



Guide

Lines

The *Occasional* Newsletter
of the
Winchester Area Tourist Guides Association

Issue of Summer 2024

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Item: 1	Title: Winchester’s Great Hall and the Brewer Family
Date: 28 Mar 2024	Contributor: Nicola James

Alice Brewer’s Purbeck Marble

Last year while studying for our Salisbury Cathedral exam, the Blue Badge cohort discovered that Alice Brewer (also spelt Briwere) donated Purbeck Marble to the construction of the Cathedral.

Little is known about Alice’s life and I wanted to know more – how many women in the 13th century, or any century for that matter, owned their own quarry and helped to build one of the country’s finest cathedrals?

As Salisbury Cathedral and Winchester Great Hall are contemporary and Elias of Dereham was involved in the construction of both, I was hoping to discover that the Great Hall’s Purbeck marble also came from Alice’s quarry. But alas, she remains elusive.



What I did discover however, is that another Brewer/Briwere contributed to Winchester Great Hall – one William Briwere, forester of Bere. The Norman elite was small – somewhere between 8,000 and 20,000 people – so we can say with some certainty that Alice and William were related. Firm evidence is scant, but based on William Brewer’s family tree and dates of death, I think it’s quite likely that Alice was William’s aunt.

William Brewer’s contribution to Winchester Great Hall

The following record details the contribution of William Briwere to Winchester Great Hall:

“Henry III in December 1221 ordered the sheriff to cause the hall of Winchester Castle to be repaired, the king’s painted chamber and kitchen and the small offices ‘against this instant Christmas when the king will be there.’ (fn. 21) It was at this time that Henry III was rebuilding the great hall. The importance of the work can be gathered from a mandate to William Briwere in 1232 to sell all the underwood in the king’s forest of ‘La Bere,’ (fn. 22) and, later, to supply timber from the same forest (fn. 23) and Alice Holt Forest (fn. 24) for the great hall” [Link](#)

William Brewer – Sheriff of Nottingham?

So I went in search of William Brewer instead and found a collector of Sheriffdoms:

“During the reign of Richard he became lord of the manor of Sumburne, near Southampton, and held the sheriffdoms of Devonshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Nottinghamshire, and Derbyshire” [Link](#)

In the same biography we're told:

"Brewer held a prominent place among the king's counsellors. His name appears among the witnesses of the disgraceful treaty made with Philip at Thouars in 1206... During the period of the interdict he strongly upheld the king, and is mentioned by Wendover (iii. 238) as one of John's evil advisers, who cared for nothing else save to please their master" [Link](#)

I was quite excited at this point – the model for the Sheriff of Nottingham is connected to Winchester Great Hall! Sadly though, the dates don't add up. The order to cut down the underwood for the Great Hall was given in 1232. Dastardly William Brewer died in 1226. So the William Brewer with a connection to Winchester Great Hall was his son.

A rabbit hole to nowhere, such is life! But interesting to learn more about the Brewers nonetheless. And William Brewer Sr wasn't all bad – it's thanks to him that we have Mottisfont which he founded in 1201.

Read Hampshire Chronicle's short but informative article about William Brewer Senior here:

<https://www.hampshirechronicle.co.uk/news/17678908.timsbury-lakes-royal-history/>

Other sources:

<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/hants/vol5/pp9-12#fnn22>

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Dictionary_of_National_Biography,_1885-1900/Brewer,_William

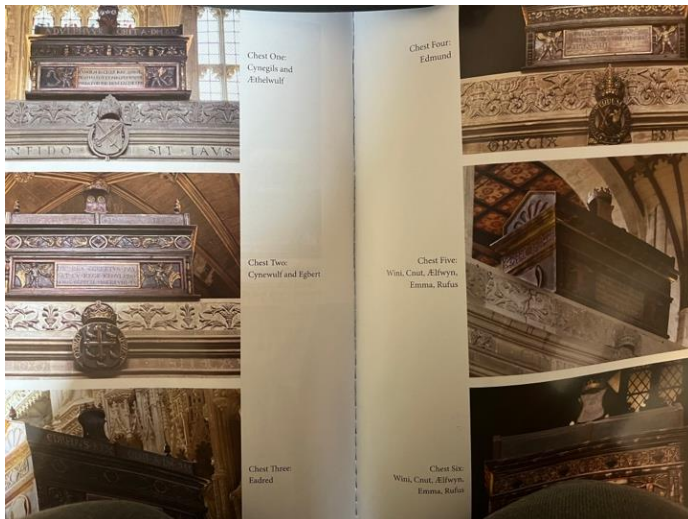
<https://www.wiltshire-opc.org.uk/Items/Devizes/Devizes%20-%20Chronicles%20of%20The%20Devizes%201839.pdf>

<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/wilts/vol10/pp225-252>

Item: 2	Title: The Bone Chests and Digressions
Date: 22 Apr 2024	Contributor: Sue de Salis

Bone Chests and Digressions

I was pretty excited to be given a copy of Cat Jarman's book, The Bone Chests, and settled down to read it expecting all sorts of revelations about the mortuary chests in the Cathedral. Well, spoiler alert, I am afraid that there is nothing in the book that you could not have learnt from existing sources, including the Cathedral's excellent Saints and Scribes exhibition. Nevertheless, the book is well worth a read for bringing together some hugely convoluted Saxon history, re-telling many of the stories we know about the bones, and adding a perspective particular to the author, who is a bioarchaeologist.



