



*A Salisbury-Cathedral-centric view of History.*

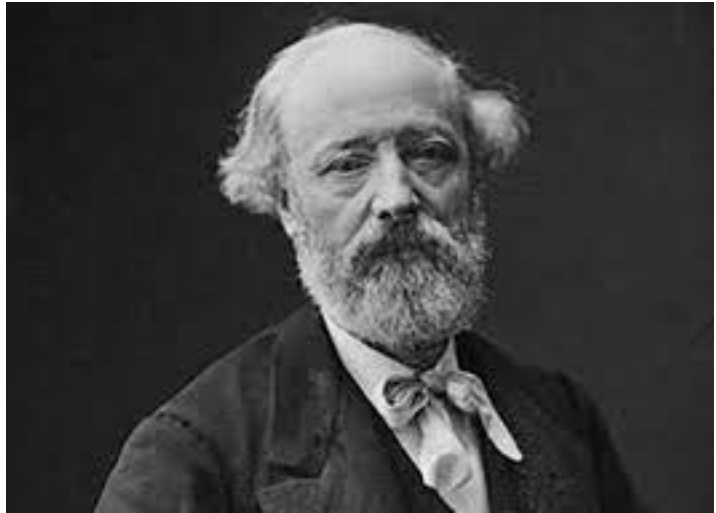
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## A PEEK THROUGH THE WINDOW - NO. 44

### MIKE DEEMING WRITES:

Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (1814-79) was one of the leading French architects in the Gothic revival tradition. These days he is perhaps best known for his 1844 restoration of Notre-Dame de Paris; this included the design of the wooden spire which sadly crashed through the roof in the disastrous 2019 fire. He had particularly strong views on glass in cathedrals and wrote of the glass in Chartres – ‘After studying our best French windows, one might maintain, as their secret of harmony, that the first condition



of an artist in glass is to know how to manage blue. The blue is the light in windows, and light has value only by opposition... The composition of blue glass singularly pre-occupied the glass-workers of the 12th and 13th centuries. If there is only one red, two yellows, two or three greens at the most, there are infinite shades of blue... and these blues are placed with a very delicate observation of the effects they should produce on other tones and other tones on them.’

It was certainly the case that the medieval glass makers had a very limited palette of colours – only blue could be produced in a wide range of colour variants, achieved by adjusting the level of cobalt additive. This flexibility didn’t exist for other colours and that’s how it arose that words like ‘ruby’ and ‘emerald’ were used to describe reds and greens – they were seen as fake gems and highly valued. So medieval coloured windows would be largely blue, with jewel-like gems of reds, yellows and greens. Our medieval pictorial windows in Salisbury - particularly the Jesse tree window and the adjacent lancet in the south nave aisle - clearly reflect this.

The concept of colour symbolism goes back to Egypt in pre-Christian times. Blue, the colour of the sky and the sea, was seen to represent calm and peace, security and wisdom; red (blood) related to danger, but also to passion; green to nature, youth, health and fertility; yellow for sunshine, joy (but also cowardice), and white for purity. Since the Middle Ages, the Virgin Mary’s robe in most windows is coloured in blue. The picture overleaf is of an 1871 window by Clayton and Bell in medieval style – it’s located on the south side of the Trinity Chapel.



In the mid-19th century, Charles Winston sponsored extensive programmes of work to synthesise chemically these medieval colours, work carried out by Powell's (see J&T 60 peek no 8). This led to whole ranges of new colours – pinks, browns, purples, greens etc – and we see many of these in the 'Suffer little children to come unto me' window near the font, where its juxtaposition to the Jesse tree window is striking in the contrast of the colour palette.

Which brings us to the present day. Caroline Swash, who designed our newest window – the Army Air Corps fiftieth anniversary window in the north nave aisle – told me of the care she'd taken to exactly match the two blue Corps' colours to the medieval blues in the south nave aisle. In the Trinity Chapel, the Prisoners of Conscience window directly reasserts the medieval approach to colour; this is hardly surprising when you consider that Gabriel Loire, the artist, was anchored in the glass tradition of Chartres, where blue is the dominant colour throughout. Surrounded by dark blue, light blue is the colour he chooses to depict Christ as the light of the world. 'Blue', he said, 'is the colour of peace', echoing Viollet-le-Duc's words above.

