

# ST GEORGE'S CHAPEL ARCHIVES & CHAPTER LIBRARY



## Research guides

### No.4 The College of St George

#### Foundation and Composition

The College of St George, Windsor Castle, was founded by Edward III by letters patent of 6 August 1348. The large and prestigious new establishment was to consist of twenty four Chaplains (one being appointed Warden) and twenty-four Poor Knights and 'other ministers'. The eventual composition, as set out in the College's 1352 Statutes, differed slightly from that initially proposed, with a Warden or Dean, twelve other Canons, thirteen Priest Vicars, four Lay Clerks, six Choristers, twenty six Poor Knights and a Virger. The College was entrusted with the maintenance of the Royal Free Chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St George and St Edward the Confessor, more commonly known as St George's Chapel, on behalf of the Order of the Garter, a chivalric order which Edward had founded in or shortly before 1348. In 1351 Pope Clement VI granted the College exemption from all ordinary ecclesiastical jurisdiction, conferring upon it the status of a peculiar, which it remains.

The rights and privileges of the College of St George have been controlled by royal grants, injunctions and mandates, by Acts of Parliament and, until 1529, by papal bulls, a significant number of which have survived in the Chapel Archives.

#### Statutes, charters and royal letters and injunctions

The text of the 1348 letters patent establishing the College has been published in the *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 1348-50, and, although the original foundation statutes of 1352 are no longer extant, transcripts can be found in later records, including a roll dating from about 1400 (SGC XI.D.20), two seventeenth century registers, and the Arundel White Book (SGC IV.B.1). The Arundel White Book, a cartulary created around 1430 by the Dean John Arundel, is a particularly important document as it also contains copies of the principal charters connected with the foundation of the College and of the deeds by which the College held much of its property. Canon Dalton's 1895 transcript and translation of the College statutes of 1352 and royal injunctions from 1378 to 1572 remains the most accessible version of these sources. Proof copies of this unpublished volume are available for consultation in the Archives and Chapter Library.

The St George's Chapel Archives and Chapter Library holds a number of the original charters and royal pardons associated with the College issued from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. As a Royal Free Chapel, St George's Chapel falls directly under the Monarchy and retains exemption from ordinary ecclesiastical jurisdiction. As a result, a series of regulatory injunctions have been issued to the College by the Sovereign and College Visitor (until 2001 the Lord Chancellor and from 2001 the Queen), which supplement the College statutes. Nine sets of these injunctions, dating from 1378 to 1667, survive in the Chapel Archives, supplemented by a series of royal letters which acted as less official conveyances of the royal will. These include two letters from Henry VIII (SGC XI.P.10,23), a mandate from Elizabeth I (SGC X.3.10), two mandates from Charles I (SGC X.4.13-14) and a letter from Charles II (SGC X.4.16). There are also royal replies to official addresses of congratulations proffered by the Dean and Canons on special occasions.

## Acts of Parliament

The College of St George was incorporated by Act of Parliament during the reign of Edward IV. Henry VII's exemplification and inspeximus of this Act, both dating from 1503, are held in the Chapel Archives (SGC X.2.4-5), whilst an enrolled copy of the original Act may be found in the Parliamentary Archives. This and subsequent Acts of Parliament which affected the College may be consulted in the series of published Parliamentary Statutes.

## Papal bulls

St George's Chapel Archives and Chapter Library holds twelve original papal bulls (named after the lead seal (*bullae*) affixed to them), including one of the foundation bulls. The text of a further fifteen Windsor papal bulls for the period 1350-1430 is included in the Arundel White Book (SGC IV.B.1), and a further sixty-six were transcribed in Denton's Black Book (SGC IV.B.2-3). Forty-five of these relate to St Anthony's Hospital in London, which was granted to the College of St George by Edward IV in 1475.

## **Administration**

### Chapter Acts

The government of the College of St George is determined by the Dean and Canons meeting in Chapter. Although the College statutes of 1352 ruled that Chapter meetings were to occur daily after Prime, the frequency with which Chapter met to discuss business has fluctuated during the course of College history. For much of the seventeenth century, no more than thirteen Chapter meetings were held annually. In the eighteenth century, by comparison, as many as forty meetings were held each year.