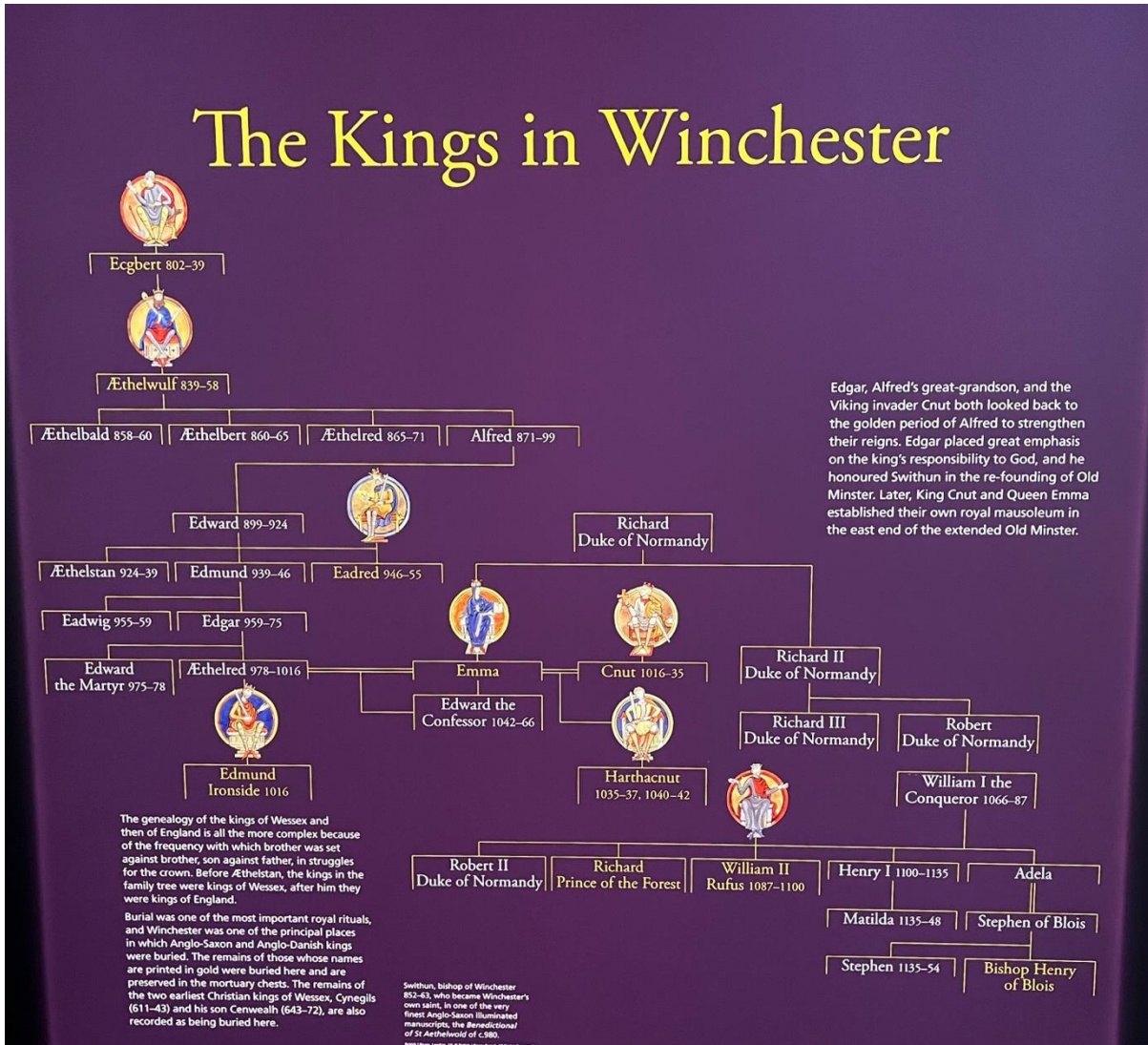
The author's picture of the images of some of the chests from Cat Jarman's book

A) The History Bit

This is quite hard work but worth persevering with if you want to get your Saxon kings and queens straight and understand better the complex interplay between the Saxons and Vikings/Danes over several centuries. The book takes the names on the mortuary chests and uses these as a way in to what was going on during, before and after the lives of those individuals. This enables a near chronological history of the period from Cyngils in 611 all the way through to William Rufus in 1100.

One point I hadn't previously appreciated is that, since Alfred was the fifth son and fourth in a line of brothers to be King, when he died, it was far from obvious that his son Edward the Elder would succeed him. There were sons of elder brothers who could claim succession in priority. This may go some way to explain why Edward was so keen to establish the dynasty and the mausoleum at the New Minster. Interestingly, Edward's second son Athelstan, the first rex totius Britanniae, chose to be buried in Malmesbury together with those who fought with him at the crucial 937 battle of Brunanburh (which arguably established a united England), rather than in Winchester.

Another intriguing aspect is the role of Emma of Normandy. The book explains the Viking ancestry of the Dukes of Normandy, contributing to Emma's appeal to Ethelred in his struggles with the Danes. But, of course, things still went badly for Ethelred who ended up being succeeded by the Danish ruler, Cnut who took both the throne and Queen Emma after Ethelred's death. This was despite the fact that Cnut was and remained married to his first wife, Eadgifu throughout. Under Cnut, Winchester might claim to be the capital not just of England, but also of an empire spanning much of Scandinavia. Unfortunately for Cnut, none of his sons, whether by Eadgifu or Emma, were particularly successful or long-lived, resulting in her son by Ethelred, Edward the Confessor, ending the Danish line of succession. Edward, of course, failed to have a son at all, leading to Emma's great nephew, William the Conqueror, descendant of the Norman Vikings, ending the Saxon line completely. Confused? The diagram below taken from the explanations on the top floor of the Kings and Scribes exhibition may help.



The author's photo of an information board in the Kings and Scribes exhibition.

B) The Bones

The book introduces each new chest with a section detailing the various disturbances the bones have suffered over the centuries, including the move from Old Minster, the creation of the New Minster and removal of remains to Hyde Abbey, and the various familiar tales of loss and destruction. Some of this is quite fun. I particularly liked the suggestion that Alfred's bones had to be moved out of the Old Minster to the New Minster because the monks complained that his ghost was causing too much trouble. (Definitely one to add to our Halloween tours!)

C) The Bioarchaeology

An aspect I found particularly interesting was the stuff about dating and identifying bones. Of course, it is first necessary to find the bones. The author explains that, whilst it is surprising that Athelstan's pivotal Battle of Brunanburh seems to have left no remains (even its location is uncertain), this may be because human bones tend to be put to good uses. She explains the fate of the bodies at Waterloo which were mainly used for fertiliser-think about this when you put bone meal on your roses! The Waterloo bones would also have been used for filtering brown sugar cane into refined white sugar-yum.

Once found, bones can be dated using carbon dating. The problem with this, however, is that we are what we eat and this can influence the apparent date of our bones. For instance, a diet rich in seafood will result in the bones testing as older than they actually are. Similarly, where a person has lived can be guessed at by measuring isotope values which are generally determined by what we drink. Consumption of imported wine can give misleading results.

If these scientific tests are used to establish likely age and background to the remains, it is then a question of identification by DNA. This is much harder as it involves finding someone related to the dead person. The more generations since the death in question, the more diffuse the relationships. The book suggests that even though the remains found in the Leicester car park have been identified as those of Richard III with reasonable certainty, this is still something of a guess based on a statistical analysis of the DNA results.

The Cathedral has commissioned a lot of research into the bones found in the mortuary chests and the results so far are summarised in the Kings and Scribes Exhibition. These include: that one of the sets of bones is female; two are young men; the remains date from the expected periods; and that they belong to 23 separate bodies. There is still a lot to learn, however, and the bones are currently being examined by the Crick Institute with a view to checking whether DNA tests indicate family relationships among the bones. According to a Blog by the Vice Dean last October, it will be “at least another year” before there are definitive results from this latest investigation. So, we wait on!

Item: 3	Title: The Foundry that made Alfred
Date: 21 Jun 2024	Contributor: Colin Cook

The Foundry that made Alfred

A planned rendezvous with some old friends in Bath took us to Frome recently, a Somerset town I had not visited before. First stop was the Frome Museum and an introduction to a wealth of history including the largest hoard of Roman coins found in Britain, a Saxon monastery founded in 680CE, a thriving 17th & 18th century cloth industry and, in the 19th & 20th, the story of J W Singer & Sons, whose foundry cast statues that stood regally across the British Empire, from Cape Town to Karachi, Kimberley to Kolkata, Melbourne to Montreal, Sherborne to Shanghai, but of particular relevance to us guides is that it was here that Winchester’s statue of Alfred came to life.

I am indebted to Sue Bucklow’s book - *Casting the World – The Story of J W Singer & Sons, Frome* - from which the photographs here are taken, many developed from some of the 3,000 glass negatives saved in the 1970’s from the skip by one of their employees and donated to the museum.

