



*Extracts from the Chapter minutes from 1733 onwards and divers historical prospecting.*

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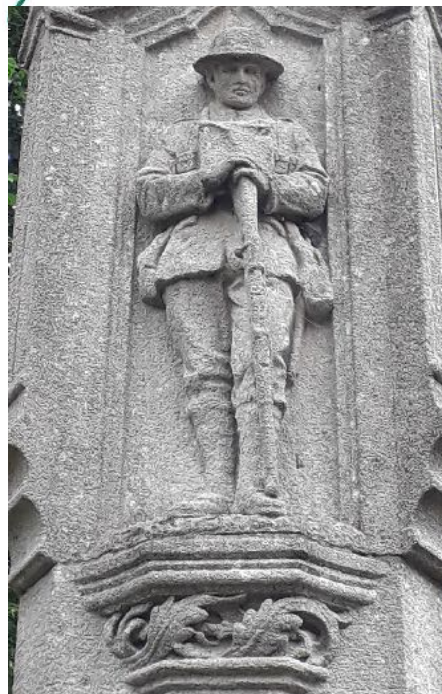
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## A PEEK THROUGH THE WINDOW - NO. 21

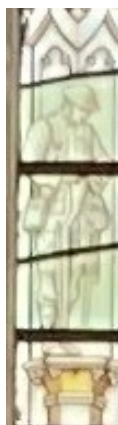
**MIKE DEEMING WRITES:**

Many war memorials feature a sculpture or carving of a soldier 'resting on arms reversed' as a mark of respect for those who have lost their lives. This photo is of the superb memorial in Iwerne Minster, Dorset, which was designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, grandson of Sir (George) Gilbert Scott who had carried out the Cathedral's major restoration in the 1870's. It was dedicated in 1920 by the Bishop of Salisbury. The memorial has a triangular cross-section and is designed to look like a medieval cross, occupying a spot which may well have had a cross in the Middle Ages.

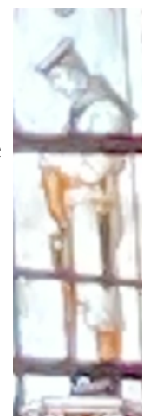


The origin of the tradition of resting on arms reversed is lost in time. It was used by a Commonwealth soldier at the execution of Charles I in 1649 (the soldier was duly punished for his symbolic gesture towards the King's death) and it is recorded being used at the funeral for the Duke of Marlborough in 1722. Most recently it was carried out by military personnel at the funeral of HRH Prince Philip in Windsor Castle. Nowadays it is rarely seen in the UK, but is still common elsewhere in the Commonwealth, notably in Australia and Canada

The depiction of this show of respect is seldom seen in stained glass windows, and these images from the memorial window in the St Laurence Chapel in the south transept of the Cathedral are two of very few in England.



Commissioned in 1924 from Clayton and Bell, the windows on the east walls of the St Laurence and St Michael Chapels show figures of saints and heroes, together with shields of diocesan towns, commemorating the men of the diocese who died in the First World War. Clayton and Bell were one of the major Victorian Gothic Revival glass makers and designed numerous windows in the Cathedral.



By 1920, Reginald Bell was the third generation of Bell's in charge of the family company and it was he who designed the extraordinary Victory window on the south wall of the St Michael Chapel. His style has moved on vastly from his grandfather's mastery of Gothic Revival exemplified by the narrative windows on the north and south sides of the Trinity Chapel. Now the primary Gothic colours of red and blue still assert themselves, and there is extensive silver staining, but much more white glass to admit more light and contrast with the vibrant colours. An article in 'The Studio' magazine of April 1923 summarised it well – 'His Victory window – one of the finest painted in England in

the past four hundred years – would still be a dignified thing, would still tell its story, if every painted line and shadow upon it could be removed..... The lead-lines would still preserve its composition... in the Triumph light (right) with soaring lines like flames outlining the wings of the adoring Cherubim beneath the rainbow on which the Christ is throned.'

It was at this time too that the Jesse tree window was being re-created by Mary Lowndes in the south nave aisle, with the three 'mandorla'- or 'vesica'-shaped images above one another, with Christ in majesty at the top, the Virgin Mary with the infant Christ in the centre, and the missing mandorla of Jesse below. Although the symbols are different and the mandorla more muted, Bell's Triumph image clearly reflects this medieval design.



