



Extracts from the Chapter minutes from 1701 onwards
Mark brandonmarkandsuebrandon@outlook.com

In the last edition I mentioned Queen Victoria's letter concerning Leadenhall. This was an official government letter minuted in April 1857 and was signed by the Lord Chancellor, *Pepys*. I researched Charles Christopher Pepys, first Earl Cottenham, to see if he was a relation to the diarist, Samuel. It turns out that he was a distant relation but pronounced his name *Peppis*. HOWEVER, he resigned the Chancellorship and died a year later in 1851!!!!!!!

I have another query over the mysterious **St. Mary Abbey** which I assume is just a name as there is no record of an actual abbey in Salisbury. The minute reference for it mentions a location of Queen Street. The History Centre at Chippenham have documentary evidence that nine properties under this collective name existed between Brown Street and Queen Street and south of the Plume of Feathers, which puts it firmly in the Cross Keys Chequer. The Plume is part of the present shopping mall.

Now in October 1854 an application was made by the Wilts & Dorset Banking Company (founded in 1835 with 400 shareholders) for the purchase of the *Reversion in Fee* of the premises known as St. Mary Abbey. The bank's head office was the splendid Ham-stone building in Blue Boar Row, now Lloyds, so what did they want with St. Mary Abbey? I have passed this question on to the Lloyds' archivist. *Reversion in Fee* by the way is legal jargon for transferring ownership whilst keeping a future interest. For example, the bank might have wanted premises for offices whilst the phase 2 of its headquarters were being built. They would revert to the Chapter when no longer required. Phase 1 is shown below.

Tithes (usually written tythes) provided a right to 10% of the produce of land including stock which was used to support the clergy. The Tithe Commutation Act 1836 meant that money could be paid instead of the traditional 'goods in kind' (kept in a tithe barn). As with most laws there were unintended consequences. In October 1855 consent was given *to the removal of a tythe Barn at Coate belonging to the vicarage of Bishops Cannings the same not being now required in consequence of the Commutation of Tythes there being no glebe in the tything*. So the result was the wholesale demolition of tithe barns. Luckily some excellent examples survived such as those in Tisbury and Bradford-on-Avon. The *glebe*, as you probably already know, was the land (often gifted) that formed part of a benefice and provided income for the incumbent.

We all tend to view the architect James Wyatt as something of a vandal but his draining and levelling of the churchyard produced a setting that Bill Bryson eulogised in *Notes from a Small Island*: 'Salisbury Cathedral is the single most beautiful structure in

England and the Close around it the most beautiful space'. Also, when the cathedral was reopened in 1792, George III, his queen and six princesses attended and admired 'the improvements'. A print of the pre-Wyatt view is shown below. Note the north transept porch bought by Henry Penruddock Wyndham and now in his park at Bourne Hill.

Another oddity, this time in October 1854: *A sum of £187.16.6 due on loan of £708.16.4 to be borrowed from the bank to pay the Bishop as trustee of the Prebendal Fund. £200 loaned, at interest, from the Chapter Clerk.* You would think that the Clerk would be poorly paid compared to the Canons but this appears not to be the case with Mr Lush Alford who was also a Notary. Later, in May 1859, Mr Alford actually hosts the Chapter meeting, an unheard of event in the period under study.

In the mid-seventeenth century, clergyman John Gregory made a surprise discovery in Salisbury Cathedral that began to reveal the truth of the Boy Bishops. The Boy Bishops of the Middle Ages, following widespread and popular custom, supplanted the true bishops in their cathedrals for a period of time during the Christmas season - 6th December (Feast of St. Nicholas) to 28th December (Holy Innocents Day) .

This strange and largely forgotten tradition, stretching from the early Middle Ages to the present day, gives a fascinating insight into the medieval world and its legacy. Elected by their fellows, these Boy Bishops exercised their power in cathedrals, churches and beyond, right across Europe. They controlled services, directed the clergy, enjoyed lavish entertainment, went on visitations to great noble and religious houses and received huge sums of money. However, the topsy-turvy reign of a Boy Bishop was often accompanied by bitter ecclesiastical arguments, violence, civil unrest and even murder. It is a little-known fact that the Boy Bishop tradition is still alive today.

Our own 'Boy Bishop' tomb is much more likely to have covered the heart of a Bishop whilst his body was buried elsewhere; possibly Bishop de la Corner (1289). For more information on this subject Google [THE MEDIEVAL BOY BISHOPS](#) by Neil Mackenzie.

In April 1859 there is a lease minuted for **The Judges Lodgings** in the High Street. My research shows that assize judges stayed at Mompesson House and Robert Key recalls them staying at the North Canonry. If anyone has more pertinent info please let me know. In December 1859 a lease is mentioned in the Cheese Market which is the area between the Library (originally Market House) and the snicket through to St. Thomas'. No house number is given but the Chapter acquired the Vine Inn there in a swap with the Council brokered by Lord Radnor and Henry Wyndham in 1785 designed to free-up space for the building of the Guildhall. In October 1844 St. Thomas' petitioned the Chapter for land to build a school. This was eventually granted but the school was pulled down in 1974 in order to build St. Thomas House alongside the river.