The Chapter Acts represent a formal record of the business concluded and decisions taken at these official meetings of the Dean and Canons. The earliest Chapter Acts are no longer extant, if indeed they were recorded. Chapter Acts for the year 1430 are contained within a later register which was compiled in the early seventeenth century (SGC IV.B.4). Transcripts of the Chapter Acts for 1523 to 1548 can be found partly in the aforementioned register and also in a book compiled in 1701 by Canon George Evans (SGC IV.B.16-17). The series of original Chapter Act registers held in the Chapel Archives commences in 1596 (SGC VI.B.2-19)

A wide range of information can be found in the Chapter Acts, although they record business completed and decisions taken, rather than the discussions held or speeches made at Chapter meetings. The Chapter Act registers cover a wide range of business: the appointment of College officers; disciplinary proceedings and the hearing of disputes; the care of the fabric; the services and ornaments of the Chapel; residences and emoluments; and the administration of the properties held by College. The Chapter Acts are therefore an essential resource for research into most aspects of the history of St George's Chapel.

A transcription of the surviving Chapter Acts for the years 1430-1672 can be found in volume 13 of the St George's Chapel Historical Monograph series: Shelagh Bond (ed.), *The Chapter Acts of the Dean and Canons of Windsor, 1430, 1523-1672* (Windsor, 1966). An unpublished transcript of the Chapter Acts for 1672 to 1684 by the Reverend M G Smith and selective indexes of later Chapter Acts (to 1986), are available for consultation in the Archives and Chapter Library.

## Chapter Clerk's records

Although the office of Chapter Clerk was not mentioned in the founding statutes of 1352, the position soon became of central importance to the administration of the College. The Chapter Clerk served as scribe and archivist and was responsible for recording and maintaining Chapter Acts, letters missive, and other muniments and papers. The Chapter Clerk continues to act as chief executive officer for Chapter and, at various times, has been engaged in a number of additional capacities such as inspecting properties, assisting the Canon Steward in the receipt of money, holding courts, and representing the College in litigation.

The records directly emanating from the Chapter Clerk, besides the registers of Chapter Acts, consist of three principal groups: lease registers, Chapter correspondence, and memoranda books. A full register of leases survives for the period 1660-1866 (SGC VII.B.1-244, SGC IX.B.1-8), whilst two renewal of fines books dating from 1671 to 1820 (SGC VII.A.1-2) and alienation [of leases] books for 1685-1865 (SGC IX.B.9-12) are also held in the Archives and Chapter Library.

Internal and external correspondence generated by and on behalf of the Dean and Canons was traditionally kept by the Chapter Clerk. Dating mainly from the late eighteenth century, the surviving correspondence includes official letter books covering the period 1827-1930 (SGC XIII.A.3, SGC VI.B.30-42), and bundles of letters from 1791. A number of the nineteenth and early twentieth century Chapter Clerks maintained memoranda books, including notes and copy letters on a wide range of topics, in addition to the main series of Chapter Office files. These illustrate the nature and scope of the Chapter Clerk's work.

## **Finance**

### Canon Treasurer

From 1352 to 1867 the Canon Treasurer was responsible for managing the income of Chapel and making all payments of salaries, expenses and charges. The Treasurer's accounting records contain information concerning a wide range of topics and are, like the Chapter Acts, a useful resource for research into most aspects of the history of St George's Chapel. They record various financial activities, including payments made to members of the College and for Obits, pensions, repairs, arrears and general expenses.

Entries in the Treasurer's accounts which concern payments made to members of College are an important resource for biographical research and are particularly valuable for information regarding the choral establishment and minor officials associated with the Chapel, such as Lay Clerks, Deacons, Choristers, Virgers, Bellringers, Sacrists and Chantry Priests, who tend not to appear in sources elsewhere.

The duties of the Treasurer were reorganized in 1867 following the transfer of the properties held by St George's Chapel to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The whole of the accounting process was transferred to the Steward and the Treasurer's responsibilities were confined to the care of the fabric of College buildings. In 1936 the Chapter decided not to elect a Treasurer and the office disappeared for many years, its responsibilities having been assumed by the Steward.