For more information about the Prisoners of Conscience window, see the Pitkin Pictorials 1980 guide and notes on Roger Ayers' presentation to the Friends of Salisbury Cathedral, 23 September 2006.

Ed: The religious use of the colour blue of course is also found in the ultramarine (beyond the sea) used in medieval paintings for the Virgin Mary's apparel. This high-status and expensive colour came solely from the mineral lazurite imbedded in Lapis Lazuli (the blue stone) found in the Sar-e-Sang mines of Afghanistan (right). This was carried overland on the Silk Road to Syria where it was transported to Venice by ship.

As Lapis is full of impurities the stone was finely milled before mixing with pitch, mastic, turpentine and linseed oil or wax and then heated to form a paste. Finally it was kneaded in an alkaline lye solution that washed out the pigment. If you want to know more I recommend Kassia St Clair's fascinating book *The Secret lives of Colour* (John Murray 2018).





## WE SHALL REMEMBER THEM

The Chapter minutes of July 1922 record that Chapter agreed with Archdeacon Carpenter's request that a memorial cross from Flanders in memory of Lt. J H P Carpenter should be placed in the cloisters. Where of course it still stands (right) as a melancholy reminder of the dreadful toll of WW1.

We have in the past drawn attention to the bureaucracy that lies behind some of the Chapter minutes. Naturally, after WW1 the Cathedral was asked for some way of commemorating the fallen. This was originally discussed in 1917. A minute from June 1922 reads as follows: *This joint meeting of the War Memorial Committee and the Advisory Committee accepts the recommendation of the report of the Westminster Committee with additions so that the war memorial will take the following form.*

*A chapel in the south bay of the south transept and eight lights, six on the east side and two on the south side of the south transept to be designed subject to the advice of an expert [Harold Rogers] to be appointed by the Dean and Chapter after consultation with the Cathedral Advisory Committee. That the whole project including the chapel be treated as one and be put in hand simultaneously.*

## THE 'MAIDEN OF THE WATER'

Ashmore, the highest village in Dorset, at the western end of Cranborne Chase is best known for its  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre pond, a rarity in the Chase. Clive Aslet in his (500) *Villages of Britain* (Bloomsbury Publishing 2010) writes that water was quite literally worshipped. On Midsummer's Eve, the villages perform the ancient rite of *Filly Lou*.



The Filly Loo (there is no definitive derivation of this phrase) is a celebration marking the longest day and the filling of the village pond and is held on the Friday nearest June 21st. There's a green-man, the Hambleton Hopstep Band and their caller and lots of dancing in the village street, the climax being a version of the Abbots Bromley Horn dance by torchlight, in an eerie silence broken only by the sound of a lone flautist. There are also performances by Morris Dancers and the evening ends with everyone dancing hand-in-hand around the village pond.

## SAVERNAKE STORY

David Sherratt writes: Jot & Tittle makes mention in Edition 106 of the Ailesbury family in a minor financial agreement between the Dean and Chapter and the Marquess in 1921. It might interest readers to know of the sad tale which lies behind it. His Lordship's Agent was at that time earnestly seeking sources of money for the maintenance of the the Marquess's extensive estates and his seat, Tottenham House (below). The story is a stark reminder of the vicissitudes facing aristocratic families in the early twentieth century.



The first Marquess, Charles Brudenell Bruce, on succeeding to the Estate in 1814 decided to build a palace commensurate with his advanced status in the aristocratic hierarchy. This was against the advice of his brother-in-law, Sir Richard Colt Hoare of the banking dynasty who bluntly called it a 'white elephant'.

Later in the century, William, the 4th Marquess - 'Willy' to London Society and a hoard of bookmakers - is described by the 7th Marquess in his book 'A History of Savernake Forest' (1962) thus : ' a notorious ne'er-do-well..his excesses shortened his life... he squandered an immense amount of money and thus left his family in a very precarious state'.

