



Extracts from the Chapter minutes from 1733 onwards
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It was thought that you might be interested in hearing some of the items I came across whilst working in the Archives as a volunteer. I have also included nuggets of guiding information I have come across or which have been passed to me by colleagues and visitors. If you have any similar info please let me know so we can all benefit.

For the title I am indebted to a lady from Lambeth Palace who passed on this information to a colleague. **Jot** and **Tittles** are ancient in Palaeography, Jot being the smallest letter of the Hebrew and Aramaic alphabets and used in the same way as the Greek iota. Tittles were even smaller and referred to the marks above the script in documents such as Magna Carta. Today they have atrophied so that Jot is now the crossing on a letter **t** and Tittle is the dot above the **i** and **j**. As the title implies we are delving into detail.

You may wonder why I have chosen 1733 as the starting point - this is when the minutes began to be in English instead of Latin. I thought we would start with the selection and arrival of a new Lord Bishop -The practice was ultimately settled in this form by the statute *Payment of Annates, etc.*, 1534.:

After the death or translation of a Bishop the Dean and Chapter would meet and start the ball rolling. Firstly, the King (as Defender of the Faith) and Archbishop of Canterbury had to be informed. One of the Canons was suggested to the Archbishop as *Keeper of the Spiritualities* during the interregnum. Then the Canons were informed of the significant Chapter meeting to which they must attend.

Letters Patent were received from the King (with the Great seal affixed but open) giving permission to elect in May 1757 a *fit person to the Bishoprick of Sarum*. This was known as a *Congé d'Élire - Whereupon publick procognition being made* was published in the London Gazette. They had 12 days to apply before the King made the decision for them. The decision had then to be approved by the Metropolitan Archbishop (ie bishop of the principal city and leading bishop of the see as opposed to an 'ordinary' bishop). Elected *Right Reverend Father in God John Gilbert now Bishop of Llandaff* (December 1748).

John Head's arrival in May 1758 was recorded in detail as follows:

1. *The said Lord Bishop was met about five miles from the city in a field called **Bishop's Down** by several clergy, gentry and citizens of the best note who attended his coach to the city.*

2. *The said Lord Bishop proceeded to the city where he was joyfully received by the Mayor [and aldermen] and most eminent citizens and was conducted to the Council Chamber where ... of the Free School congratulated his arrival to the City and Bishopruck in a Latin oration.*
3. *Proceeded to the Sign of the Lamb & Sun coffee House [Mitre House in the High Street] where he puts on an episcopal habit and meets the Chapter and Archdeacon.*
4. Procession through North Gate accompanied by the choir singing.
5. Stops opposite Grammar School for another Latin Oration.
6. To Cathedral west door. Takes oath and kisses the Gospel.
7. Conducted up to Choir.
8. Canon Ogle and President raise the Bishop.
9. Hymn of praise.
10. *Kyrieleyson and Paternoster. Responses were said according to the statutes. Present Me [Chapter Clerk] and many others.*

To the Chapter House where *inducted and installed in the stall of the prebend of Potterne.* Takes oath to King George and *assigned a place and a voice.*

Dr John Fisher, Bishop of Exeter, elected in 1807, the friend and patron of Constable. King George III and Archbishop asked to approve decision. Similarly with Thomas Burgess, Bishop of St. Davids, unanimously elected in May 1825.

Lord Bishop (having first put on his episcopal habit) exhibited the letters mandatory and commissional of James Croft M.A. Archdeacon of the Archdeaconry of Canterbury for the induction inthronization and installation of the said Lord Bishop of Sarum.

It is very noticeable that the procedure for both Bishops and Deans was a lot quicker than today. Patronage is at play here with the King making the final selection but it is not clear if this was always the case. George II of Great Britain, France* and Ireland wrote in 1757: *Our trusted and well-beloved Thomas Greene, Doctor in Divinity and one of our Chaplains in Ordinary to be preferred to that place.* *British kings claimed the throne of France right up to 1801 - hence the Fleur de Lys in George III's coat of arms.

Misdemeanour and punishment are regular items in the minutes: In 1803 Jabez Burden was found guilty of incest and suspended. In 1799 a *Regiment of Dragoons requested not to exercise horses in the Close.* In 1826 a *Chorister expelled after stabbing another in the churchyard.* In 1846 there was a rare scandal which resulted in 14 Canons assembling in the Chapter House to decree the Reverend Francis Lear Dean in place of Hugh Nicolas Pearson, friend of the great and the good, resigned. I understand from one of our colleagues that a young lady from the Teachers Training college may have been involved!!!