The early Treasurer's accounts form a series of 114 rolls and books which were produced during the period 1362-1663 (SGC XV.34.1-71; XV.59.1-45). A subsequent series of Treasurer's Books covers 1690 to 1917 (SGC XIII B.3, 9, 15-16, 24-25). The information in these books is

supplemented by a set of bound audit sheets, 1751-1867 (SGC XII.B.5 – 26; VIII.A.1), and by the stipend books recording payments made to College staff, 1840-1889 (SGC XIII B.21-23).

### Canon Steward

The office of Canon Steward was created by the 1352 statutes to receive the College revenues and to administer the College estates. A second Stewardship was created in 1549 to manage the large number of additional properties acquired by the College under the will of Henry VIII (known collectively as the New Dotation). Two Stewards (the Stewards of the Old and New Dotation) were regularly appointed until 1714 when the two posts were amalgamated. Following the transfer of the properties held by St George's Chapel to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1867 the Steward gradually took over those responsibilities previously held by the Canon Treasurer. The office of Treasurer was left vacant in 1936 and for a number of years the Steward became responsible for all aspects of College finances.

The Steward's accounts from 1369 to 1686 comprise a series of 170 account rolls known as *compoti* (SGC XV.42,48-49,53,61). A subsequent series of Steward's books covers 1681-1724 (SGC XII.B.1-4); whilst a set of bound audit sheets documents the Steward's accounts for the period 1751-1902 (SGC XII.B.5-26, SGC VIII.A.1-2).

Charity accounts have been sporadically administered by the Steward, including the St George's School Account and the Fabric, Window, Altar, Library, Apprenticing, Widows', Twickenham School, Windsor National School and the Canal and Road Funds. In addition to the general charity accounts, separate account books are held for the Window Fund, 1797-1873 (SGC XIII.B.7), the Canal and Road Fund, 1810-1866 (SGC XIII.B.7), and the Widows' Fund and Apprenticing Fund, 1715-1873 (SGC XII.A.8).

### Canon Precentor

The Precentor is responsible for the regulation of services in the Chapel and the administration of the finances related to Chapel services. From 1660 until 1867 he was also concerned with the administration of the Chantry or Precentor's Lands, receiving the rents from a number of local tenements.

There are 76 surviving Precentor's rolls, covering the period 1363-1682 (SGC XV.56.1 - 78). Accounts from 1681 onwards were kept in the Precentor's account books (SGC XII.B.1, B.4) and audit books (SGC XII.B.5 – 26; VIII.A.1 - 2). Records of subsidiary accounts include books of offerings, 1759-1827 (SGC XII.A.1, A.7), sacrament money accounts, 1718-1850 (SGC XII A.2; XIX.89e) and a burial and installation fee book, 1866-1944 (SGC XIX.89)

### Audited accounts

Audit books compiled for the period 1751-1902 (SGC VIII.A.2, XII.B.5-7,10,12,14) and the audited Chapter accounts for 1903-1976 (SGC XIII.B.27-31) provide a valuable overview of the College finances.

## **Chapel services and ceremonies**

A series of attendance books survives for 1384-1385, 1468-1479, and 1667-1711 (SGC V.B.1-3), recording the presence, or absence, of individual Canons, Minor Canons, Priest Vicars and Lay

Clerks at Chapel services. Subsequent attendance books, dating from 1762 to 1949, also list the anthems sung each day (SGC V.B.4-14).

Details of baptisms, 1609-1957, marriages, 1627-1956, and burials, 1625-1954, at St George's Chapel before 1957 can be found in volume 10 of the St George's Chapel Historical Monograph series: Edmund H. Fellowes (ed.), *The Baptism, Marriage and Burial Registers of St George's Chapel, Windsor* (Windsor, 1957). The original registers, which commence in 1609, are held in the Archives and Chapter Library (SGC R.1-2, 4-7), with those still in use remaining in the custody of the Chapter Clerk.

The Archives and Chapter Library holds a selection of service sheets and orders of service for a variety of special services and ceremonies held at St George's Chapel since the nineteenth century, including various royal weddings and funerals, supplemented by Chapter Clerk's and Clerk of Work's files which relate to the arrangements for these occasions (e.g. SGC CW.16.1.2-3). A large collection of documents relating to Royal Ceremonies held at St George's Chapel in the first half of the twentieth century was donated to the archive by former Minor Canon and Organist Edmund H. Fellowes (M.69) and includes admissions tickets for various Garter Day services. The personal collection donated to the archives on behalf of the late Lay Clerk Bill Kempton in 1973 includes an assortment of documents relating to ceremonies held in St George's Chapel in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, including orders of service, tickets, souvenirs, correspondence, and photographs (M.41). Garter Day services held at St George's Chapel from the 1948 to the present are also documented in the Archives. Memorabilia include photographs, programmes and orders of services, correspondence, and related notes.