John Webb Singer's casting, forging and engraving business benefited from the Gothic Revival and Oxford Movement. This generated a great demand for candlesticks, altar crosses and lecterns. His love of art and aesthetics nurtured by many trips to Europe, established his reputation across Britain. Gaining expertise firstly in sand moulding and then the lost wax method, in October 1888 he met with 20 sculptors at the London studio of Edward Onslow Ford to promote his newly installed large cupola furnaces.

Within the month Hamo Thorneycroft came down to Frome to work on his first commission with J W Singer & Sons, a fertile association that continued until Hamo's death in 1925.

His parents were renowned sculptors too and with his mother Mary, he continued work on the statuary of *Boudica and her Daughters* on the Thames Embankment started by his father, Thomas, in 1850.



Copyright: Frome Museum

This photograph shows it being re-assembled in the workshop at Singers around 1897 prior to its eventual unveiling in 1902.



Hamo was a regular visitor to Frome, fine tuning the plaster casts of his work. This photo shows Hamo standing by the plaster model of Alfred prior to its casting.

The next shows foreman John White standing by the cast statue.



The author recounts the journey of the 20 feet high 5 ton bronze statue of Alfred by train [GWR] from Frome to Winchester [City station?]

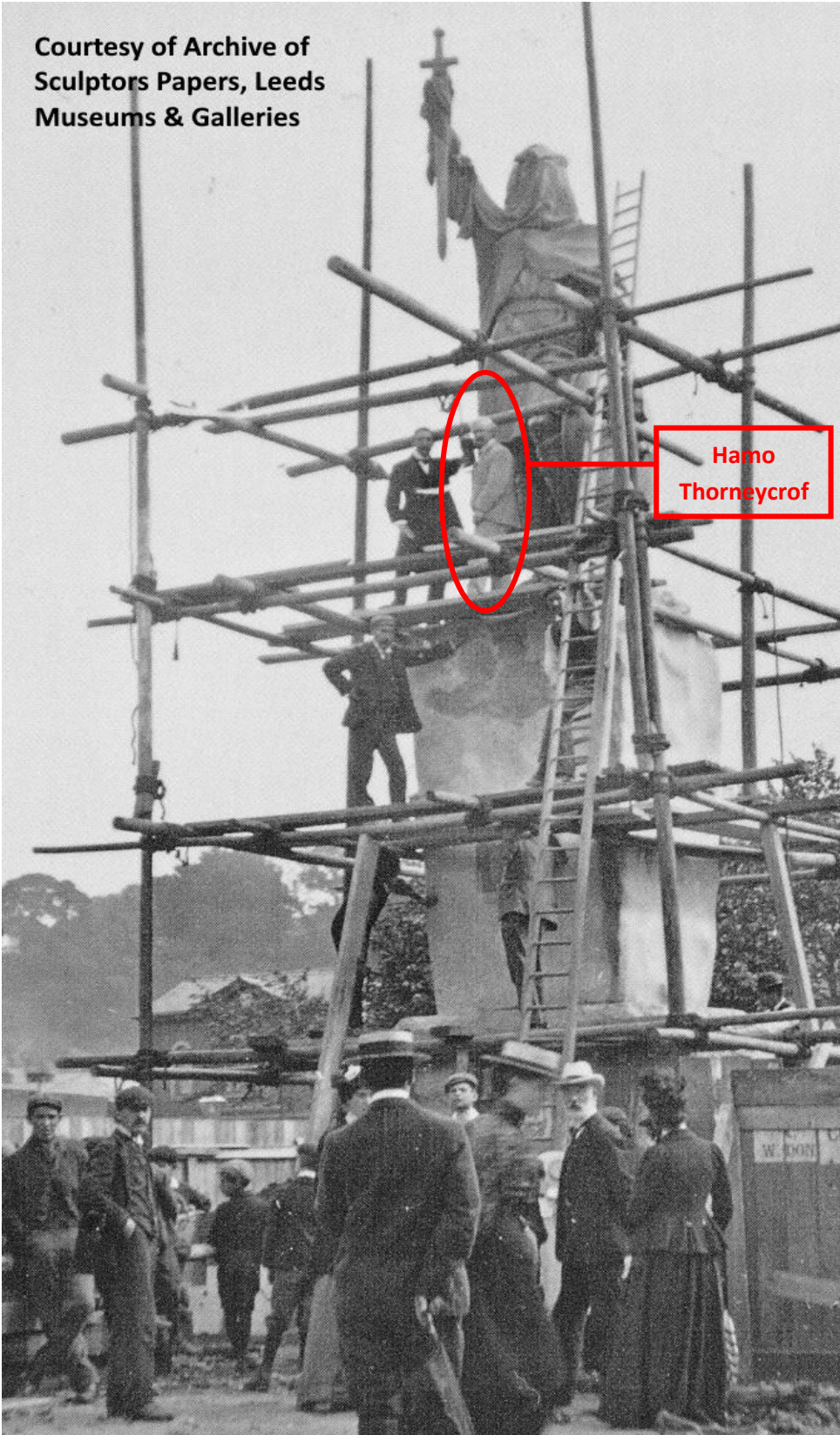
Here it is being prepared for hoisting up onto the 54 ton Cornish granite plinth. Imagine the horror of the crowds of onlookers when a guide rope snapped and Alfred crashed to the ground [chipping off a piece of stone from the plinth] - and cracking his nose.

Hamo wrote to his sister Agatha the next day:

“It is with an extraordinary feeling of relief that I saw the statue of Alfred settle on to the granite pedestal at 10.20 last night”.



And finally, a photo below of Alfred’s statue safely installed awaiting his formal unveiling, its sculptor standing high up on the scaffolding.



Item: 4	Title: Who was the First Mayor of Winchester
Date: 22 Apr 2024	Contributor: Sue de Salis

Who was the First Mayor of Winchester?

Was it:

