

A Tribute to Daniel Winwood-- the man who led the team that built St Paul's Chapel in Birmingham in the 1770s.

It was on October 15th 1771 that the "Inhabitants" of the Town of Birmingham held a meeting in the Upper Chamber of the Old Cross to discuss the possibility of preparing a bill to put before parliament for the building of a new church or churches. Some 91 men attended, many more than usually attended Town meetings. The meeting decided to go for two new churches, to set up subscriptions to pay for the preparation of the bill, to allow any group of seven of them to "do the business" and to buy a minute book to keep a record of their proceedings. The latter was an important decision as the book still exists in Birmingham Archives and Heritage. For the early stages it is very helpful, but as time goes on it mainly records the time and which pub for the next meeting.

One of the 91 was Daniel Winwood and he appears straight away as one of the small group of active trustees. So who was he? He is best described as a typical toymaker of Birmingham, sometime engraver, and at this stage a chapemaker. A chape is a small piece of metal that forms the tip of a sword's scabbard or, alternatively, part of a buckle. He may also have been a partner in an Iron Foundry. In 1760 he leased a plot of land in Newhall Street from Charles Colmore, a standard Colmore Lease, on which he had to build a house costing at least £250. This became 32 New Hall Street, looking from Colmore Row towards Great Charles Street, a few houses down on the left. He appears to be a well regarded successful toymaker, and attended St Martin's Church.

The first job of the trustees was to find landowners who would donate enough land for the church buildings and burial grounds, so they formed two small groups for the task. Daniel Winwood was the leader of the small group that had to find out what Charles Colmore was prepared to do. The practice of the time was that in addition to donating the land, the landowner had to make a significant donation of cash because the land surrounding the church would be significantly enhanced in value. Something of the order of £1000 was the norm. Winwood had to talk to Charles Colmore, but he was out of town, so George Holloway, his land agent, had to go to London to see him and he reported back that "He was willing to give Three Acres of Land in the piece call'd the Hill Piece for the purpose of Building the Church upon, and Burying Ground. A Plot of Land Twenty Yards in Front and Fifty Yards in Depth for the purpose of Building a House for the Officiating Clergyman to reside in, Two Hundred Pounds in Money and the Presentation for the Lives of the first Incumbent and his Own, the perpetual Advowson being settled on his Heirs." This, I judge, must have been quite a surprise. On consecration Charles Colmore would become Patron of St Paul's chapel. One of the rights of a Patron was to recommend to the bishop the man he wanted as minister. This is the meaning of "the presentation". What Colmore was doing here was giving the trustees the right to nominate who they wanted as minister during his, Colmore's, life and the life of the minister. He was giving the trustees the right to nominate but only donating £200 cash, nothing like £1000. This was the first crunch point for Daniel Winwood. If the proposal had been rejected the whole scheme with Colmore might have fallen apart. The proposal was accepted.

At the end of May 1772 the bill became law when it received the royal assent. The precise date is uncertain. There were a number of changes to the bill in the Act, the most noticeable surprise being that Charles Colmore was in fact required to donate £1000, plain and simple, no strings attached, no mention of £200, no mention of the Presentation. And so it has been reported ever since. However, as documents in BAH show, Colmore and Winwood had had a private meeting before the Act was passed, a meeting at which they knew that £1000 would be in the Act. At the meeting Colmore had stuck to his £200, but Winwood, as chairman of the trustees was named as being responsible for the trustees finding £800 to pay for the presentation.

In essence Colmore had sold these limited rights of presentation to the trustees for £800, and as the money went into the fund he could claim he had donated £1000. Again, Winwood could have had little choice, but it

must have been quite a burden. The Act stated that anyone who subscribed £30 or more became a trustee. Winwood was going to have to find a lot of trustees, and he would have known that the other church, St Mary's, had just ten. Early on the trustees had decided that subscriptions had to reach £3000 before building a church could start. By mid 1774 St Mary's had been consecrated, but there were no announcements at all about St Paul's. It was around this time that Colmore and Winwood met to discuss future plans. They included putting a cap of £8000 on subscriptions, which was rather optimistic given that there were no signs that they had reached £3000, deciding that the cost of the parsonage would be between £400 and £500, and determining the reimbursement of the minister if the parsonage was not finished in time. It was in the indenture of this meeting that the first private meeting of Colmore and Winwood was revealed. No announcement of intent appeared in the rest of 1774, nor in 1775. In fact in 1775 Winwood was elected a churchwarden at St Martin's, which was not a bad idea if he was to recruit a lot of trustees for St Paul's.