For information regarding sources relating to music played at Chapel services, see **Research guide no. 7 Music.**

## **Probate**

Until the eighteenth century the Dean and Canons exercised probate jurisdiction "in the freehold of the College within the Lower Ward of Windsor Castle." Wills proved in the peculiar court of the Dean and Canons at Windsor were mainly those of members of the College of St George and other residents of Windsor Castle. A will register, containing copies of wills proved and administrations granted from 1662 to 1736, is held in the St George's Chapel Archives (SGC XIII.B.2). An additional peculiar court of the Dean and Canons of Windsor was held in Wantage with probate jurisdiction over a number of parishes in West Berkshire and Wiltshire. Probate records for this court are held by the Wiltshire and Swindon Archives.

## **Dean**

Originally known as Warden, the Dean of Windsor, acting as *primus inter pares* (first among equals), presides over Chapter, supervises the life of the College and acts as its spiritual head. Biographical information regarding individual Deans holding office prior to 1949 can be found in volume 8 of the St George's Chapel Historical Monograph series: S.L. Ollard, *Fasti Wyndesorienses: The Deans and Canons of Windsor* (Windsor, 1949).

Although the Dean is not responsible for the production of any of the main series of official records, the Archives and Chapter Library holds certain classes of documents specifically originating with individual officeholders. Several past Deans have made and kept registers, including Dean Arundel (1419-1454) who produced the 'White Book' (SGC IV.B.1), Dean Hascard

(1684-1709) (SGC IV.B.22), Dean Keppel (1765-1777) (SGC IV.B.26), and Dean Legge (1805-1816) (SGC IV.B.27). Deans have occasionally represented Chapter in visitations of properties and benefices and have generated visitation records in the course of this work: see **Research guide no. 5 Property Records**.

From 1480 to 1846 the Deanery of Wolverhampton was annexed to the Deanery of Windsor. A small number of documents regarding the administration of the Deanery of Wolverhampton survives at Windsor; notably the 'Wolverhampton Book', recording appointments made to the eight prebends of Wolverhampton by Deans of Windsor and Wolverhampton from 1677 to 1765 (SGC IV.B.28) and associated papers relating to appointments and resignations from 1675 to 1703 (SGC XV.58.C.42). These are supplemented by the Chapter Clerk's correspondence concerning the Wolverhampton Deanery, 1835-1895 (SGC XVII.54.1).

In his role as Register to the Order of the Garter, the Dean of Windsor acts as keeper of the Garter registers, but does not hold all the records of the Order: see **Research guide no. 1 The Order of the Garter**.

## Canons

Biographical Information regarding individual Canons prior to 1949 can be found in volume 8 of the St George's Chapel Historical Monograph series: S.L. Ollard, *Fasti Wyndesorienses: The Deans and Canons of Windsor* (Windsor, 1949). An annotated manuscript book known as *Peter Scott's Book* (SGC IV.B.21), compiled by several Canons from the seventeenth century to the twentieth century contains a list of the Deans and Canons of St George's Chapel from 1352 onwards, as well as transcriptions of statutes, injunctions and related historical documents.

For information regarding official documents produced by the offices of Canon Treasurer, Canon Steward and Canon Precentor, see section above: [Finance](#).

Attendance registers record the attendance of Canons at Chapel services for the periods 1384-1386, 1468-1479, 1667-1711, and 1762-1949 (SGC V.B.1-14). In addition, collections of personal papers of Arthur Stafford Crawley, Canon (1934-1948), and his family (SGC.M.126); and of John Neale Dalton, Canon (1885-1931) have been deposited in the Archives

## Priest Vicars and Minor Canons

The 1352 statutes provided for thirteen Priest Vicars who were to reside in the College precincts and attend services daily in the Chapel. The Priest Vicars served at various times as school-masters, musical instructors of the choir, Succentor, and Keeper of the Clock. From around 1500 records attest to the existence of an order of clergy in the college, known as the Minor Canons, who held similar responsibilities to the Priest Vicars but held a higher status. The office of Priest Vicar was removed by the Injunctions of 1547 and the Vicars' responsibilities were fully assumed by the Minor Canons.