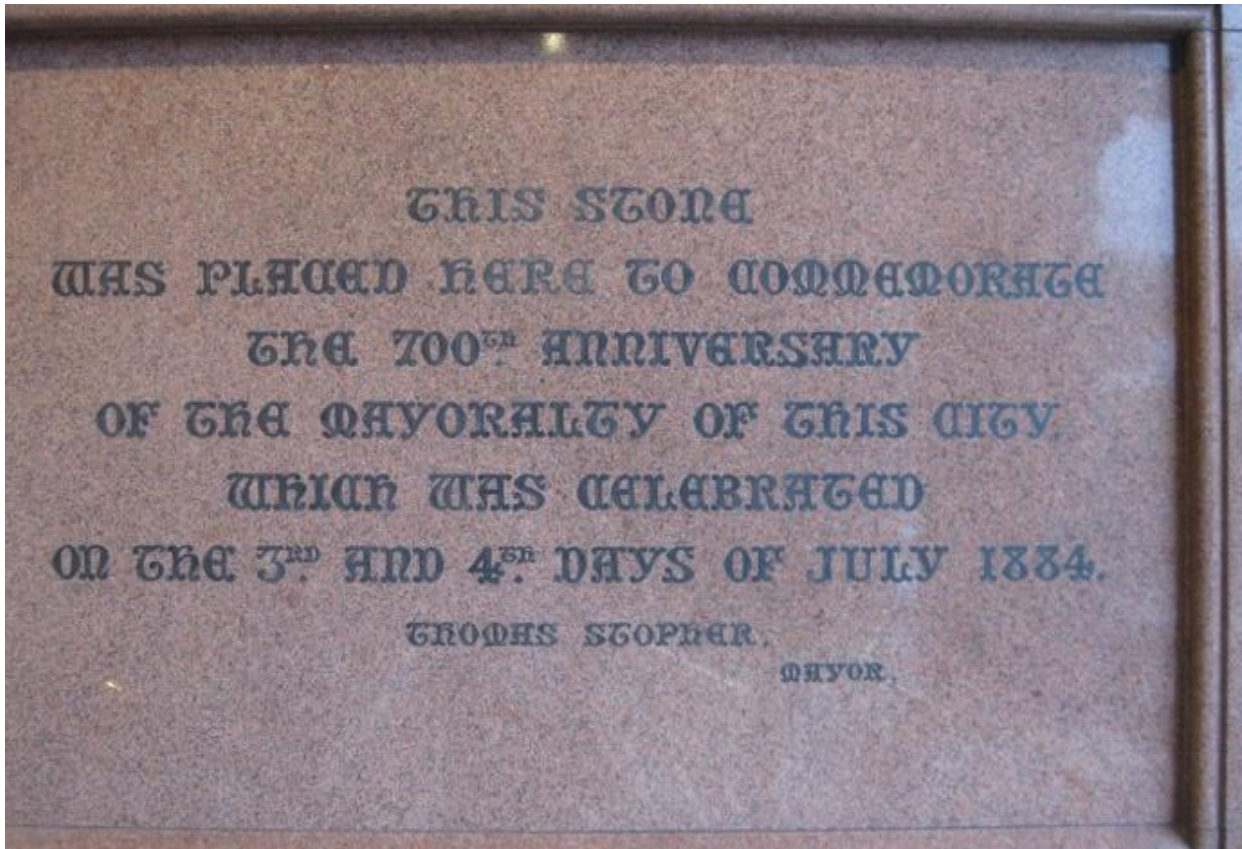
- a) Thomas Oysin, who is named in the Red Book of mayors kept in Abbey House as being the first mayor, made in 1200; or
- b) A Mayor made at a later date, possibly by Edward 1 in 1284 (even though the city became a corporation in 1199); or
- c) Florence de Lunn, depicted in the Guildhall frieze above the main entrance as being made Mayor in 1184 by Henry 11 (see picture below) and also appearing as one of the statues on the Buttercross and remembered in the name of the buildings opposite the theatre in Jewry Street?



The author's picture of the central Guildhall frieze

For what it's worth, my money is on a) or b), not c). The various depictions of Florence all date from the 1860s onwards (Buttercross restoration 1865, Guildhall opening 1873, De Lunn buildings 1884) when Winchester was gripped with civic pride. It seems quite likely that, as the first capital of England, the great and the good of Winchester felt that we should also have the first Mayor. It is documented that London's first Mayor was made in 1189, so there was a clear incentive to find a candidate to pre-date this. Interestingly, the architect Thomas Stopher who Patrick discusses in his article below, was Mayor three times over this period and was the architect behind the De Lunn buildings.

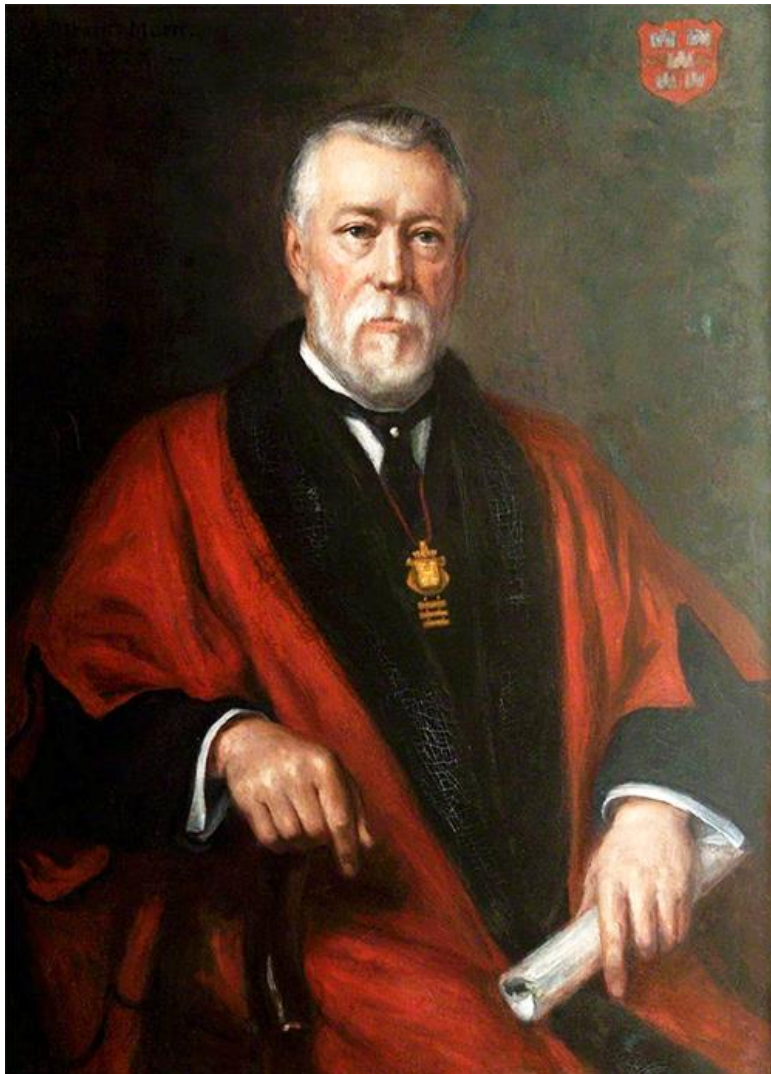
I am also indebted to Judith for the photo below of a plaque in the Guildhall porch commemorating 700 years of the Winchester Mayoralty in 1884. Of course, this bears Thomas Stopher's name.



As noted in Matthew Feldwick's book "Haunted Winchester", despite De Lunn's frequent depiction in Victorian public art "there is scant evidence for his actual existence!".

Any thoughts/contributions welcome.

Item: 5	Title: Thomas Stopher three times Mayor of Winchester
Date: 25 May 2024	Contributor: Patrick Craze



Thomas Stopher (1837-1926) was a Winchester based architect and surveyor, prominent municipal leader (three times Mayor of Winchester), magistrate, trustee and antiquarian.

Portrait of Thomas Stopher in Abbey House by Annie Osborne Moore (1858-1949). Image courtesy of Hampshire Cultural Trust

Family Life

Thomas Stopher was born on 3rd June 1837 at Pimlico in Middlesex, the eldest son of Thomas Stopher (1802-1874) and Sarah Standley (1809-1847). Thomas had three siblings; Mary (1834-1851), Richard (1840-1848) and William (1844-1931).

By 1841 the Stopher family had moved to Winchester and are recorded in the 1841 census as living at Southgate Street, father's occupation – Carpenter. Thomas's mother died in 1847 at Kingston upon Thames, the place of her birth and is buried there.

