin (for Anglesey) is shown left<sup>4</sup>. A German engineer, Dietrich Uhlhorn, invented a level coin press of which he sold 500 by 1840. It was used in the Birmingham Mint, the largest private mint in the world whilst the firm of Taylor & Challen improved the design and supplied complete press-room equipment to the world's mints.

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The Royal Mint's origins go back to 886AD when mints were fragmented but it was unified in 1279. It operated from special premises in the Tower of London for several hundred years before moving to Royal Mint Court where it stayed until 1968 when it finally moved to Llantrisant in Wales. Since 2018 the use of cash has declined and so the Mint has successfully diversified into precious metals investment, historic coins and luxury collectibles. It is also involved in

recovering precious metals from electronic waste and this is now being used in its new Jewellery Division.

Incidentally, Isaac Newton was given the sinecure of Warden of the Royal Mint but took it seriously and went head to head with the counterfeiters. The result was *The Great Recoinage* of 1696 which included the Coin Act that made owning counterfeiting equipment, High Treason. Left is a modern press<sup>5</sup> - no expense spared.

## VICTORIA'S CHILDREN



Queen Victoria had 9 children, 42 grandchildren and 87 great-grandchildren, no wonder she was known as the *Grandmother of Europe* (see illustration<sup>6</sup> below) Her children were as follows:

Victoria (Vicky) Princess Royal married Crown Prince William of Prussia: 8 children including German Emperor William II and Sophia Queen of the Hellenes - 23 grandchildren including 3 kings of Greece and 1 queen of Romania.

Edward VII married Queen Alexandra of Denmark: 6 children including George V

Princess Alice married Louis IV of Hesse: 7 children including Alexandra of Russia - 10 grandchildren including Edward VIII and George VI and a king of Norway.

Alfred Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha married Grand Duchess Maria Alexandovna of Russia: 6 children including Queen of Romania - 18 grandchildren including a king of Romania and queens of Greece and Yugoslavia.

Princess Helena married Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein 6 children - 1 grandchild.

Princess Louise married John Campbell Marquess of Lorne: no issue.

Prince Arthur Duke of Connaught and Strathearn married Princess Louise Margaret of Prussia: 3 children including Crown Princess of Sweden - 7 grandchildren including queen of Denmark and Count Carl Johan Bernadotte (see J&T No.137).

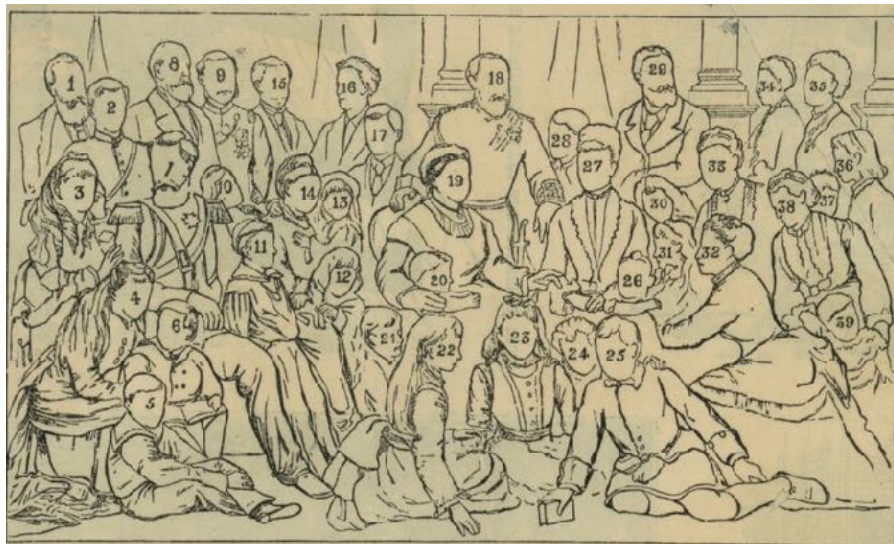
Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany married Princess Helena: 2 children - 8 grandchildren.

Princess Beatrice married Prince Henry of Battenberg: 4 children including Victoria Eugenie Queen of Spain and Prince Alexander of Battenberg who became Sir Alexander Mountbatten. - 8 grandchildren including queen of Spain and Spanish Heir Apparent.

Knowing what royalty are, you will not be surprised that Victoria and Albert shared the same grandparents: Duke Francis of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfield and Countess Augusta Reuss. Also two pairs of her grandchildren married each other: Princess Irene of Hesse and by Rhine (daughter of Alice) to Prince Henry of Prussia (son of daughter Victoria); Grand Duke Ernest Louis of Hesse (son of Alice) to Princess Victoria Melita (daughter of son Alfred). I hate to think what their DNA analysis would look like - apart from the haemophilia.