### MORE USELESS KNOWLEDGE

**M**y latest trawl of the charity shops yielded *The Long and The Short of It* by Graeme Donald, Michael O'Mara Books 2016. It is a wonderful exploration of the stories behind our measurements. For example, the barrel; although used in everyday speech is in fact a measure of 36 gallons, which in my misspent youth yielded 18 dozen bottles of wine. Now in France it is called a *barrique* and got its name as it could be filled with cobblestones and with 5 others formed a perfect barricade of Parisian Streets during an insurrection. In 1853 Napoleon III commissioned Baron Haussmann to demolish medieval streets and construct boulevards. These looked great but more importantly were too wide to block.

### THE SABU DISC

**T**he disc was discovered in the tomb of prince Sabu (around 3100-3000 BC), pharaoh Anedjib's son, by Walter Bryan Emery in 1936. He was a British Egyptologist who devoted his career to the excavation of archaeological sites along the Nile Valley. Anedjib was the fifth pharaoh of the first dynasty of Ancient Egypt.

The disc is made of metamorphic siltstone, a very fragile material that is actually a schist stone, and had been entirely carved from a single block. The disc of Sabu has a maximum diameter of 61 cm (24.01 inches) and a maximum height of 10.6 cm (4.17 inches) ; in the middle it has a hole of about 8 cm in diameter (3.15 inches).



As you can imagine, theories abound - some zany, including part of a *warp-drive* (Star Trek devotees take note), but they are all pretty unconvincing. However, I came across a well-argued idea showing that the ancient Egyptians knew about chemistry. They certainly knew about glass making which was the origin of much European



chemistry. This concept proposes that the disc is part of an operation for making *Natron*, a sodium carbonate essential to the mummification process and today made by the *Solvay* method.

If you are interested in looking into this fascinating theory then go to the very detailed webpage <https://www.milleetunetasses.com/blog/chemistry-in-ancient-egypt/disc-of-sabu-by-ancient-egyptian-technology.html> - I should be intrigued to know your thoughts.

## JOB SPEC

In January 1902 it was decided that the Clerk of Works ought to have his job defined. The specification follows:

1. *To direct the work and pay the wages of the men employed about the Cathedral and the Close.*
2. *To check the bills of tradesmen and to submit the same to Masters of the Fabric, the Communar or the Master of the Choristers as shall be proper in each case and to take instructions as to the payment of the same.*
3. *The Clerk of Works is expressly forbidden to take any commission or gratuity from any tradesman employed by or on behalf of the Chapter or any of its officials.*
4. *To keep proper accounts of the moneys received and expended by him and to submit such accounts to the Dean & Chapter or their Chapter Clerk when required to do so.*
5. *To examine the whole of the fabric of the Cathedral twice a year and present a written report of any defects to the Masters of the Fabric.*
6. *To report to the Masters of the Fabric all matters in the Cathedral or precincts which require special attention or repair as soon as they come under his notice; and to superintend all ordinary work required for the care and preservation of the Cathedral, Cloisters, Chapter House and Close Wall.*
7. *To keep the grass and footpaths in the Close in good order and rolled and cut.*
8. *To tend to repairs to houses and other buildings belonging to the Chapter or over which they have authority as trustees or governors, making when required by the officer of the Chapter to whom the care of each building belongs estimates of cost of repairs and obtaining contracts from tradesmen for carrying out the same.*
9. *To test the fire extinguishing apparatus' not less than once a quarter and to certify to the Masters of the Fabric that the same is in proper order.*
10. *To keep a record of the Cathedral keys and the persons by whom they are held and to see that they are produced once every year at least.*
11. *To put at the disposal of the Verger when required by him such of the workmen as may be necessary for moving furniture or fittings in and about the Cathedral and for ordering anything that may be necessary for Divine Service.*
12. *And generally to do all such work as he may be directed to do by the Chapter or the heads of the different departments, either directly or through the Chapter Clerk.*



At the February meeting, Clause 3 was rescinded as the Clerk of Works had already given his word. Also he could undertake other work if authorized by the Masters of the Fabric. This presumably includes changing the spire's light bulb (Gary, above)!