The 1851 census records Thomas as a Scholar at Trafalgar House School, Trafalgar Street, Winchester then aged fourteen. His widowed father and two of his siblings, Mary and William, are recorded as living at Knowle House Farm, Fareham in the 1851 census, father's occupation – Carpenter. Also recorded as living at Knowle Farm House in 1851 is Charlotte Shawyer (1835-1924), occupation servant. Thomas's father married Charlotte in 1855 and they had eight children.

On 1st January 1861 Thomas married his first wife Mary Francis Counter Hendy (1836-1876) at St Thomas's Church, Winchester. The marriage registration entry records his age as twenty-three and his and his father's occupation as Surveyor. Thomas and Mary had three children; Mary (1861-1949), Ellen (1863-1935) and Frank (1865-1930 Canada).

The 1861 census records Thomas and his wife Mary living at 28 Parchment Street, Winchester, and his occupation as Architect and Surveyor. His father and stepmother are recorded as living at St Swithun's Street, Winchester in 1861 and his father's occupation is recorded as County Surveyor.

The 1871 census records Thomas, his wife Mary and their son Frank living at 3 West End Terrace, Winchester, and his occupation as Architect and Surveyor. His father, stepmother and their children are recorded as living at 14 St Swithun's Street, Winchester in 1871 and his father's occupation is recorded as County Surveyor.

Thomas's father died on 24th December 1874 at Winchester. The Hampshire Chronicle announced his death:

On Christmas-eve, in his 73rd year, Thomas Stopher, for 21 years the County Surveyor for Hampshire.

Thomas's first wife Mary died at Winchester in 1876. Thomas married his second wife Louisa Baker Brown (1829-1899) on 12 Jun 1877 at Westminster and they don't appear to have had any children.

The 1881 census records Thomas, his wife Louisa and his daughter Mary as living at 3 West End Terrace, Winchester, and his occupation as Architect and Surveyor.

The 1891 census records Thomas, his wife Louisa and his son Frank as living at Fair Lea, St Giles Hill, Winchester. Both Thomas and his son Frank occupation are recorded as Architect and Surveyor.

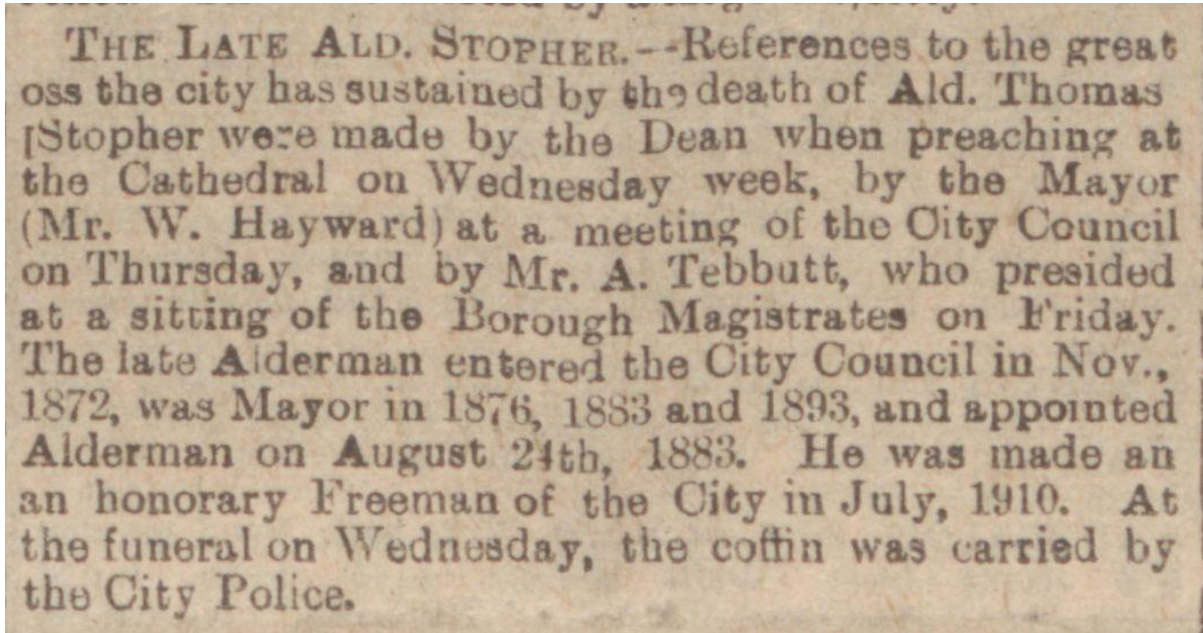
Thomas's second wife Louisa died on 13th May 1899 at Winchester. Thomas married his third wife Edith Louise Stobbs (1869-1957) on 18th June 1900 at Richmond upon Thames. Thomas and Edith had a daughter Elizabeth (1901-1953).

The 1901 census records Thomas, his wife Edith and his son Frank as living at Fair Lea, St Giles Hill, Winchester. Both Thomas and his son Frank occupation is recorded as Architect and Surveyor and his son Frank as his father's assistant.

The 1911 census records Thomas, his wife Edith and their daughter Elizabeth living at Fair Lea, St Giles Hill, Winchester and his occupation is recorded as Architect and Surveyor. His son Frank had emigrated to Canada in 1907 and died there in 1930.

The 1921 census records Thomas and his wife Edith living at Chilcomb Chine, St Giles Hill, Winchester and his occupation is recorded as Architect and Surveyor, employer, at 57 High Street, Winchester.

Thomas Stopher died at the age of 88 years on 2nd May 1926, at Chilcomb Chine, St Giles Hill, Winchester and was buried on 5th May 1926 at Magdalen Hill Cemetery.



The Western Gazette 14th May 1926

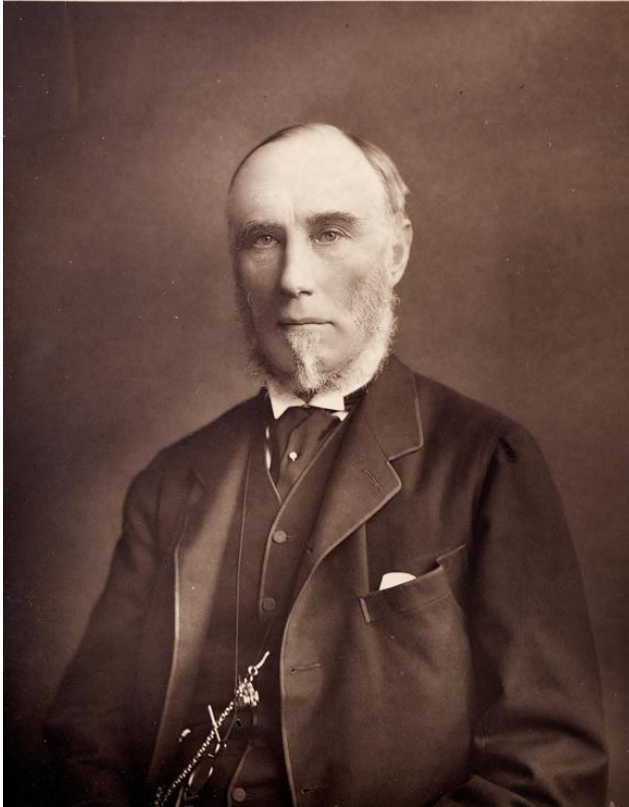
Thomas Stopher was survived by his younger brother William who had for many years ran an Ironmongery business on Jewry Street and he died in 1931.