It was as Winwood's spell as a churchwarden came to an end in 1776 that things began to stir, but it must also have been around this time that a particular part of the Act began to play a part, and this was the 7 year Rule. Under this Rule if the church had not been finished for Divine Service and consecration within 7 years of the passing of the Act, then the trustees had to give the land back to Colmore, sell all materials and pay back Colmore what he had donated and anything left over could be paid to subscribers pro rata. It was now four years since the passing of the Act, so three years left. A meeting of the trustees took place on March 14th. They had resolved to begin St Paul's "as soon as a sufficient sum shall be subscribed" and they "intended waiting on the Public to solicit their generous contributions for so necessary an undertaking". It was to be towards the end of 1776 before things start to happen. With Daniel Winwood still chairman of the trustees, Henry Kempson, a land surveyor, became secretary. So far as we know he did not continue with the Minute book, but did keep records in a small book with the title "Memorandums relative to St Paul's Chapel". His first entry was on November 12th 1776 and recorded that the land was to be staked out again, the design requested from a Mr. Eykyn, and the collection of subscriptions started.

The odd thing at this stage is that there was no mention of appointing a builder. Kempson was buying in bricks and many other materials, Eykyn had been appointed surveyor, and it seems as though they were managing the project, and on June 2nd 1777 a foundation stone was laid in the northeast corner by Daniel Winwood. With just two years left there was now a change of plan with the decision to hire builders. A document in BAH dated 1st August 1777 is a bond between John Standbridge and Henry Couchman, builders, and 28 trustees for the payment of £4200 for the building of the chapel. Any deficiency in the payment would be met in equal shares by the trustees. However, it was to be November 26th 1777 before the agreement was agreed and signed. The important part of it, in addition to the price, was that a completion date of March 1st 1779 was given, some three months before the deadline, and that Daniel Winwood had been able to produce 28 trustees. The price certainly looks high. The total cost of building St Mary's had been just over £4000, Kempson had already spent a lot on materials and there is strong evidence that by this time the spire of St Paul's had been removed from the design. That decision in itself must have been a difficult one for Winwood and his trustees to take, and indicates just how short of funds they were. But they had an acceptable completion date.

Around this time and with 28 trustees on board, an indenture was produce bringing together the various commitments, namely the £800, any deficiencies in the cost of building, and the cost of the parsonage. All 28 trustees signed and sealed it.

When the builders started Henry Kempson's notebook dried up, so we know next to nothing about 1778, apart from a meeting of the trustees on December 28th, the main purpose of which was to decide who was to be presented to the bishop as the first minister. They chose the Revd W Toy Young, a young curate at St Martin's, who was probably well known to many of the trustees, whose numbers had now risen to 31. We have no knowledge of what happened in 1779. If the completion date of March 1st was met it is surprising

that a date for consecration could not have been arranged before the end of May, when the seven years was up. The date of the consecration was Wednesday June 2nd 1779. It was the closest run thing imaginable, but Daniel Winwood and his team had got there. It is difficult to imagine anyone enjoying a consecration more than they must have done.

There was one more Indenture, dated July 28th 1779, entitled “Assignment of the Nomination of a Minister to St Paul’s Chapel during the lifetime of Charles Colmore Esq.” Colmore was not a patron until the chapel had been consecrated. It was then necessary to confirm the agreement that the trustees could nominate the incumbent through assigning the rights. Recently a new version of the Episcopal Registers for this period has been made available and the record for W Toy Young shows that his patron was Daniel Winwood. The “Patron Type” is given as “Lay” and the “Patron Role” as “for this turn”. Thus this part of the arrangement had worked and the payment of the £800 looked secure as by now the number of signatories to this Indenture i.e. the trustees had risen to 45, a glorious cross section of the Town, toymakers and merchants, plumbers, a grocer and tobacconist, a surgeon and man-midwife, led by Daniel Winwood.

After consecration the appointments of wardens (churches had churchwardens, chapels-of-ease had wardens) could not take place as the date set by the Church for such meetings had passed. So it was that on March 28th 1780 Daniel Winwood was appointed a warden of St Paul’s for a year by the “subscribing inhabitants present” and John Startin by the minister. It was perhaps in recognition of his dedication to the task of building St Paul’s Chapel that Daniel Winwood also became the High Bailiff of Birmingham for 1780.

For me, Daniel Winwood deserves honouring for sticking to the task as chairman of the trustees for over seven years and in very difficult circumstances. On June 2nd I will raise a glass and drink a toast to Daniel Winwood for building St Paul’s Church—just in time! Anyone join me?