Biographical information regarding individual Priest Vicars and Minor Canons to 1949 can be found in volume 5 of the St George's Chapel Historical Monograph series: Edmund H. Fellowes, *The Vicars or Minor Canons of His Majesty's Free Chapel of St George in Windsor Castle* (Windsor, 1945). However, because of the paucity of evidence about the early office holders, this does not represent a full list of Priest Vicars and Minor Canons.

The principal primary sources for the collective history of the Priest Vicars and the Minor Canons are the Chapter Act registers (see section above: Administration: Chapter Acts), attendance registers (SGC V.B.1-14), and the Treasurer's account rolls (see section above: Finance: Canon Treasurer).

The financial information contained in the accounts of the Canon Treasurer can be supplemented by the records kept by the Steward of the Minor Canons. From 1729 onwards, these include Steward's books which contained financial accounts for the Minor Canons' property, in addition to information on salaries, stall money, and installation money (SGC M.134/2/1-5). Other records generated by the Minor Canons include statute and memorabilia books (SGC M.134/1/1-4); registers of Minor Canons, 1904-1965 (SGC M.134/1/4-5); Widows' Fund correspondence and accounts 1891-1908; and property records relating to the Minor Canons' estates: Winterlands Farm, Sussex; Hook Farm, Bromley, Kent; and houses in Overcliff Road, Lewisham, Kent (SGC M.134/3).

In addition, the personal papers of Edmund H. Fellowes, Minor Canon (1900 -1951), have been deposited in the Archives (SGC.M.6; M.69; M.165).

## **Lay Clerks**

In addition to the general Chapel attendance registers (SGC V.B.1-14), registers of Chapter Acts (see section above: Administration: Chapter Acts), and the Treasurer's account rolls (see section above: Finance: Canon Treasurer), there are several series of documents dating from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries which specifically concern the Lay Clerks. These include a number of petitions submitted by the Lay Clerks in the seventeenth century (SGC XI.B.11-18) and a collection of bills in connection with the Choir in the late seventeenth century (SGC XI.B.35-36,38). These are supplemented by records of payments to Lay Clerks accompanied by notes of their attendance and fees which can be found in the main series of Chapter bills (SGC/XIV *passim*). An unpublished chronological list of known Lay Clerks, 1596-1671, and a biographical index of Lay Clerks, 1622-1898, are available in the Archives.

In addition, personal papers of Lay Clerks Fred Naylor (SGC M.155); Joseph Stilliard (SGC M.147); William Bell Kempton (M.41); C.F. Simpkins, (SGC M.7 & M.896) and Joseph Adams (SGC M.147/A/11) have been deposited in the Archives.

## **Further reading**

J.N. Dalton, *The Manuscripts of St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle* (Windsor, 1957)

J.N. Dalton, 'The Statutes and Injunctions of St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle' (Unpublished proof, c. 1895, edited by M F Bond 1962)

A.K.B. Roberts, *St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle 1348-1416. A study in early Collegiate Administration*, (Windsor, 1947)

St George's Chapel, Windsor, 'List of the Church Commissioners' Records, 14th-20th century, in the muniments of St George's Chapel, Windsor' (Unpublished list, 1996. Copy available in the Archives & Chapter Library)

Shelagh Bond (ed.), *The Chapter Acts of the Dean and Canons of Windsor, 1430, 1523-1672* (Windsor, 1966)

*Calendar of Patent Rolls* (HMSO)

S.L. Ollard, *Fasti Wyndesorienses: The Deans and Canons of Windsor* (Windsor, 1949).

Edmund H. Fellowes (ed.), *The Baptism, Marriage and Burial Registers of St George's Chapel, Windsor* (Windsor, 1957)

For further information contact St George's Chapel Archives and Chapter Library, The Vicars' Hall Undercroft, The Cloisters, Windsor Castle, Windsor SL4 1NJ (email: [archives@stgeorges-windsor.org](mailto:archives@stgeorges-windsor.org)) or consult our website ([www.stgeorges-windsor.org/archives.html](http://www.stgeorges-windsor.org/archives.html)).