The Architect and Surveyor

Thomas Stopher was educated at Trafalgar House School, Winchester and on leaving trained as an architect and surveyor in his father's office in St Swithun Street. Later he succeeded his father as surveyor to Winchester College and St John's Hospital and moved the family business to offices at 57 High Street, Winchester.

Stopher was in the right place and time to be an architect and surveyor. Winchester's population had more than doubled from 6,069 in 1801 to 13,752 in 1851 a figure not seen since the Black Death in the 14th century which had decimated Winchester's population. By 1891 the population had increased three and half fold to 20,926 and inevitably there was a huge demand for housing, schools, shops business premises and pubs!

The main areas for housing development were outside the City walls on former Soke land including St Faith's, Hyde, Fulflood, Weeke, St Giles Hill and Highcliffe. Stopher was in an enviable position to meet the demand for architect and surveyor services and his prolific work is recorded in his diaries, 1862-63, 1892-1921 and ledger of architectural work, 1866-1891 held at the Hampshire Record Office.



One notable “collaboration” was between Thomas Stopher and his patron Thomas Baring, Earl of Northbrook, over the development of St Giles Hill.

Thomas George Baring, 1st Earl of Northbrook, Viceroy of India 1872 – 1876, First Lord of the Admiralty 1880 – 1885, and Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire and High Steward of the City of Winchester

In 1878 the Ecclesiastical Commission proposed the sale of land on St Giles Hill and a petition signed by 75 people was presented to the city council asking for the creation of a 'Public Park' for health and recreation. Stopher supported the proposal and against great opposition on 18th May, 1878, The Hampshire Chronicle reported on the Winchester Town Council's decision to purchase 8 acres of land on the west face of St Giles Hill for £1000 (£125 per acre). The land was to be for ever used and maintained solely for the purpose of public exercise and recreation and that no buildings shall be erected thereon.

In the same year the Council purchased the land for the park, the Ecclesiastical Commission auctioned 13 lots of the Dean and Chapter's land including land at St Giles Hill, Chilcomb valley, St Cross and Eagles Field at the City Rd end of the Andover Rd. Lord Northbrook purchased lots 1-4 and lot 8 on St Giles and lot 13 Eagles Field. He purchased 44 acres on St Giles hill at a cost of £222 per acre almost twice the value of the park land.

Northbrook delayed starting work on housing at St Giles hill, starting instead by developing the Eagles Field land from 1878 and his architect was none other than Thomas Stopher.

There is little doubt that Stopher had considerable influence within the Council in persuading members to vote in favour of purchasing the Park Land, which he whole-heartedly supported, and that the Park would contribute considerable to the desirability of any housing development on the top of the hill.

Stopher's involvement in developing the top of St Giles hill is first recorded in this advertisement in the Hampshire Chronicle 4th March 1880:

St Giles Hill Winchester

Many inquires having been made as to this land, I have been instructed by the owner to give notice that it will be shortly be laid out for building purposes and will be for sale or let on long leases. Roads will be formed and works erected for the supply of water to the estate.

Further particulars from Adam, Moberly and Shenton Solicitors of Jewry Street

Or Mr H Warren, estate agent, Jewry Street

Or the undersigned Thomas Stopher, 57 High Street, Winchester.

This is clear evidence that Stopher is working for Northbrook on the development of St Giles Hill. Despite this early date the reality is that building works didn't start until the park was completed and the Didcot Newbury and Southampton Railway (DNSR) opened their station at the foot of St Giles Hill in 1885. Incidentally Lord Northbrook's son, Viscount Baring, was MP for Winchester and a Director of the DNSR at this time.

Many of the fine grand villas on St Giles Hill were designed for clients by Stopher but Northbrook maintained control of the hill's development by signing off the drawings and he is immortalised in the road names: Northbrook Avenue, Baring Road and Stratton Road.

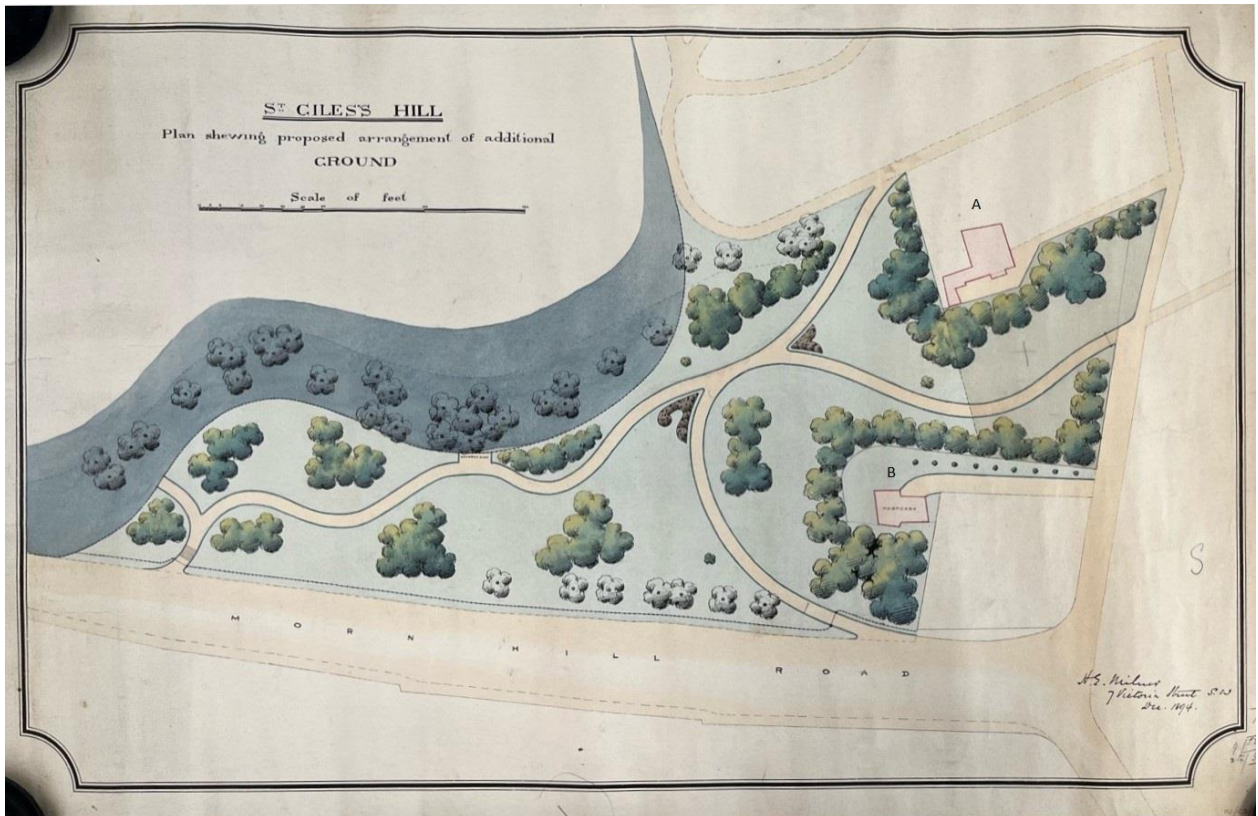


Part of Stopher's payment for his services was a plot of land on top of St Giles Hill on which he built a house to live in. The census records for 1891 – 1911 record the house name as Fair Lea and it would appear the house name changed to Chilcomb Chine (left) by the time of the 1921 census and he died there in 1926

The 1881 census records that Stopher was living with the rest of the Great and the Good of Winchester on west hill, at No 3 West End Terrace. Perhaps he was one of the first to 'defect' to the new prestigious suburb on the eastern side of the city, but others would follow, and the census records record Benjamin Barrow Colsen who owned the Chesil Brewery, Mr Hayter the China merchant, professional gentleman and senior military officers.

