



Extracts from the Chapter minutes from 1701 onwards
Mark Brandon markandsuebrandon@outlook.com

Since working with Magna Carta I have become a great admirer of two historic figures, **William the Marshall** (1146 - 1219) and **Elias of Derham** (1160 - 1246). Interestingly, the breadth of both their achievements has only come to light in recent years and they are linked, if only because Elias was retained to administer William's will. There is an interesting article on the web by David Langton in which he puts forward the theory that Elias could possibly be the son of Archbishop Stephen Langton! Some of his research is rather esoteric but his examination of names is of interest. He found that the surname Derham (sometimes Durham) was not common in Norfolk but was associated with Wiltshire. In fact he eventually comes to the conclusion, through the Langton connection, that his birthplace could be Horncastle, in Lincolnshire!

Whilst on the subject of multi-achievers, one I have recently come across is **Bishop Gilbert Burnett** (1643 - 1715) whose burial tablet is on the wall of the Nave south aisle. He was born in Scotland and well educated, becoming fluent in Dutch, French, Latin and Greek. He went into exile during James II's reign and managed to upset Charles II by commenting on his lifestyle. But as William III's Chaplain he became the king's confidant. He wrote a history of the Reformation and a history of his own times. and he was the owner of the *Articles of the Barons*, the precursor to Magna Carta that is now in the British Library.

Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800 - 1859), the writer of 'Horatius at the Bridge', wrote of Burnett: *his jurisdiction extended over Wiltshire and Berkshire. These counties he divided into districts which he sedulously visited. About two months of every summer he passed in preaching, catechizing, and confirming daily from church to church. When he died there was no corner of his diocese in which the people had not had seven or eight opportunities of receiving his instructions and of asking his advice. The worst weather, the worst roads, did not prevent him from discharging these duties. On one occasion, when the floods were out, he exposed his life to imminent risk rather than disappoint a rural congregation which was in expectation of a discourse from the Bishop.*

The poverty of the inferior clergy was a constant cause of uneasiness to his kind and generous heart. He was indefatigable and at length successful in his attempts to obtain for them from the Crown that grant which is known by the name of Queen Anne's Bounty (established in 1704 to augment the incomes of the poorer clergy). He was especially careful, when he travelled through his diocese, to lay no burden on them. Instead of requiring them to entertain him, he entertained them. He always fixed his headquarters at a market town, kept a table there, and by his decent hospitality and munificent charities, tried to conciliate those who were prejudiced against his doctrines. When he bestowed a poor benefice, and he had many such to bestow, his practice was

to add out of his own purse twenty pounds a year to the income. Ten promising young men, to each of whom he allowed thirty pounds a year, studied divinity under his own eye in the close of Salisbury.

When the doctor took liberties, which was not seldom the case, his patron (William III) became more than usually cold and sullen, and sometimes uttered a short dry sarcasm which would have struck dumb any person of ordinary assurance. In spite of such occurrences, however, the amity between this singular pair continued, with some temporary interruptions, till it was dissolved by death. Indeed it was not easy to wound Burnet's feelings. His self-complacency, his animal spirits, and his want of tact, were such that, though he frequently gave offence, he never took it. He sounds a bit of a Boris Johnson figure - if he were quieter and more thoughtful he could have gone much further in his career.

Now to the Chapter minutes of June 1854. Letter from Viscount Palmerston Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department: No new burial ground shall be opened in the city of Salisbury without the previous approval of one of the Secretaries of State and burials be discontinued within the Cathedral. Public Health was obviously the 'in' topic. In October 1853 the City Board of Health advised the Chapter that contractors would shortly commence construction of a sewer in Exeter Street. They asked if the Cathedral could keep its gates open at night to allow traffic to bypass the obstruction. Amazingly, the Chapter not only agreed but offered to allow carts through in the day time as well. Before the advent of sewers (October 1844), the Organist complained of his neighbour's privy which emptied into the dividing ditch.

