



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

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## A PEEK THROUGH THE WINDOW - NO. 7

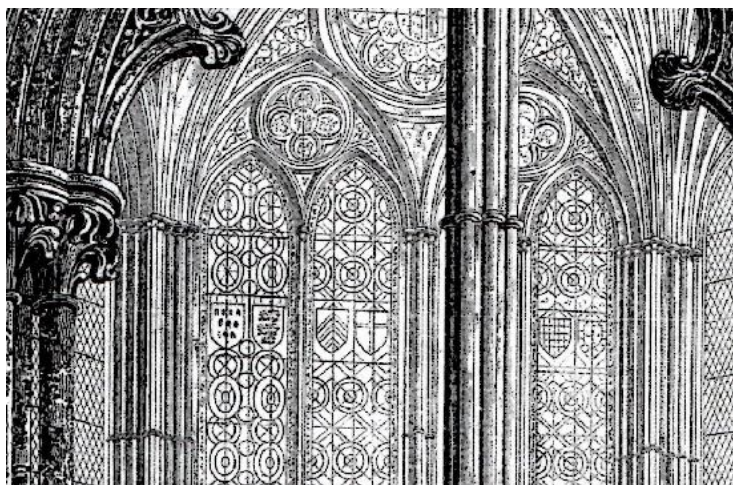
Mike Deeming writes:

**M**In the north transept there's a fine brass memorial in memory of John Britton *Historian of this Edifice and author of the noble series of works on the Cathedrals and Medieval Antiquities of England, this Memorial is erected (with the concurrence of the Dean and Chapter) by Members of the Royal Institute of British Architects to record their sense of the eminent services by which he revived the admiration of Englishmen for the venerable Monuments of the taste & piety of their Forefathers and gained for these Majestic Structures the respect of Foreign Nations. Born July 7, 1771, at Kington St Michael, Wilts, Died 1 January 1857 in London, Buried in Norwood Cemetery, Surrey*



What did he do to deserve this accolade? In the early 19th century, he wrote a series of illustrated books on the Beauties of England and Wales, the Cathedral Antiquities of England and the Architectural Antiquities of Great Britain. Two of his first books were about Wiltshire and about Salisbury Cathedral. This was at a time when the Napoleonic wars made the Grand Tour more difficult, so his books encouraged staycations for the better off. As railways were built, the likes of Baedeker and Bradshaw followed, so in many ways Britton can be regarded as the originator of a new class of literary works - guide books for tourists.

What does this have to do with windows? It can be very difficult tracking the history of windows. Although not as movable as pictures in an art gallery, leaded windows do need to be taken down every 100-150 years for re-leading (the lead calms that hold the glass pieces degrade and need to be melted down and replaced). Fashions change, too, so that glass can be moved from one window to another to suit. One of the glories of Salisbury Cathedral is the uniformity of architectural design throughout the building; a consequence of this is that many lancets are



identical. Hence moving glass from one window to another is relatively easy.

Tracking these movements depends on reliable sources of information and one of the most reliable is John Britton. His 'History and Antiquities of the Cathedral Church of Salisbury', published in 1814, includes a superb series of engravings of views and elevations, and many of these show windows in the background. He took great care to accurately portray the details of the glass, albeit in black and white. 1814 is crucial too, because it's after Wyatt's 'restoration' that resulted in large quantities of glass disappearing, but before John Beare's reglazing of 1820. One of the best examples shows the glazed medieval coats of arms in the Chapter House windows which were relocated by Beare to the west window of the nave.



Many others, not least John Constable, made drawings or paintings which show windows, but few are as accurate and reliable as Britton. Hence an enormous thank you is due to Britton for his contribution to understanding the history of our glass. The brass memorial shows that the Royal Institute of British Architects appreciated his contribution too. His burial place in Norwood Cemetery is marked by this 10ft Grade II\*-listed sarsen stone, reflecting his lifetime spent with antiquities and his Wiltshire origins.

#### MISINFORMATION

Sometime ago I mentioned that the Cathedral employed a Hayward, *no doubt to scythe the grass*. However, in reading about life in Medieval England I discovered that a Hayward's job description was *Hedge-warden in charge of fences and the prevention of livestock from escaping*.

#### COVID AND CHOLERA IN THE CLOSE

Rosemary Pemberton writes:  
*With thanks to Ruth Newman*

On 11th January 2021 The Dean of Salisbury announced that the Cathedral would be closed for public worship until further notice, as The Cathedral and Harnham Ward were recording the highest level of Covid19 infection on the national register. One hundred and eighty years earlier, in 1841 Martin Coates, a surgeon at the Salisbury Infirmary noted that typhus had 'raged most severely' in The Close. He was giving evidence to the Board of Health inquiry into the 'Sanitary Condition of Salisbury'. He reported that, during the floods of 1841, typhus had 'raged most severely' in The Close with upwards of 20 cases in a few months.

Following the cholera epidemics across the country of the 1840s a Public Health Act had been passed and investigations were ordered into towns where the death rate had been over 23 per thousand in the previous 7 years. Salisbury's count was 25. The Close was recorded as having a population of 527 in the 1851 census. Nine deaths from cholera took place there in 1849. One of those was a noted surgeon, Dr Richard Brassey Hole aged 30, whose memorial plaque is in the cathedral. The rate of death here was one in 60, whereas in the rest of the city it was 1 in 45.