## MILTON ABBEY

Set in an idyllic spot eight miles south-west of Blandford Forum, the original collegiate church was founded by King Athlestan in 933AD. It was supported by the king's gift of sixteen manors. In 964 the canons were replaced by Benedictines from Glastonbury. In 1309 the church was struck by lightning and the resultant fire destroyed the church, books, relics and records. It was gradually rebuilt, in time for Henry VIII to dissolve the monastery. The monks were dispersed and the manors sold off. Sir John Tregonwell, a lawyer who helped arrange the king's divorce from Catherine of Aragon, bought the estate in 1540 for £1,000. The family gradually petered-out and the estate was sold to Joseph Damer in 1752. He was created



1. Prince Frederick William Louis of Hesse, K.G.—2. Prince Frederick William Victor Albert of Prussia.—3. Princess Frederika Amelia Wilhelmina Victoria of Prussia.—4. Princess Victoria Elizabeth Augusta Charlotte of Prussia.—5. Prince Ernest Louis Charles Albert William of Hesse.—6. Prince Albert John Charles Frederic Alfred George of Schleswig-Holstein.—7. Frederick William, Imperial Crown Prince of Germany and Prussia, K.G.—8. Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, K.G.—9. Prince Arthur, K.G., Duke of Connaught and Strathearn.—10. Prince Christian Victor Albert Ludwig Ernest Anton of Schleswig-Holstein.—11. Prince Joachim Frederick Ernest Waldemar of Prussia.—12. Princess Sophie Dorothee Ulrique Alice of Prussia.—13. Princess Margaretha Beatrice Feodora of Prussia.—14. Victoria, Princess Royal of England, and Imperial Crown Princess of Germany and Prussia.—15. Prince Leopold, K.G.—16. The Marquis of Lorne, K.T.—17. Prince Albert William Henry of Prussia.—18. Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, K.G.—19. Her Majesty Queen Victoria.—20. Princess Franziska Josepha Louise Augusta Mary Christina Helena of Schleswig-Holstein.—21. Princess Elizabeth Alexandrine Louise Alice of Hesse.—22. Princess Victoria Alexandrina Olga Mary of Wales.—23. Princess Louise Victoria Alexandra Dagmar of Wales.—24. Princess Maud Charlotte Mary Victoria of Wales.—25. Prince George Frederick Ernest Albert of Wales.—26. Prince Alfred Alexander William Ernest Albert (Son of the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh).—27. Alexandra, Princess of Wales.—28. Prince Albert Victor Christian Edward of Wales.—29. Prince Alfred, K.G., Duke of Edinburgh.—30. Princess Irene Marie Louise Anna of Hesse.—31. Princess Victoria Louise Sophie Augusta Amelia Helena of Schleswig-Holstein.—32. Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein (Princess Helena of England).—33. Marie Alexandrovna, Duchess of Edinburgh and Grand Duchess of Russia.—34. Princess Beatrice Mary Victoria Feodora.—35. Princess Louise, Marchioness of Lorne.—36. Princess Victoria Alberta Elizabeth Matilda Mary of Hesse.—37. Princess Victoria Alice Helena Louisa Beatrice of Hesse.—38. Princess Louis of Hesse (Princess Alice of England).—39. Princess Maria Victoria Feodora Leopoldine of Hesse.

KEY TO THE FOUR-PAGE SUPPLEMENT OF HER MAJESTY AND THE ROYAL FAMILY.



Lord Milton and then Baron Damer in 1764 and proceeded not only to remodel the building but the estate as well - including the village. One tenant, a lawyer, refused to move but had to when the sluice gates on the old abbey pond were opened. The new model village, called Milton Abbas, is now a tourist attraction, set in its Capability Brown setting.

The last of the Damers sold the estate to Charles Joachim, Baron Hambro, a merchant banker from Denmark. Hambro commissioned Sir George Gilbert-Scott to restore the church in 1865 but in 1932 the estate was sold and divided up. It was at this point that I became interested as the story was minuted in the Cathedral Chapter Act books of November 1932 and June 1933. These were occasions when the Greater Chapter met, that is the non-residential canons as well as those in the Cathedral Close. It appears that the Catholic Church wished to purchase the property and this galvanised the Bishop and especially one of the Canons who was Bishop of Sherborne. You can feel the *'over my dead body'* coming off the page. They managed to persuade the Ecclesiastical Commission to buy the estate's 666 acres for £36,000. The church was put in charge of the Milton Abbey Committee of the Diocesan Board of Finance. Visitors to the house and park were charged a shilling of which 6<sup>d</sup> went to the committee and 6<sup>d</sup> to the commission. In 1953 it became a school (pictured above<sup>7</sup>) which is still flourishing.

### CRESSET & BEACON

**T**his neat little shelter<sup>8</sup> is at Culmstock in Devon on the north-west corner of the Blackdown Hills. It was one of a chain (or relay league) of Elizabethan beacons that were lit in time of danger, most famously at the sighting of the Spanish Armada on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1588. It was rebuilt in 1870 but originally would have had a wooden pole in the centre supporting a fire basket.



1. Courtesy of Silver Magazine.
2. Courtesy of wildflowerfinder.org.uk.
3. Courtesy of The Churn Benefice (churnchurches.co.uk).
4. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.
5. Courtesy of Staatliche Münzen Baden-Württemberg.
6. From Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper of 14<sup>th</sup> July 1877 and shown in Wikipedia.
7. Photo of Milton Abbey School by John from Wareham and shown in Wikipedia under Creative Commons Attribution.
8. Photo of Culmstock Beacon courtesy of Tony in Devon and shown in Wikipedia under Creative Commons Attribution.
9. Stolen with subtle daring from *The Book of Who* by Rodney Dale (CRW Publishing 2005).