## QUORA

**Q:** Which side did the Romans walk on?

A: In 1998, a Roman quarry was discovered near the town of Swindon. For centuries, the local Portland limestone had been cut and shaped into blocks for the needs of this quiet corner of Britannia. And for centuries, heavy four-wheel carts had rattled in and out of the works, scoring the stone. By the time the quarry was abandoned, two sets of well-defined ruts had formed. One set - on the left, looking out from the quarry - was much deeper than the other. This, the archaeologists realised, reflected the traffic pattern on the quarry road. Year after year, carts loaded with stone had exited by the left-hand ruts, and returned empty on the other side.



The traffic pattern in the Swindon quarry is sometimes cited as evidence that the Romans habitually drove on the left. It is, of course, nothing so definitive. We can say with bedrock certainty (so to speak) that carts at the Swindon quarry kept to the left. But we cannot assume that this was a universal rule, or that pedestrian traffic followed a similar pattern. A mosaic from male baths at Timgad, Algeria, is shown (left), where pedestrian traffic may have also kept to the left. The writing though looks to me though as if it is telling you to *wash your feet well?*

Typically, wheeled traffic kept to the centre of a Roman road. Often, in fact, it had no choice. The best evidence, as so often, comes from Pompeii, where the roads of a bustling Roman town have been preserved more or less intact. Vehicular traffic, famously, was limited on the streets of Roman cities. It was also carefully channeled. In Pompeii, at least, most of the streets were one-way, and relieved only by occasional turn-offs and parking spots (to judge from the municipal laws of a Roman town in Spain, there were hefty fines for blocking traffic). Other cities were provided with wider, two-lane streets, whose traffic must have been guided by regulation, or at least convention. But there is, to my knowledge, no evidence for a universal right- or left-hand rule.

Pedestrian traffic seems to have been fairly anarchic. Although there must have been local conventions for walking through narrow areas, these rules were unwritten, or are at least not preserved. Some large buildings, above all the great imperial bath complexes of Rome, were designed for continuous circulation in both directions. Here again, however, we have no indications of a general rule for foot traffic keeping to one side or the other. In the absence of definitive evidence, in short, we should probably assume that local custom governed pedestrian behaviour everywhere, and that the practice of keeping to the left - if it was indeed the general rule on Roman roads - was not a universal guide for walking patterns.

Right is a Pompeian pedestrian crossing  
(*creative commons*).





## AQUAE SULIS

I visited Bath recently and spent a happy hour in the Abbey with its West Front Jacob's ladders (right). A three-year restoration is just coming to an end and the Perpendicular interior is bright with the incredible Tudor fan vaulting a breathtaking feature (below). The vaulting at the east end was designed by Henry VII's master masons, William and Robert Vertue. The Nave however is a copy by our old friend GG Scott. Scott also opened up the space by removing the wooden screen from the Quire (they too use this spelling).



The West window is a *Pentateuch window* because it shows characters and scenes from the first five books of the Old Testament.

St Alphege was an Abbot of Bath who became Archbishop of Canterbury and was killed by Vikings after refusing to pay £3,000 *Danegeld*. A section of the screen to his chapel was designed by Jane Lemon and embroidered by the Sarum Group.

It is likely that this site was used for worship 1,000 years ago but the original Abbey was replaced by a Norman cathedral, which in turn was replaced in Tudor/Stuart times. The Scott's restoration of 1860-1873 had a major impact only to fall victim to

bomb damage in WWII.

The unique feature of the abbey is the two Nave walls which are literally smothered in 641 funerary tablets, and the floor in 847 *ledgers*. I was disappointed to find that Sir Isaac Pitman's tablet (below) was not in shorthand.

Its interesting how many of the tablets are military and naval - *Ecclesia militans* (the Church Militant)? There seems a dichotomy between the peacefulness of the 'original message' and the analogy of warfare used by evangelists: the *Church Army* founded by Wilson Carlile in 1882 and William Booth's *Salvation Army* of 1865. Then of course there is the *Bishopric of the Forces*. Did you know that the regimental colours (standards and guidons) should stay until completely disintegrated and then be buried with staff and mount in an unmarked grave?

