



Extracts from the Chapter minutes from 1701 onwards
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THE LION-HEART CONNECTION?

One of our colleagues mentioned over coffee that she had been taught that the old muniment chest outside the Morning Chapel had been used to collect Richard 1's ransom. I thought that this was quite unsubstantiated until one of our longest-serving colleagues said that she thought that the Bishop at the time was responsible for co-ordinating the collection of the ransom monies.

I looked back at J&T No.25 where there is a piece on Bishop Hubert Walter. Indeed he was responsible for collecting the ransom, and for delivering it. In fact it was he and not the bard Blondel that found where Richard was imprisoned. Sadly for us though he was no longer the Bishop of Salisbury but Archbishop of Canterbury.

The emperor demanded that 150,000 marks (100,000 pounds of silver) be delivered to him



before he would release the king, the same amount raised by the Saladin tithe only a few years earlier, and 2-3 times the annual income for the English Crown under Richard. Richard's mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine, worked to raise the ransom. Both clergy and laymen were taxed for a quarter of the value of their property, the gold and silver treasures of the churches were

confiscated, and money was raised from the scutage and the carucage taxes. At the same time, John, Richard's brother, and King Philip of France offered 80,000 marks for the Emperor to hold Richard prisoner until Michaelmas 1194. The emperor turned down the offer.

The King owned 18% of the land by value. The figure raised by tax on income and 25% on moveable property brought in £60,000. John's official income was £35,000 but with all his extortion it came to £60,000. Money to rescue the King was transferred to Germany by the emperor's ambassadors, but "at the king's peril" (had it been lost along the way, Richard would have been held responsible), and finally, on 4 February 1194 Richard was released. Philip sent a message to John: "Look to yourself; the devil is loose". It is said that the turncoat castellan of St.Michael's Mount died of fright at the news.

I did think that this story was an urban myth but perhaps a *mito cicerone* would be more appropriate. As I am sure you know a *cicerone* is a tourist guide. Named of course after the silver-tongued Roman orator, Cicero. The connection with us is that it was Cicero's secretary Tiro that invented the shorthand that English monks developed and which is so much a feature of Magna Carta.

So to sum up, the muniment box could have been used to house Salisbury's contribution to Richard's ransom but at present it can't be proven either way.

PARCHMENT



Other people's work is always more interesting than one's own. On a Monday, Penny (retired archivist) sits next to me and studies her early medieval Latin manuscripts. What amazes me is that not only can she translate medieval Latin but she can read the archaic writing which is totally beyond me. In explaining her working she pointed out that the pages alternated in colour: the bright white being the inside (flesh-side) surface of the parchment and the darker colour, often flecked with hair follicles, was the outer (hair-side) surface of the untanned skin. She also mentioned that *velum* was only used for the most important documents, the word being of the same root as *veal* (calf).

Parchment came from the Latin *Pergamenum*, as it was supposed to have been invented in Pergamon in Anatolia. The semi-circular knife of the *Parchmenter* (left, William Cowley - the last parchment maker) was

called a *lunellum*. The frame is known as a *herse*.

NEW PREBENDS

In his summing up on the Visitation of 1890, one of the reforms that Bishop Wordsworth wanted to introduce was, in his own words: *I desire to revive five of the Prebendal stalls. The Chancellor, the Archdeaconry of Dorset, the Archdeaconry of Wilts, the Subdeanery and the Succentorship who are without stalls. I would like to refund:*

1. Ramsbury (exchanged in 1545 for Gillingham major) for the Archdeaconry of Wilts. *I am willing myself to give one hundred pounds to form a small capital sum for its endowment.'*
2. Sherborne, attached to the Archdeaconry of Dorset.
3. Loders, if the Chapter will





install the person collated.

4. Faringdon, with the aid of the Lord of the Manor if he were willing to yield all claim to the Ecclesiastical Dignity.

5. Blewbury. Chapter need to form a committee of our brethren learned in the history of the Church to confer with me as to what steps should be taken in this matter.

6. I was pleased to see, on inspecting the choir stalls that at least some of the Bishop's requests were acted upon.

GRAFFITI

I was privileged to be included on one of Steve's Graffiti Tours. I was amazed at the sheer quantity but wondered what these lost voices were trying to tell us? Much of the symbolism is lost on us today although various scholars have had a go at decoding them but it is clear that this practice was not at all frowned upon. Here are some examples, from Greek above the north transept to tomb-top games:

If you haven't already been on one of these tours I urge you to book yourself one ASAP. Whilst above the north aisle I couldn't resist a shot of our clock's hidden bell.





THE SINISTER SCRIBE

Stephen Hannath sent the following e-mail: I enjoyed reading J&T 29 and in the 'cartoon' of a 'library' I notice that the scribe in the middle of the picture is writing with his left hand. Am I wrong to think that (like the clockwise spiral staircase story) left handedness was 'sinister' and therefore not allowed? Having spent my professional life in education, I can remember left handed

pupils being forced to use their right hand.

In Latin left-handed is the word *sinister*, which also refers to the left-hand side of a shield in heraldry, though it is not clear how the negative connotation became attached to this meaning. 'Left' actually comes from the Anglo-Saxon meaning *weak or broken*. According to Professor Malcolm Parkes (HistoryExtra.com), it would have been very difficult for a left-handed scribe to use a quill successfully on a sloping desk. In effect he would have to push the quill which would be likely to cause smudging. His feeling is that this would be enough to put off most lefties applying for a job in the scriptorium.

Emily contributed: My understanding is that a left handed scribe would use a feather from the right wing of a swan/ goose and a right handed scribe a feather from the left – the feather tip being slightly differently angled. It's probable that angle of the desk would have been more acute than we would use ourselves today. They also used a knife partly to steady their hand against when writing. The attached picture might (or might not!) help.

As I am sure you realise, the spiral staircase was designed to aid defence. Which means that it would be extremely useful if you were a left-handed attacker. Finally, Phrase & Fable gives an interesting link to **Roman auguries**, with birds flying to the left being seen as an ill omen. Please let me know if you can shed more light on this interesting question.

Right, courtesy of calgraphy-skills.com.

