



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

STOURTON TOMB

You may recall the story of Lord Stourton of Stourhead (J&T No.27) who was convicted of murder but still buried in the Cathedral, supposedly with a hangman's noose over the tomb. The location of the tomb (according to Dodsworth) is shown in the South Nave Aisle where the top of Bishop Osmond's tomb is placed.

Fabian, originally from Luxembourg, is doing research into Osmond, principally the music that accompanies the Sarum Rite. When I mentioned Stourton case to him



he came up with an interesting suggestion. The hanging took place in Salisbury in 1556. During Edward VI's reign (1537 to 1553) Protestant extremists did quite a lot of damage to churches. So it is conceivable that his tomb was altered to look like Lord Stourton's in order to deceive anyone looking for our Catholic saint.

Left: Lord and Lady Stourton's tomb (1536) in St. Peters,

Stourhead.

Any other theories?

A MILITARY CONNECTION

Another researcher is Alan Willis. He showed me a letter from the archives written by Mrs Chafyn Grove who you will remember donated the money for the Willis (no relation) organ. There was one word he was quite unable to read and unfortunately I could not either.

Later, I received an e-mail from Alan saying that he decided the word was 'manoeuvre'. Not sure of the significance of this word he approached a military historian friend. *Just to show where archival research can lead you, he came up with details of a huge exercise near Amesbury held at exactly the same time as my letter (1872)!*

In case you are remotely interested, I have attached the hyperlink. It's worth a quick read.
<https://www.silentearth.org/storm-clouds-gathering-world-war-one/>.

The article starts with a photograph of Salisbury Plain taken from the scrapbook of Lady Florence Caroline Mathilde Satoris who married Sir Edmund Antrobus of Amesbury Abbey.

THAT CHEST

Richard Owen, a fellow guide wrote after reading J&T No.30:

I share your scepticism about the King Richard Ransom and think that the following use is more likely. It is not clear how long Bishop Hubert Walter actually spent in Sarum or why he would collect the ransom in this area in 1194.

In 1194 Hubert Walter was Chief Justiciar to Richard 1st (He was also Bishop of Salisbury 1189 – 1193 and Archbishop of Canterbury 1193 – 1205). He instigated a system for regulating Jewish lending which entailed 'chirographs' which recorded and witnessed all debt and repayment transactions.

These records were to be held in chests in six principal towns. I think it likely that this system also enabled the crown to levy a tax to on all these debts. This system and the locks on the chests were controlled by seven people: two Christians; two Jews; two Scribes and a Royal Official. These chests were therefore fitted with seven locks and held seven chirographs.

I think that it is likely that the chest outside the Morning Chapel is one of these.

This chest originally had only three built-in locks and four more external padlocks on strap bands were added possibly to enable it to comply with the new Jewish debt regulations.

The combined knowledge of the Cathedral volunteers is truly amazing. A chirograph by the way is a medieval document with several copies on the same piece of parchment. *Chirographum* was usually written across the middle and then the parts separated by cutting.

WHAT DID THE VICTORIANS DO FOR US?

January 1881: Chapter agree that Vicar of Stratford-sub-Castle should pursue the idea of erecting a Reading Room upon part of the land of the late Mr Walters.



Intrigued, I looked up the Stratford-sub-Castle website and found that the building was now the village hall (left, courtesy of [stratfordsubcastle.org.uk/village hall](http://stratfordsubcastle.org.uk/village_hall)). The following history was also included.

Mary Elizabeth King seems to have been a remarkable lady. She was born, and lived all her life, in the Salisbury area. When she was 19 she married Charles King, 10 years her senior, and they had 8 children, all but one of whom survived to adulthood. As the vicar's wife she lived in Stratford sub Castle for 36 years and must have played a significant role in the village.

Her most lasting achievement is the erection of the Reading Room in 1881. This shows her dedication to the education and cultural life of her husband's parishioners. Her image here has been taken from a photograph of Mrs King which hangs in the Reading Room. It was presented to the Reading Room by two of Mrs King's great-grand-daughters, Dorothy Margetts and Elizabeth King, on 17th August 1989.

The following details have been gleaned from the census returns and the birth, marriages and deaths registers. Mary King (nee Hodgson) was born in about 1820 in Salisbury. We first come across her in 1839 when her marriage at Alderbury to Charles King is recorded that spring. In the 1861 census we find her living with Charles, in Mawarden Court (below, courtesy of Lyn Robson 2012). Charles was the vicar of Stratford sub Castle. They have 8 children, 6 girls sandwiched between two boys. The younger boy, Reginald, seems to have died as an infant.