In 1894 the Park land was increased further by a gift made to City Corporation and a document dated 8th 26 September, 1894, records:

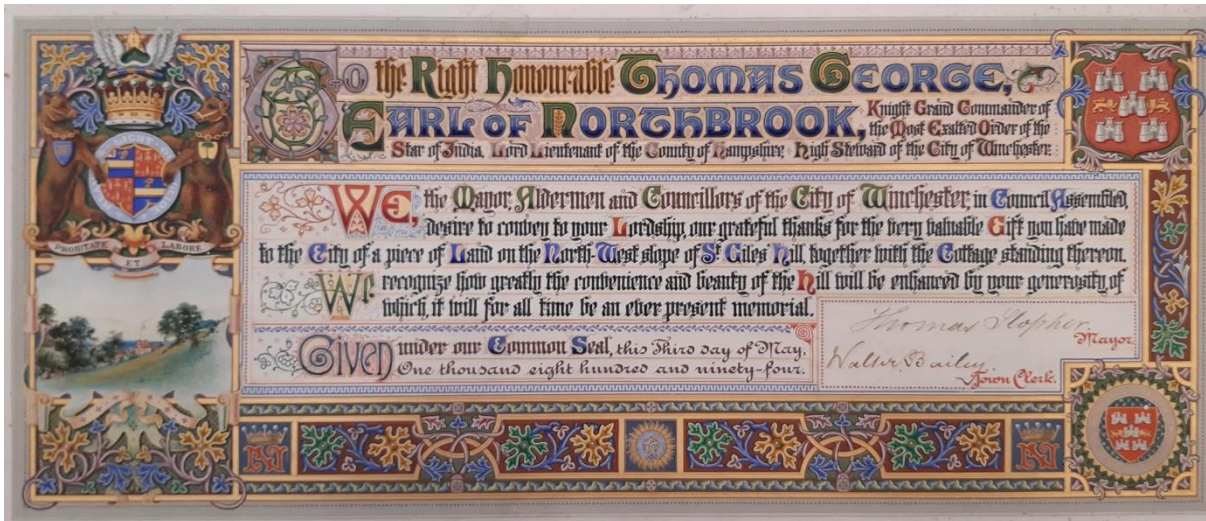
Thomas George, Earl of Northbrook conveyed land and 'Prospect Cottage...occupied by John Turner...' with covenants and conditions '...not to build or erect any buildings of any kind or description other than where there is another building...' and to maintain a fence and a footpath seven feet wide.



Plan of the land gifted to the City by Lord Northbrook by landscape designer H E Milner. Building 'A' is Prospect Cottage and building 'B' is The Mortuary designed by Thomas Stopher. Image courtesy of Hampshire Record Office W/C5/9/29

The Hampshire Chronicle of the 6th October, 1894 records the gift:

On 3rd May, 1894, thanks were conveyed to the Rt. Hon. Thomas George, Earl of Northbrook, Knight Grand Commander of the Most Noble Order of the Star of India, Lord Lieutenant of the County of Hampshire, High Steward of the City of Winchester, in the form of an illuminated scroll signed by Thomas Stopher, Mayor and Walter Bailey, Town Clerk, on behalf of the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of the City of Winchester.



Illuminated Scroll presented to Lord Northbrook by Thomas Stopher, Mayor of Winchester. Image courtesy of Hampshire Record Office 106M92W/4

Thomas Stopher's other collaboration with Lord Northbrook was the building of a school on the western outskirts of the City. In 1877 a meeting convened of those interested in 'Middle Class' education and was held in the Guildhall at the invitation of the then Mayor, Thomas Stopher. Money was raised to buy 12 acres of land for £3,300 adjacent to Romsey Road on the outskirts of Winchester. Lord Northbrook, backed the scheme and offered to lend £10,000 at 4% interest and the architect for this development was again Thomas Stopher.

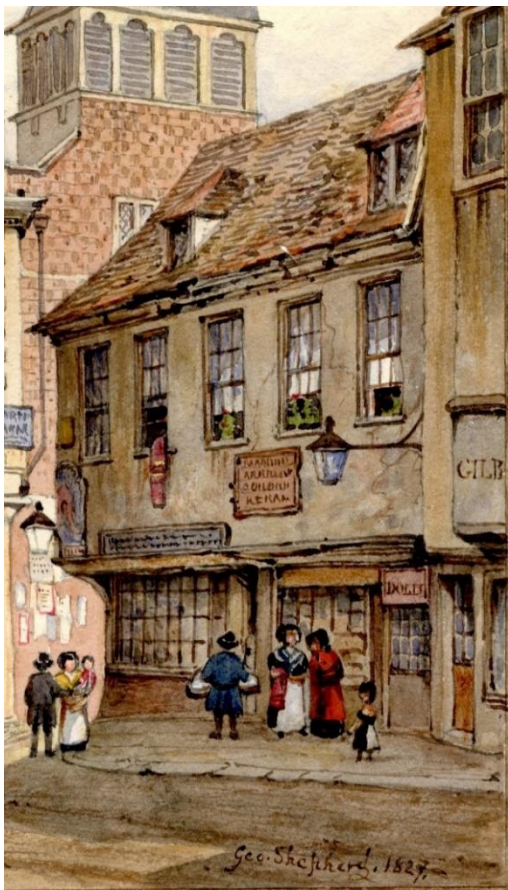
The school was called the Winchester Modern School and it opened in 1880 with a board of Governors, of which Lord Northbrook was Chairman and included the Bishop and Dean of Winchester Cathedral, the Headmaster of Winchester College and the Mayor. This was to be a fee-paying school for "the lower middle classes and respectable working classes" of Winchester. The school was not successful and after seven years had to close.



The building was then used for a Preparatory School known as Westfields but this also failed and had closed by 1896. In 1897 Lionel Herbert, with financial help from Lord Northbrook, bought the premises and started West Downs School which became a successful and a well-established Preparatory School for boys age 8 – 13 years.

Thomas Stopher also collaborated with the wealthy brewer Richard Moss (1823-1905) to redevelop a number of Winchester's historic public houses and hotels including the Dolphin Inn on the corner of the High Street and St Thomas Street.

Richard Moss owned the Winchester Brewery on Hyde Street and leased the Dolphin Inn from St John's Charity. Stopher's design for the new building is a mix of architectural styles which is typical of the late Victorian period.



The old Dolphin Inn painted by George Shepherd in 1827 appears to be a half-timbered jettied building of great age, possibly medieval or at the latest Tudor in date.

It is understood that Stopher later reused the oak chimney piece of the old inn in his house Chilcomb Chine on St Giles Hill.

The Hampshire Chronicle condemned Stopher's Dolphin Inn as a new design in domestic Gothic 'presenting ugly features and occupying valuable space'.

Image courtesy of the Warden and Scholars of Winchester College

At street level the architectural style is classical with square stone columns or pilasters separating the windows. Looking above street level are brick elevations inset with black and white mock Tudor panels, mirroring God Begot house opposite. On the roof line is a baronial style tower, complete with pointed roof, reminiscent of French chateaus or Scottish castles.

The building was completed in 1883 and features Stopher's signature corner entrance which is adorned with two stone carved classical dolphins and below them inscribed The Dolphin Inn.





Stopher also redeveloped the Old Star Inn on the corner of the Upper High Street and Staple Gardens which became the Talbot Hotel and is now an estate agent, The Green Man on Southgate Street, The Crown Hotel on the corner of North Walls and Jewry Street (since demolished) and now offices, The Great Western Hotel, now the Bishop on the Bridge and others.

The Talbot Hotel closed in 1975. Image courtesy of Belgarum Estate Agents

In fact, there is hardly a street in Winchester that Stopher's architecture does not feature, from the De Lunn buildings on Jewry Street to the west wing School of Art and Library extension at the Guildhall, an extraordinary level of output by any standards, and many of the buildings stand as a lasting memorial to his name.

Public Office and Service

In 1872 Thomas Stopher was elected to the Winchester City Council. He was appointed an Alderman in 1883 and served as Mayor of Winchester on three occasions, in 1876, 1883 and 1893. Stopher held other important public offices - he was a magistrate, a trustee of Christ's Hospital and a trustee of St Cross Hospital. In 1910 he was elected a Freeman of the City of Winchester in recognition of his public service.



In 1883 Thomas Stopher was elected as the 700th Mayor of the City of Winchester and in 1884 the City Council commissioned bronze and silver medals to commemorate the event. (See Item 4 above as to possible question marks around the 700th anniversary date!)



Hampshire Record Office has a list of recipients for the silver and bronze medal.

The Antiquarian

Thomas Stopher had grown up in Winchester and he was passionate about the great history of the City and of its streets and buildings.

Stopher compiled several volumes of papers, drawings and photographs and they provide a detailed record of what was happening in Winchester in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Hampshire Record Office (HRO) holds 8 scrapbooks compiled by Stopher, his work ledgers and diaries and numerous papers and documents relating to historic and contemporary civic matters.

The HRO also holds a typed transcript of Stopher's manuscript on the history of Winchester streets which was begun in 1895 (shelved at 942 WIN OS). The original manuscript is with Hampshire Cultural Trust (HCT) which also holds many drawings and engravings collected by Thomas Stopher. A catalogue of an exhibition of these, held in 1915 is available at HRO (Warren Library Pamphlet no 24).

The HCT also holds 5 volumes of photographs (by William Savage and others) compiled by Stopher, a collection of election posters and handouts collected by him; civic invitation cards, menus and tickets also collected by him, and a handwritten copy of Stopher's 'History of Winchester Streets'.

These papers reflect Stopher's role in public office, his work as an architect and surveyor and also his interest in Winchester's past and in its future development.

Stopher assisted his fellow Alderman William Henry Jacob in the immense task of sifting through and cataloguing Winchester's ancient civic documents and charters housed in the muniment room at the Westgate. The conditions in the Westgate were not ideal for the storage of such material and between them Stopher and Jacob saved hundreds of these unique ancient documents for prosperity which are now housed at the HRO.

In 1924 Stopher published *St John's Hospital Winchester – Some Notes of the History of the Hospital in the Last Half Century*, published by Warens & Sons, it is thought to be the only book that Stopher had published.

Perhaps one of Stopher's greatest legacies is that he committed his early memories of mid-19th century Winchester to print in an article for the 'Proceedings' of the Hampshire Field Club Vol IX Part I (1920) entitled 'Winchester Reminiscences of 70 Years Ago'. His article provides a fascinating insight into what Winchester was like in the 1850's and of the changes he witnessed, many of which he had a hand in.

Click on the link to read Stopher's Reminiscences. [Vol Part 1.pdf \(hantsfieldclub.org.uk\)](https://hantsfieldclub.org.uk/Vol%20Part%201.pdf)

Stopher's other great legacy is that in his civic role he commissioned a young talented local artist, Beatrice Olive Corfe (1866-1847), to paint watercolour views of Winchester's streets and buildings. Stopher witnessed the pace that Winchester's built environment was changing and he wanted to record the City as it was for prosperity.

Many of Beatrice Corfe’s watercolours can be found in Abbey House and are a unique record of what Winchester’s streets and buildings looked like at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Hampshire Cultural Trust are the custodians of two of Corfe’s paintings, Bridge Street and Minister House on Great Minster Street, both painted in 1899.



Minister House, by Beatrice Olive Corfe (1899).

Image courtesy of HCT.



Bridge Street by Beatrice Olive Corfe (1899). Image courtesy of HCT

Corfe’s painting of Bridge Street justifies Stopher’s concerns that the Winchester was changing and for the need to record change. Today the view has changed beyond recognition and without Corfe’s painting, we may not know what stood on the site now occupied by Chesil House.



And finally.....

Given Thomas Stopher's extraordinary work output as an architect and surveyor, his commitment to public office and service as a magistrate and trustee, it is a wonder that he also found time to be an active member of the Winchester Dramatic Society.

Shakespearian roles were his forte commencing with Paulo in Othello (1865), followed by Prince Hal in Henry IV (1866) and Macduff in Macbeth during 1873 and 1885. In 1908 he was involved in the organization of the Winchester National Pageant, and at age 71 years, taking the role of Sir Walter Raleigh.

The Pageant was staged to raise money for the restoration of Winchester Cathedral. This was a fundraising event on a monumental scale held in the ruins of Wolvesey Castle and involving 3,000 people in a series of historical tableaux. The Hampshire Chronicle praised Stopher's performance: "He is a true Raleigh ... a very fine piece of acting."

The author is indebted to Flavia Bateson, Archivist, Winchester Dramatic Society, Chesil Theatre, for the above information and photo.

Thomas Stopher as Sir Walter Raleigh,
Winchester National Pageant 1908.

This article is by no means an exhaustive biography of Thomas Stopher life but rather a sense of the man and there is much more to say about him. Today he would be considered to be a mover and shaker of a time during which Winchester experienced the greatest expansion and change since its heyday in the 14th century. Stopher was however something of a paradox. On the one hand he was passionate about Winchester's history, its streets and its buildings and on the other he was literally the architect of change, both in his role in public office and in overseeing the demolition of historic buildings replaced with new buildings to his design.

Guide Lines Dates

- Winter Issue
 - submit copy by 20 December 2024
 - publish 31 December 2024
- Summer Issue
 - submit copy by 20 June 2025
 - publish 30 June 2025

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Send contributions to: patrick.craze123@gmail.com in editable format (Plain text or Word please)
WATGA Chair, Sue de Salis sueds100@gmail.com and the Editor, Patrick Craze patrick.craze123@gmail.com
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