Willy (right, pictured by Vanity Fair, *courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery*) spent much of his childhood in the company of stable lads, huntsmen, and the Estate labourers so that when he entered Eton College amongst his peers he was mocked for his broad Wiltshire accent. He married a girl, 'from the Variety stage' who left him childless and occupied himself with a luxurious London lifestyle (shades of 'Dorian Gray' published at that time), and at various racecourses along with country pursuits. Amongst his exploits was a furious gallop with a coach and four round Marlborough High Street, his 'pocket borough'. The inevitable consequence was the occupation by duns, bookmakers, and aristocratic spongers at Tottenham House. Willy decided to sell the lot , House and Estate, in order to pay off his creditors. It was when the sale was about to be confirmed with Lord Iveagh, the Guinness magnate that the Family stepped in to preserve their family home. The judge at the challenge by the Family roundly condemned the Marquess's lifestyle and Willy conveniently died in 1894. His uncle







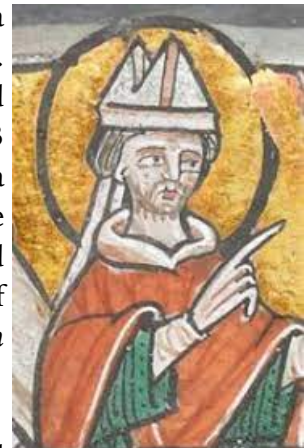
Henry the fifth Marquess inherited title and ruinous Estate. 'He gradually got the better of the financial crisis...living modestly in a small house at Leigh Hill'. He died in 1911 just as Lloyd-George's Liberal Government 'adopted a policy of directing taxation to the break-up of inherited wealth' and the First World War was to prove disastrous for the owners of large estates : 'it caused the pound to lose a great part of its value,.. initiating the process whereby the bare cost of living rises steeply from one year to the next.'

This was the state of affairs for Chandos, sixth Marquess when he inherited the Ailesbury title. Eight years after the dealings with the Dean and Chapter, much of the Estate, its farms and villages surrounding Savernake Forest (above, Cathedral Oak) were put up for auction in Marlborough and after the 1929 sale (many lots unsold) a second auction attempted to rid the Marquess of his costly inheritance. The rise of the Great Depression must have affected sales. Just before the Second World War a deal was arranged whereby the Forest Commission took over the ancient Savernake Forest with the clause 'The Hereditary Wardenship of the Forest shall be retained by the Marquis of Ailesbury and his heirs'. At the end of the Second World War the 'white elephant', Tottenham House, was leased to Hawtreys Preparatory School and in the early 21st Century the House, long unoccupied, and a part of the Estate were sold to a private buyer who has undertaken a massive restoration project of the House and its ancillary buildings. *The Fall of the House of Usher or sic transit gloria mundi?*

#### DID YOU KNOW?

**T**he first Earl of Norfolk was Hugh Bigod (1095 to 1177). When Henry II was sorting out the aftermath of the Matilda-Stephen civil war, Hugh lost his castles but was made Sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk. In 1166 he was excommunicated by Archbishop Becket but this was quashed by a Royal Council *as it contravened the Constitutions of Clarendon*. Hugh's sister married William d'Aubigny (see J&T No.108).

Herbert of Bosham was originally a clerk in the Royal Chancery but was exiled with John of Salisbury and Thomas Becket. John failed to get his exile lifted as he regarded his oath to the Church above that to the king. Herbert stood up to Henry which led one courtier to remark *well whoever's son he is, I would give half my land for him to be mine*. He remained a loyal friend of Becket to the end. The three men were all great scholars. Becket left Paris to handle the accounts of a financier but was recruited into the household of Archbishop Theobald. His colleagues included 3 future archbishops and 6 bishops. He was sent to study law in Bologna and Auxerre and was given missions to papal courts. In 1154 he was made Archdeacon of York (£100 a year) and given various prebends and provostships. Finally Theobald recommended him to Henry for the post of Chancellor. The rest, as they say, is History. Image *courtesy of British Library*.



For more information: *Tales from the Long Twelfth Century* by Richard Huscroft (Yale University Press 2016).