In June 1851 the General Board of Health sent Thomas Webster Rammell to investigate and prepare a report. He noted in his introduction that 'The question of the application of the Public Health Act was one which had been very warmly contested previous to my arrival and this contest carried on with unabated vigour'. The majority of the town council were against the



investigation and even objected on the grounds that the notice advertising the public meeting had not been fixed to public buildings with 'proper authority and timeliness'!

The Bishop and Dean were, however, in favour. Another important gentleman in the review was Dr Andrew Bogle Middleton, who was living on the west side of The Close, probably at No. 67 between Myles Place and King's House. He was a strong promoter of the cause of improving the water supply and drainage system in Salisbury and is recorded as so in a Blue Plaque on the Waterstones building. He complained to the inquiry that the water in his well was unfit to drink due to contamination from drains and cesspits.

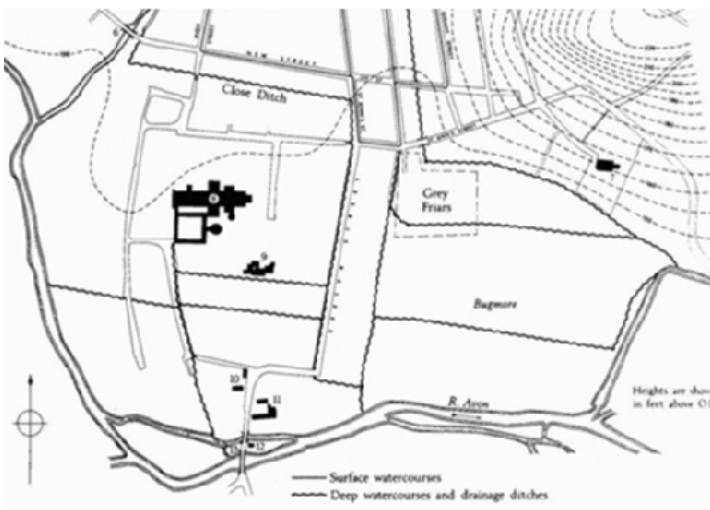


Rammell reported that the houses in the Close were generally supplied with water from wells rather than from the drains and that the level of these were affected by the level of the river. However, on his inspection of the town he noted that 'Three cottages near the entrance gate and facing the windows of the Widows College, have neither backlet (backyard) nor privy nor pump. They have to go for water to the opposite premises'.

*'Cottages' opposite the Widows College in 1865/6 according to the Getty Museum*

Despite the Close having the Avon on the south and west side and the Close Ditch on the north and east sides Rammell's report states that very few houses used these for draining sewage. The Bishop's Palace had drainage into a ditch which ran west-east just south of the Palace and drained into Bugmore. The majority of residences used cesspools that were cleared when full.

*Part of the plan of watercourses produced by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments.1980*



The report also gave much consideration to the burial sites of the city as possible contaminant areas. It stated that the cathedral burial areas had been levelled about sixty years earlier, in the time of Bishop Barrington. Drains replaced the ditches which had flowed into the bishop's ditch and no internments had taken place there since. Mr Fisher, Clerk of Works to the Cathedral remarked that 'The graves, which were not many in number were entirely obliterated, which occasioned a good deal of excitement in the town at the time' He added that

internments, which were not numerous now, took place in the church, in the cloister and in the cloister green. He goes on to say that lead coffins had been used for all burials in the cathedral itself since 1826 as, when digging a new grave, one of 1775 had been disturbed and the

'effluvia was very offensive' He noted that the cathedral made use of caissons, water-tight coffins to form the graves which were held down by piles.

Following the publication of the report, Dr Middleton continued to campaign for the improvement to the water supply and the council were eventually persuaded to borrow money to build a grand water pumping station in Wyndham Road and a reservoir (now in the grounds of Leehurst Swan School)\*. Fresh water was supplied to the majority of households and a sewage system laid down. The bishop's ditch may have been closed at this point and the lake constructed. The Close Ditch was finally filled-in in 1860. Needless to say, deaths dropped dramatically in the aftermath.

It is pleasing to record that The Cathedral currently has a role in the efforts to reduce infectious disease by operating as a vaccination centre. It is again playing its part in the long story of



improving the health of Salisbury residents.

\*Ed. There is also a 19<sup>th</sup> century pump-house and reservoir off Devizes Road.

#### BLOG

Please note that all back-copies are now available

at the touch of a button on [jot-and-tittle.com](http://jot-and-tittle.com).

Also in J&T No.58 there is an article 'All the world's a stage' mainly concerning the Presbytery (above). Verger, Joseph Davies has kindly taken some excellent photos for me, so the article complete with the photos is on the first page of the Blog.

#### PILGRIMAGE

In J&T No.38 this subject was discussed. On researching something else I came upon some useless knowledge for you.

TAWDRY: short for tawdry lace, a corruption of St.Audrey lace after the showy but poor quality lace necklaces sold to pilgrims to St.Audrey's tomb. She was Abbess of Ely and was called Æthelthryth (Etheldreda) in Anglo Saxon.



ROAM: possibly a reference to pilgrimages to Rome.

CANTER: easy pace at which to ride on pilgrimage to Canterbury.