Mind you, some contemporary practices (October 1850) seem lethal to our ears: *Masters of the Fabric provide new charcoal braziers for use in the Cathedral.* This would have been an efficient form of heating (think of a blacksmith's forge) but it does run a real risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

In a previous issue I mentioned Elias of Derham's canonry. In March 1717 I found this entry: *Leave was given to Treasurer Talbot to pull down **Ledden Hall** and rebuild with not less than four rooms per floor and no more than fifty feet in front.* In October 1843 another change to what we see today: *Clerk of Works to break up the path across the square by the Choristers School house [Wren Hall and Braybrooke House] and to cause it to be covered by turf and to restore the posts and chains from their present position and place them at the border of the grass plot.*

The tower and spire have been a source of problems since they were first erected: In March 1848 it was minuted that the Clerk of Works was to report *as to the work necessary to be done to the spire and tower of the Cathedral to prevent the intrusion of damp and water.* On 5th April 1848 the minutes include a copy of a letter from J.R.Fisher to the Dean. *I am unable to report with any correctness the probable amount of repairs necessary to the spire and tower. The wet came through the joints and even through the stone on the south, south-west and west angles of the spire during the late continued rains [one of the wettest Februarys across England and Wales - Google]. It therefore appears to me absolutely necessary that the*

pointing should be made perfect to prevent any injury being done to the stonework by the cramps rusting. I judge the cost of the work to the spire to be about £130 [say £7,600]. The timbers and ladders of the inside training [?] of the spire should be put in sound condition.

The two architects that concern guides most are James Wyatt (1746 - 1813) and George Gilbert Scott (1811 - 1878). In autumn 1859 (when *The Origin of Species* was published) there is a report on the fall of Chichester's tower and spire and Scott's proposed restoration at a cost of £50,000 (say £6 million in today's money). Queen Victoria and Albert headed the list of subscribers, donating £350 personally (£42,000 in today's money).

There was also a **Memorandum of Agreement** drawn up in 1870 that was addressed to *George Gilbert Scott of Spring Gardens in the parish of St. Martin in the Fields in the Liberty of Westminster in the county of Middx.* This sounds quite rural but the 1861 census shows Greater London with over 3 million population and increasing steadily.

A charge of £1,250 is made to cover the repaving of the Nave and aisles [£144,000 in today's money]. *In February 1868 Scott deducts £497 -14 - 0 from the bill as he has substituted Devon marble for Purbeck marble.* Gary Price confirms that different materials were used. Scott's contractors submitted **Daywork Sheets** detailing the work completed and materials used. In July 1866 this list included *poles, scaffolding boards, ladders, scaffold cords, putlogs, planks, cube oak for struts, iron straps, cramps for ashlar, steel, ashlar, steps for staircase, slate for pinning and Colza oil for lamps.* In the previous month work was carried out on the tower windows. The Daywork sheets show *solder, lead, glass, putty, lead-coloured paint, copper wire, linseed oil, red lead and copper for cramps.* These lists often included waste; if the latter was lead it was expected to be sold. *Deduction for old lead of 18/- per cwt - June 1868.*

In April 1866 there is a long letter from Scott to the Dean including *inward bending of the tower piers* which he concludes are due to construction errors rather than the weight of the spire. Best of all is Scott's **Specification of Works** which includes detailed diagrams. The specification of a drain is a good example. First there is a cross-section showing drain and underpinning of buttresses. *Concrete composed of strong clean gravel, small stones and broken hard bricks and ground blue Lias lime in a proportion of 6:1. This to be overlaid with Portland concrete and a thin coating of Portland cement.* The drainage channels to be of *tooled Forest of Dean stone with thirty trapped cesspools and cast-iron bell traps. 4" glazed stoneware drains from cesspools. Gutters to be reformed to have English oak bearers and Baltic deal gutter boards.* When it comes to the masonry, Scott is very specific about when slate dowels are to be used and when copper. *All new finials to be made in strict accordance with the original design in detail as well as dimensions.* This attention to detail, knowledge of construction techniques and quality control is a world away from Wyatt's approach.

Putlog: short horizontal pole projecting from a wall to take scaffolding boards.

Colza oil: today known as Rapeseed oil. **Finial:** decorative stonework at apex of structure.

Lias: early Jurassic limestone. **Dowel:** is a cylindrical rod cut into pins for reinforcing.

Trap: U-bend. **Portland cement:** modern cement.