

Jot & Tittle Sarum

A personal selection of Salisbury Cathedral, Museum and local history.

EDITORS: Mark and Tim Brandon

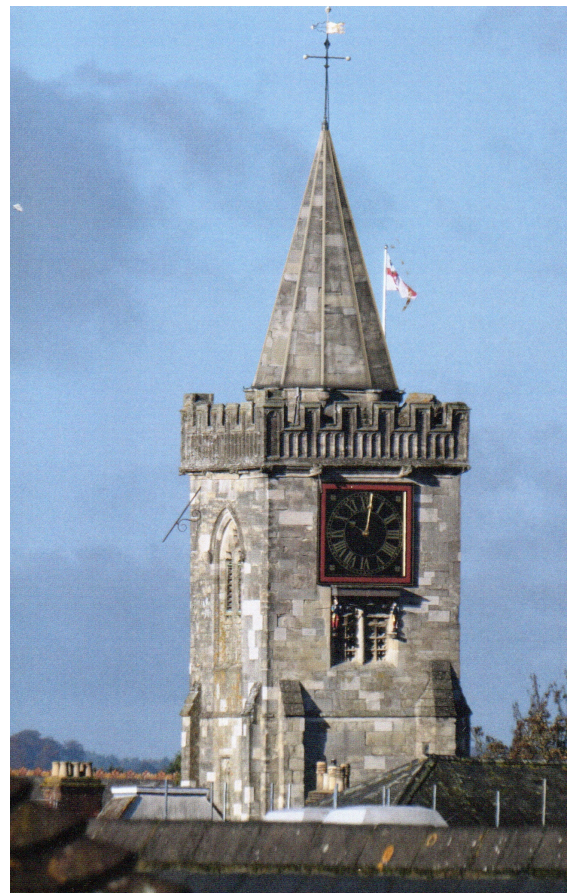
EMAIL: jandthistory@gmail.com **WEBPAGE:** jot-and-tittle.com

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INSPIRED ARCHITECTURE

The Salisbury Civic Society newsletter of December 2025 carried an article by Richard Deane about St Thomas' Church tower - and did it once carry a spire? The evidence for one is the presence of heavy squinch arches. My Lever & Harris *Illustrated Dictionary of Architecture 800 - 1914* (Faber & Faber 1993) defines a squinch as 'a small arch or series of concentric arches built across an angle of a square or polygon to support a polygonal or circular superstructure, such as a spire or dome. There is also what seems to be the base of a spire. So it does look as if a spire was intended but there is no evidence that it was actually built. The photo (right) is a mock up of how it could have looked (courtesy of Paul Stevens Architecture).



CHAPTER MINUTES

May 1930: Clerk of Works reports that old clock can be taken to pieces and moved from the tower to the Cathedral when a suitable space was found.

September 1930: Sub-committee advised placing old clock in Cathedral but not putting it in working order.

November 1929: Proposal to remove Hertford monument and replace the altar of St Stephen abandoned as impractical.

EX LIBRIS

A Christmas present was Lara Maiklem's *A Mudlarking Year* (Bloomsbury Publishing 2025). Lara is a licenced searcher of the Thames banks and something of an amateur archaeologist. The chapters of her new book are headed by the month and carry drawings of her finds. In March I was delighted to see that she had found a 15th century pewter pilgrim badge featuring St Osmund



of Salisbury. The Salisbury Museum has a wonderful collection of these badges but it is good to find one of ours in London. I have talked before about why they seem to have been returned to water after use; it is a mystery so if you have any ideas, please let me know. When Laura goes for some expert advice on pilgrim badges she is shown one of St Audrey. Apparently the saint probably died of throat cancer which she attributed to her love of jewellery as a young princess. Souvenir necklaces sold at her shrine were of such poor quality however it gave rise to the adjective *tawdry*.

MISSING ARCHITECTURE

Another article in the Civic Society mag is by Fiona Donovan following a guided tour of the Franciscan Friary site and its curtilage by Rosemary Pemberton. The photo below shows a doorway whose origin is unknown. As we know, the Cathedral's north transept porch was sold to Henry Penruddocke Wyndham and can still be seen at Bourne Hill. Now there is another missing porch from the Cathedral. It was known as St Stephen's Porch and was situated at the southern end of the Ambulatory where it originally led to the Head Verger's house. Could this be it I wonder?



Transplanted doorway at 44 St Ann Street

CATHEDRAL REPAIR

There are two Great Chapters a year in which the non-residential canons and the Bishop attend. Here the Cathedral Architect has written a report which those of you who like the background detail might be interested in.

In November 1931 The Dean read Mr Forsyth's report into the Muniment Room roof:

Appears to date from the end of the 13th century and has flint and stone exterior. There is an entire absence of ventilation in the roof space.

Framing of the roof appears to be 14th century - the varying oak rafters are framed to the 8 hip rafters. Purlins which support the rafters are supported at their upper end by a large octagonal centre-post and received by a diagonal bearer carried on braces and wall posts before reaching the wall plates. The walls are of lime rubble and have cracked under the thrust from the roof.

The lead appears to have failed in the past and damp has affected the timbers. The centre-post should be replaced but the moulded base can be reused.



It is important to ventilate the timbers during reconstruction. The lead from the roof should be stored and replaced with copper which is lighter, cheaper and does not expand and contract so much.

I removed some of the flooring to examine the timbers which are in excellent condition, as are the tiles.

Looking at the Vestry ceiling, I can see it shows signs of infestation. It should be removed and treated. Before replacing, the joists should be examined.

I also looked at the Cathedral roofs which on the whole are in good condition. The Nave however requires that the gable windows be provided with permanent access of air.

The estimated cost to be £1,200 but the Dean and Chapter should be prepared for a total of £2,000. The Dean stated that there were no spare funds so a special appeal might be required.

Ed. You will be pleased to know that the money was raised and all the work carried out. The print is from 1834. Note the hand winch for raising the chest lid. Below is a teaser for the next Jot & Tittle, due out on 30th January (12 editions cost £12.50), details on web page.

Read all about it!



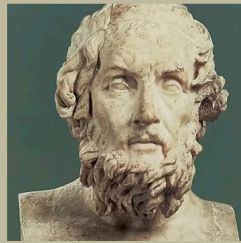
A sneak peek at the next edition - No.179

Jot & Tittle: keeping up with history.



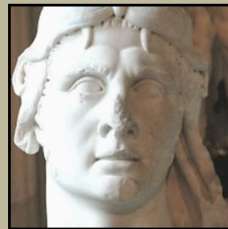
Whale of a time

The lost art of scrimshaw.



The first
geographer

The all-encompassing life
of Strabo of Amasia



The poison king

The amazing story of
King Mithridates of
Pontus



Ex Libris

John Stow and *A Survey
of London* 1598