



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

Editor: Mark Brandon: markandsuebrandon@outlook.com

WEBPAGE/BLOG: jot-and-tittle.com

A PEEK THROUGH THE WINDOW - NO. 16

MIKE DEEMING WRITES:

Mary Lowndes was one of the most formidable women to emerge from Dorset in the late nineteenth century. Daughter of the Vicar of Sturminster Newton, a canon of Salisbury Cathedral, Mary Lowndes (1857-1929) studied at the Slade School of Fine Art, which was founded in 1871 and from the outset admitted women on equal terms with men. She became a pupil of the artist, Henry Holiday, learning the techniques of stained glass cartooning. At Britton & Gilson, she met and was enormously influenced by Christopher Whall, the pioneer of the Arts & Crafts movement in stained glass. This steered her to take his ideas to their logical conclusion by setting up her own company – Lowndes and Drury – with Alfred Drury (former head glazier at B&G). At her studio-workshop, artists could involve themselves in all stages of the process for designing and making windows, calling on what support they needed from a few key specialists.



This highly successful venture soon outgrew its premises and in 1906 they moved to a purpose-built facility – the Glass-House – in Lettice Street, Fulham. The building is still there albeit now the home of a yoga studio. In 1922, Lowndes and Drury were invited to re-lead the west window in the Cathedral and to restore the Jesse tree. John Beare's 1819 reglazing at least undid some of the damage of the Wyatt make-over, but the significance of the Jesse window had been lost. In relocating it to the south nave, Mary Lowndes' team was able to restore its original configuration. Other images were moved there too, notably the 'Bishop and King' (now copied in Chapter House windows) and the two medallions that Roy Spring, the former Clerk of



Works, thought may have pre-dated the Cathedral and come from Old Sarum.

So, back to Mary. She was the driving force behind her company which carried out numerous commissions for churches and Cathedrals in the UK, besides nurturing artists of the Arts & Crafts movement at the Glass-House. Two of her own windows can be seen in her father's church, St Mary's, Sturminster Newton. She was also a leading light in the suffrage movement, setting up and chairing the Artists' Suffrage League, the group of women who designed and made posters and banners for the marches, demonstrations and meetings of the suffrage movement. In her guide to banner-making, she said of the banners: "you do not want to read it, you want to worship it. Choose purple and gold for ambition, red for courage, green



for long-cherished hopes ... It is a declaration." She also chaired the executive committee of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies. The statue of the suffragist Millicent Fawcett (one-time Close resident) in Parliament Square features on its plinth



the photographs and names of 55 key women of the movement. Not surprisingly, Mary Lowndes is amongst them.

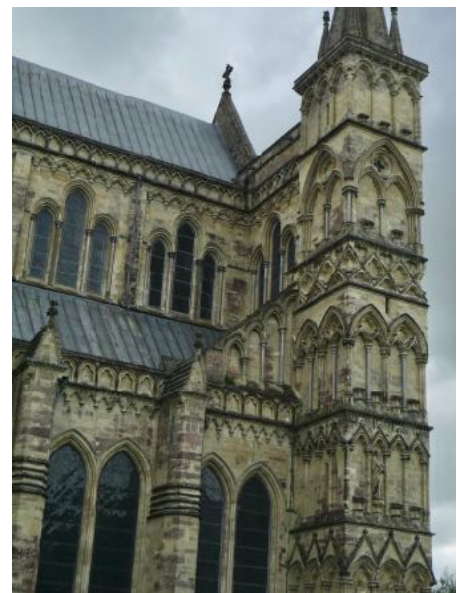
CORRESPONDENCE

Richard Owen writes: Any recognition of Elias of Dereham pleases me – I am a big fan. His biography was initially in the Missing Persons section of the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography but more recently he has been promoted due to Nicholas Vincent's researches. It is remarkable that, 800 years on, pretty well every year of his professional life can be reconstructed from references to Elias in building contracts, wills and other contemporary documents.

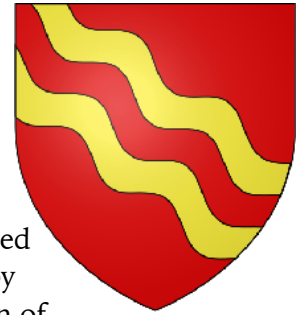
Elias came from the tiny village of West Dereham and it is a huge coincidence that Hubert Walter (who was, for all practical purposes: King, Archbishop of Canterbury, Chancellor and Chief Justice all at the same time during much of the absentee reign of Richard I) also came from this still tiny village. Hubert is about 5 years older than Elias but both their dates of birth are dodgy; say 1160 and 1165. My guess is that Hubert, who was related to the wealthy and forensic de Glanvill family, spotted the talent of his brilliant, young neighbour and friend and his family arranged for Elias's education. Elias was later Steward and Executor to Hubert Walter and earlier had been steward to Gilbert de Glanvill when he was Bishop of Rochester.

I agree entirely with your view of Elias of Dereham being much more than a clerk of works. He was a man of fine judgement and was the principal (or stood in the place of the principal) on numerous building projects. He knew what would look right and had a great sense of proportion and design. You have only to look at the nave and choir of Salisbury Cathedral which is universally acknowledged as a masterpiece whereas the West front built twelve years after his death divides opinion. Most of the professionally informed views are unfavourable. Look at the way the North tower of the West Front links to the nave (right). No one could have given any thought to the linkage. That would not have happened if Elias had still been in charge.

I'd be surprised if Elias spent any time with a chisel in his hand (his range of professional work was so wide that he simply would not have had the time) but he was in charge of every aspect and demanded high standards. Our current masons say that they can identify when his hand left the tiller by the slackness that creeps into the measurements and the workmanship. As you wrote, he was also in charge of the fund raising and knew everybody from the King and his Minders to the ABC and down. I suspect that he had links with Alice Brewer who donated the Purbeck 'marble'. He had dealings with William Brewer [Ed: founded Mottisfont Abbey] with whom



he may well have been instrumental in getting the Papal interdict lifted. He certainly came to England from exile to pursue this matter and met William who represented King John. [Ed: Arms of Brewer right. I wonder if the wiggles represent his dealings with King John?].



It is said that Durham's chapel of nine altars was inspired by Fountains Abbey's chapel of the same name. In my view it was at least equally inspired by Salisbury Cathedral's style right down to the Gothic windows flanked by multiple dark shiny shafts of Frosterley 'marble' which is the local version of Purbeck 'marble'.

This chapel in Durham Cathedral was built after the death of Elias and long after his sojourn there with Richard Poore in 1228. But he could have had a hand in some designs as a new East end for Durham Cathedral had been under discussion for many decades. Why did Richard Poore take him to Durham? Because, if you wanted a problem solved you took Elias with you. He was the "go to" professional of his day. At Durham there was a relationship issue between the Abbott and the Dean to resolve. Elias also acted as Executor to innumerable Bishops, Archbishops and Barons some of whom had spent their lives opposed to his political views. He inspired trust even in those who had opposed him.

If you want to know more about Elias read Steve Dunn's article on the J&T website, under Dramatis Personae.

BEHIND THE MINUTES



In May 1900 it was minuted that the Mayor asks if The Vine Inn could be sold to the town for a Post Office. The Chapter decided to ask £4,000 for it - say at least £450,000 today. I think there were two Vine Inns, one in Bedwin Street (left), adjacent to the Arts Centre, and one in the Cheese Cross by the path to St. Thomas' church. I would assume it is the latter (right). When Earl Radnor et al wished to build the new

Guild Hall, they had to demolish some Cathedral owned properties and the Vine came to the Dean and Chapter as part of a property swap.



The current, empty, Post Office building was constructed in 1907 by Hawkes to the design of William Oldrieve.

THE GORGES TOMB

Helen Townend writes: We have been discussing the four Cardinal Virtues which surmount the Gorges tomb and have a difficulty. We can identify Temperance and Prudence on the right hand side by their symbolism, but are finding it difficult to identify Fortitude and Justice. We think Fortitude may be back left with the pillar and laurel crown, but cannot find the symbols for Justice at all. We are looking for a blindfold/sword/scales for Justice on the left but cannot see them. There has been a suggestion that the Virtues are mixed between Cardinal and Theological, Helena being Temperance and Prudence and her husband being Charity and Hope, but I am told that would be highly unlikely.

Can you solve the mystery? If you can help Helen, please let me know. Also note that the series of TOMB TALK articles is being collated and given its own page on the website jot-and-tittle.com.

Now in my effort to find out more about this tomb with its mathematical symbols I came across a website that looks at maths in history. And what should I come across but this: *John Evelyn records visiting Salisbury and seeing the great mural dial, but the only possible candidate for this is a meridian line on the north boundary wall of the graveyard, where the spire's shadow crosses at noon. This has been nearly obscured by time, but Peter Ransom found the line marked by a deep groove in the upper ashlar coping stones of the wall, though he could not find the inscription meridies, which is probably obscured by lichen.*



So, of course, off I went, camera in hand, and there it was opposite No.28 (next to Millicent Fawcett's house), complete with inscription, now very worn. I could not check the shadow as there is a great tree in the way! I don't know if any of you knew about this stone but it was news to me?

GRISAILLE

Sue Allenby writes: Grisaille glass is very exciting. There is so little of its subtle beauty left because fashions changed over the centuries in favour of historiated glass, and also because of the passions that variously destroyed so much of both. Think of it as abstract art, asking those who contemplated it for what it was they saw, rather than telling them what to look at. The Cistercians valued it highly for this reason, and it suited their pared-down inner focus.

During the Interdict it was this, the exiled secular church reformers in France (Archbishop Stephen Langton, Richard Poore, Elias of Dereham and others), found to be so in tune with their beliefs. Most of Langton's familia were teachers and theologians; there was only one artist cum architectural visionary among them – who was given free rein when at last in 1220, Bishop Richard Poore could take his cathedral church from Old Sarum to the valley below to found the prototype Heavenly Jerusalem, in a style of early Gothic found only in England. The simple architectural form is from Euclid, built for the eyes of God. In this geometry then, the grisaille was well framed. The interior painting was uniquely theirs, for the Sarum Rite.

Stand at the opening to the Quire on a fine afternoon and look across to the fabulous great window in the outer Vestry and see the blaze of silver the grisaille glass quarries throw in the sunlight. If the Angels had still been flying and singing in the vaults in the Vestry (as they were above you in the Morning Chapel) they would be bathed in this silver light. Light was there to be controlled as well as revealed, so as the sun moved around the building, it illuminated other of the paintings – all there as a pictorial of the Sarum Rite. In the vaults, the apostles and prophets were reading and debating, lit by the grisaille in the large clerestory windows: learning and music were at the heart of their 'reformed message'. Don't just write off this glass as cheaper to produce; the patterns and the cutting of it were complicated, and often cleverly superimposed.

Grisaille changed over the century, of course. Mid century, as in the west windows heading the north and south aisles, it became formalised in pattern, incorporating more defined coloured glass. By the time the Chapter House was glazed the cross-hatching had gone and historiated roundels were incorporated. The glass that had been there was replaced in this original style in the nineteenth century. Some of these 13th century roundels are now in the west windows in the church (see above). In keeping with its abstract nature, it hardly matters then that the great early thirteenth century window is made up of fragments. All very fascinating.