Ten years later Arthur and the eldest girl, Edith, have left home. Alice, Rosalind, Elsie, Jessie and Adeline are still living with their parents. The situation is unchanged in 1881, all the girls remain unmarried and range in age from 31 to 22. Charles died in 1885 and Mary moved to The Hermitage in Durnford where she is found living with Alice in 1891. By 1901 she has moved to Wyndham Cottage in Milford and Alice and Elsie are living with her. She died on June 18th 1901, aged 81, two months after the census.



Mawardens Court was one of the jewels in the crown of the Cathedral's property portfolio and there are quite a few mentions of it in the Chapter minutes; here are a few. 1849: Reverend Charles King be appointed to serve the Cure at Stratford Sub Castle with a stipend at the rate of £100 per annum and that he be permitted to occupy the house and premises called Mawardens Court and the paddock belonging thereto called The Grove.

Leave was given accordingly to the Chapter Clerk to attend the Court of Chancery with two of the —books belonging to the Dean and Chapter in which are registered several leases of Mawarden Court in order to procure them in a cause depending in the said court between Hariot Pit widow and Thomas Pit Esq.

1850: James Alexander assigns to Ecclesiastical Commissioners his interest in the Parsonage and mills.

1851: Memorial from the lessee of Mawardens Farm for confirmation of lease agreement since difficulty with title.

1853: Messers Clutton applied for the purchase of the reversion of the Mawarden's Court Estate and the Mills on behalf of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Reversion valuation requested.

Mills: £616.10.0

Mawarden's: £5,481.16.0

Parsonage: £2,637.18.6

Total: £8,736.4.6

Incidentally, the primary reason for parishes providing reading rooms was to offer an alternative to the pub! This was very much a male preserve until the First World War.

ORIGINS OF THE MODERN CHRISTMAS

According to the V&A: 'At the dawn of the 19th century, Christmas was hardly celebrated – at least, not in a way we would recognise today. Many businesses didn't consider it to be a holiday. Gift-giving had traditionally been a New Year activity, but moved as Christmas became more important to the Victorians. By the end of the century, Christmas had become the biggest annual celebration in the British calendar. Victorian advancements in technology, industry and infrastructure – as well as having an impact on society as a whole – made Christmas an occasion that many more British people could enjoy.'

One of the most significant seasonal traditions to emerge from the Victorian era is the Christmas card. It was Sir Henry Cole, the first director of the V&A, who introduced the idea of the Christmas card in 1843. Cole commissioned the artist J.C. Horsley to design a festive scene for his seasonal greeting cards and had 1000 printed – those he didn't use himself were sold to the public. Later in the century, improvements to the chromolithographic printing process made buying and sending Christmas cards affordable for everyone.

(Victorian card below, *courtesy of Nova Scotia Archives*).

The greater mechanisation and widespread industrialisation of the country had helped to create a new middle class with a greater disposable income. Increased prosperity across Britain saw a rising market for mass-produced toys, decorations and novelty items such as the Christmas



cracker. Inspired by *bon bons* (French sweets wrapped in paper) he saw during a trip to Paris, sweetshop owner Tom Smith first invented the cracker in the 1840s. It wasn't until the 1860s, when Smith perfected its explosive 'bang' that the Christmas cracker as we know it today became a popular seasonal staple. Along with a joke, gifts inside could range from small trinkets such as whistles and miniature dolls to more substantial items like jewellery.

The Victorian age placed great importance on family, so it follows that Christmas was celebrated at home. For many, the new railway networks made this possible. Those who had left the countryside to seek work in cities could return home for Christmas and spend their precious days off with loved ones. Family life was epitomised by the popular Queen Victoria, her husband Albert and their nine children. One of the most important Christmas traditions, the decorated Christmas tree, was a custom introduced to Britain by Prince Albert.'

As Don Cupitt (philosopher, theologian and broadcaster) put it succinctly in 1996 *Christmas is the Disneyfication of Christianity*. In 1954 the Poet Laureate (and national architectural conscience) John Betjeman was somewhat kinder: *And girls in slacks remember Dad, And oafish louts remember Mum, And sleepless children's hearts are glad, And Christmas-morning bells say 'Come!'*

BEST WISHES FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM.