

## CHAPTER RECORDS

Canon Graham Hendy studied the old Chapter Decree Books (similar to Minutes) and over a period of time wrote a series of interesting articles for the Leaves magazine. Canon Hendy's comments are in plain type; extracts from the Decree books are in Italics. Spellings and punctuation are as the original.

### FROM THE CHAPTER DECREE BOOK, 13TH MARCH 1578

As a Collegiate Church the Chapter had jurisdiction over quite a large area around the village of Southwell and the ecclesiastical court was not in the jurisdiction of the Archdeacon. However, the cases which came before it were very similar to those of an Archdeacon's Court. The Canon in Residence acted as the judge with the assistance of the Registrar who was a lawyer. It is interesting to note that matrimonial cases were brought, including the reluctant suitors below; the malicious gossip drew forth public apology – perhaps something to revive?

*On Friday namely the 13<sup>th</sup> Day of March, in the Year of Our Lord, according to the reckoning of the English Church 1578, between the ninth and eleventh hours before noon of the same day Acts at the requests of the parties (at suit) enacted in the Chapter House of the Collegiate Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Southwell before the reverend gentleman Master Nicholas Cleyton Bachelor of Sacred Theology, Canon Residentiary, etc. In the presence of John Less Notary Public, Chapter Registrar, etc.*

#### **The same William Haynesworth against Anne Booth in the case of matrimony.**

*On an order of personal appearance. On which day the said Anne Booth appeared personally, and the judge at the petition of the aforesaid Haynesworth granted him to bring a "libel" by the next session and ordered the aforesaid Anne Booth to be present personally on that same day to receive the same, etc. And further the judge (on account of certain issues giving him cause for concern, and at the petition of the aforesaid Haynesworth sequestrated the said Anne Booth until, etc. and he placed her in the custody of William Garland at the expense of the aforesaid Haynesworth, etc. But afterwards the said Anne Booth appeared personally before the judge about the third hour after noon of that day together with the aforesaid William Haynesworth: And thus by formal declaration the said parties freely and willingly mutually contracted to reciprocally unconditional and legitimate marriage with immediate effect, etc. In the presence of Master Thomas Wethered, William Garland and others witnessing, etc. Whence the judge enjoined them to the solemnisation of matrimony, in the presence of the church, etc. before the first day of the month of May next. And thus he dismissed them from the court.*

#### **Agnes Bullard of Dunham widow against Rose Drables of the same in the case of defamation.**

*On an order of personal appearance. On which day the said Rose appeared personally, and confessed defamatory words uttered by herself against the aforesaid Agnes Bullard. And she submitted herself to the correction of the court. Whence the judge ordered as follows, namely: That upon Sunday next she shall ask the said Agnes Bullard forgiveness in the church before the whole congregation for speaking the said slanderous words against her. And thus she was dismissed.*

### FROM THE CHAPTER DECREE BOOK 1694

This injunction was issued by John, Lord Archbishop of York following a visitation a few months earlier. *"Furthermore for the better Government of the College and that all disorderly practices may be prevented We do enjoyn and order that all the private Backdoors or Outlets of the Vicars Houses (if there be any such) be Stopt up. And that there be no Entrance into or Passage out of the Vicarage but through the Gates. Which gates We do order to be lock'd up at ten of the Clock every night. And the key be carried to the Residentiary for the time being or to whom he shall appoint. And that the Residentiary take care to see this executed".*

### CHAPTER BOOK 17<sup>TH</sup> MAY 1694

*And we do likewise appoint that from henceforth so long as the quarterly Residence shall continue, the Residentiary for the time being shall be the Divine Lecturer. And such shall Preach or procure to be preached a Sermon every Sunday in the Afternoon at the Collegiate Church of St Mary in Southwell. For the encouragement of which Sunday Lecture or Sermon their present Majesties have bn graciously pleased to Order that the Sume of Five hundred pounds shall be paid out of their Treasury to the Chapter of Southwell as a Fund for perpetual Salary to the Preacher of it."*

### FROM THE CHAPTER DECREE BOOK 1695

31<sup>ST</sup> January 1695.

*"Decreed that if Mr Chappell the organist chance to die, that then his singingmans place shall not be disposed to anyone except to such person as shall happen to be organist".*

*3<sup>rd</sup> November 1698*

*"Decreed that the Clerk of the Fabrick pay to Mr Tho: Dring Forty shillings for pricking three full services into eight Books this year".*

*27<sup>th</sup> April 1699*

*"Decreed that the Master of the Fabrick buy four Comon prayer Books for the use of the Vicars Chorall."*

*"Decreed that the Receiver General buy the Dog Whipper a Coat out of the Comon or Rota Finis not to exceed the price of sixteen shillings"*

#### **Chapter Book 11<sup>th</sup> June 1696**

*"Decreed that Mr Willm Popeley Succeed Mr George Chappell in the Organists Rector Chori Singingmans place so long as he behave himself well therein and that the said Mr Popeley have the ordinary Salaries due upon the said offices. Paying to Willm Clay five pounds p. anno as his Assistant". (One man as organist, Rector Chori and lay clerk all rolled into one. Poor man!)*

#### **17<sup>th</sup> December 1696**

*"Decreed that John Savage Barber supply Mr Hesleden's place in his absence". (Mr Hesleden's place was in the Quire. John Savage Barber got a permanent place as a singingman in July 1701)*

#### **8<sup>th</sup> April 1697**

*"Decreed That every Residentiary finding themselves aggrieved by their Tenants ill payment of Coales have the Libty of Suing for them in the Chapt's name.*

#### **10<sup>th</sup> March 1697/8**

*"Decreed that Mr Benson Clerk of the Fabrick provide all such brewing vessels as are necessary for the Residence house and that Mr Lowe the Receiver defray the Charge thereof out of the Fines by him already recd or to be recd."*

#### **FROM THE CHAPTER DECREE BOOK, 27<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 1699**

*"Decreed that every Residentiary doe at his going out of his quarters Residence make an Inventory of the Household goods in the Residence house wch is to be entrd in one end of the Book of Fines wherein Doctor Altham the present Residentiary has now made and entred an Inventory, and that what part soever of those goods shalbe wanting that are in his Inventory (necessary wearing allowd) shal be made good by him in whose time such goods shall happen to be wanting"*

Canon Graham Hendy added the following notes when writing in "Leaves".

"Canons (with prebends in brackets), present were Roger Altham S.T.D. (Halloughton), William Porter A.M. (North Leverton), George Mompesson A.M. (Oxton Prima Pars), Daniel Chadwick (Dunham), Nathan Drake A.M. (Sacrista), and Timothy Caryl A.M. (Rampton). Most had a Master of Arts (Artis Magister) though Roger Altham was a Doctor of Sacred Theology.

It is interesting to know that at the Chapter meeting there were six canons present and it would appear that Roger Altham was the current Residentiary because he had done the inventory of household goods, and perhaps did not want to be blame or held account for things which had subsequently gone missing. In the same meeting they had passed a resolution about keeping a proper list of books in the library and a regulation that "no Book be lent out of the Library to any person whatsoever, and that every Residentiary at his coming in and going out of Residence doe view over all the Books and take care that all such Books are in the Library as are mentioned in the Catalogue made of them and now hung up there".

At this stage it seems that "Residence lasted for a quarter, that is three months, and with 16 Prebendaries, expectation might be to fulfil this obligation once every four years – not terribly demanding! The clergy were for the most part "pluralists", that is they held several livings or sources of income. It must have been quite an event at the change over every three months. We know that the Sexton was required to dust or wipe the books in the Library but whether he was called in to clean up between residences we cannot be sure. These facts remind us of the reason why the Dean's house is still called "The Residence". However you will be glad to know that he is not thinking of going on his travels for the next three and a half years! But does he have an inventory?"

#### **21<sup>st</sup> July 1700**

*"Decreed that no Vicar Chorall of this Church do for the future board at a Publick house."*

**24<sup>th</sup> August 1704**

*Decreed That upon the beginning of the next rota being at Candlemass next the Afternoon Sermon shall be preacht by the Residentiary for the time being if he think fit, if not by one of the Vicars Choral if he may be had. And if none of the Vicars Choral be at leisure to preach Then by any other qualified pson whom the Residentiary shall appoint. And that the said Preacher shall receive such Reward as if the Residentiary had preacht himself."*

**26<sup>th</sup> April 1705**

*Decreed That Dcor Stainforth have the disposal of Ten Pounds to be laid out by him for a Servants Bed Pewter and Coars Linen for the Kitchen above the Residence house wch sume is to be paide by the Receiver out of the Fines and to be repaid before the end of the next Rota"*

**7<sup>th</sup> June 1705**

*"Decreed that Mr Spencer Vicar of the Parish of Southwell shall from henceforward Preach the Lecture in ye Afternoon of the Lord's Day and shall have for his Salary the yearly interest of the 400 w King William the third gave for the Support and maintenance of the said Lecture. And it is further decreed that Mr Spencer's Successors in the Vicaridg of Southwell shall preach the aforesaid Lecture and receive the said Salary if they shall be approved by the Chaptr of Southwell but not otherwise. And this Decree is made not onely on the Account of the Reasonableness & Usefulness of the thing itself but also in conformity to the Advice & Pleasure of his Grace the Lord Arch Bp of York signified in a Letter directed to Dcor William Stainforth ..."*

Canon Hendy adds: In this letter the Archbishop refers to the "present Vicar (whom I understand to be a Sober Diligent man and to deserve all In couragement...)". At the Chapter Meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> October 1705 it was agreed that £20 p.a. from Candlemas last was to be paid to Mr Spencer at Lamas and Candlemas in equal proportions for preaching the afternoon Lecture.

**29<sup>th</sup> October 1707**

*"This day Mr Stansfield the pr'sent Residentiary being affected with Gout so that he cannot attend the Chapter tomorrow desired & appointed Mr George Mompesson to be his deputy before me Joseph Clay N:P:Register."*

On 24<sup>th</sup> January 1716/17 there was a lengthy meeting which began by admonishing Mr Wm Neep, vicar choral and the schoolmaster for neglect of the Free School, and the admonishment was set down in Latin. There followed regulations to do with the school and the demands upon the boys. Next reference was made back to the decree of 1693/4 in which backdoors and outlets to the vicars' house should be blocked up to prevent them slipping out and getting up to mischief at night. Two doors were still not blocked and one of them was the unfortunate Mr Neep's. (Incidentally by the following January the gentleman had died and there was a vacancy to be filled) There followed a laying down of standards for the vicars choral. This took up over four pages when the average was about one page for a chapter meeting. Then there followed two further pages with details about the organisation of the library. Clearly it was a meeting of some importance and there are ongoing references to the behaviour of the vicars choral and insistence on the blocking of backdoors.

**19<sup>th</sup> April 1722**

*"Decreed that a sermon be preacht every Ash Wednesday at the charge of the Chapter".*

**21<sup>st</sup> January 1724**

*Whereas it is this day represented to us by the Residentiary that he has observed severall Indecencies in the behaviour of the Boys of this parish in the time of Divine Service such as talking to one another and often going out of the Quire on frivolous pretences and running rudely out of the Church when the service is over. And likewise at times it is a Common Custom for the Boys to play in the Body of the Church and to Kick Football and to play other Sports in the churchyard and in other parts of the parish on the Lord's Day And that he has been informed by severall persons That about Normanton in this parish It is very usuall for young men to do so on Sundays in the afternoon even in the time of divine service.*

*We the Chapter being desirous as far as it is in our power to prevent such Irregularities Do decree the following orders to be observed by the Choristers and by the rest of the Boys under our care, Namely*

- 1. That they go in and out of the Church decently and not run as the manner of some has been.*
- 2. That no Boys be allowed to go out of Church in the time of divine service.*

3. That none of the Choristers or Schoolboys be permitted to play in the Churchyard or anywhere else on the Lord's Day nor in the body of the church at any time whatsoever.

4. That the Choristers be directed to carry necessary orders relating to the service of the Church and to look out the services for the Residentiarys use as far as may be while the voluntarys are playing.

5 That they do in all things behave themselves decently and moderately in the Church and forbear whispering and talking to one another.

We do Likewise decree That the schoolmaster the Rector Chori and others whose businss it is be required to take all proper care to see that these orders be duly observed."

(They also appointed monitors, and realising that some things were beyond their control urged Mr Becher and other Justices to instruct the Constables to punish disorderly practices, and that the churchwardens should do the same).

#### **24<sup>th</sup> July 1777**

*On Thursday twentieth fourth Day of July in the Year of Our Lord One thousand seven hundred and seventy seven In the chapter House of the Collegiate Church of the Blessed Mary the Virgin of southwell in the county of nottingham between the hours of eight and twelve of the clock in the forenoon of the same day Before the Venerable Thomas Porter Clerk M:A: William Rastall Clerk D:D: Samuel Abson M:A: and William Becher M:A: Prebendaries of the respective Prebends of North Leverton, Normanton and Rampton capitularly met together and making a Chapter among themselves In the presence of George Hopkinson Notary Publick Registrar*

*Decreed that John Daubney the Verger have a new coat as usual.*

*Decreed that John Breedon the Dog-Whipper have a new coat as usual.*

*Decreed that Mr T Spofforth be paid £1. 10.0 for writing Church Musick.*

*(This was almost certainly for copying out parts for the choir).*

*Decreed that a Nesessary house be built for the School Boys by or near the Palace Wall of the churchyard. (i.e. a loo).*

*Francis Ingleman the Bricklayer having behaved very impertinently to the Rev'd Dr Rastall during his last Residence It is ordered that the said Francis Ingleman be dismissed from his employment as Bricklayer at the Residence.*

#### **21<sup>st</sup> August 1777**

*Decreed that a Coach Road also a Necessary house and other alterations be made about the Residence House according to Mr Hendley's Plan under the direction of the present Residentiary and that the expense of the same be paid out of the Rota Fines, if other funds be difficient".*

#### **Chapter Meeting 20<sup>th</sup> April 1820**

*Decreed that an Alteration be made to the wine cellars in the Residence House, so as to furnish room for the accommodation of each Prebendary".*

Canon Hendy adds: Three months is a long time without access to your home supply, so here was a chance to lay in some for the next period of residence. According to a Chapter meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1821 the cost of the work was "One Hundred and Twenty Six Pounds, Four Shillings & Three Pence to pay the cost of the new wince cellar and other repairs at the Residence House", Who is going to complain about that, with such a clear marketing feature? Not to sell you understand, but to come and live here! But that was not quite the end of the story.

#### **Chapter Meeting 10<sup>th</sup> April 1822**

*Decreed that every Prebendary desirous of depositing any wine in the Residence House shall place the same in one of the stone catacombs constructed for this purpose and not elsewhere".*

Surely some of the gentlemen were not getting their bottles mixed up were they?