

# The Building of St Paul's Church, Birmingham in the 1770s

By John Sawkill

## Table of Contents

<a href="#">An overview</a> .....	1
<a href="#">The sources of information</a> .....	4
<a href="#">Preparing the Bill to put to Parliament</a> .....	5
<a href="#">The Act of 1772</a> .....	12
<a href="#">The building of St Mary's Chapel</a> .....	14
<a href="#">The assigning of sittings and setting of rents</a> .....	16
<a href="#">The Music Festival</a> .....	19
<a href="#">An estimate of the expenses and receipts in building St Mary's chapel</a> .....	20
<a href="#">The collapse of part the gallery of St Mary's chapel</a> .....	21
<a href="#">The building of St Paul's Chapel</a> .....	22
<a href="#">The action begins</a> .....	24
<a href="#">The Design of the Chapel</a> .....	26
<a href="#">The Location of the Building</a> .....	29
<a href="#">Managing the Business</a> .....	29
<a href="#">Appointing the Minister</a> .....	32
<a href="#">The Music Festival</a> .....	33
<a href="#">The assignment of sittings and determination of rents</a> .....	34
<a href="#">An estimate of the expenses and receipts in building St Paul's chapel</a> .....	34
<a href="#">A comparison of the two schemes</a> .....	36
<a href="#">The Consecration of St Paul's</a> .....	36
<a href="#">The Consecration Sermon</a> .....	38
<a href="#">The Indenture of July 28th 1779</a> .....	39
<a href="#">The Communion Plate</a> .....	44
<a href="#">The Parsonage of St Paul's</a> .....	45
<a href="#">The three Chapels of Ease to St Martin's</a> .....	47

**An overview**

An Act of Parliament was passed in 1772 for the building of two new chapels, and the provision of burial grounds, in the parish of St Martin's church in Birmingham. St Martin's was, and still is, the parish church of Birmingham. Both new chapels were chapels of ease to St Martin's. Although both had areas of the Town assigned to them, they were not, for many years, parishes in their own right. The first to be built, St Mary's, was consecrated in 1774, and the second, St Paul's, in 1779. This article is a detailed account that goes from the preparation of the bill to put before parliament through to the consecration of the chapels. St Mary's was demolished in 1925 to make room for an expansion of the General Hospital, St Paul's still stands. Although the main aim has been the story of the building of St Paul's, the nature of the sources has been such that the building of St Mary's has been included.

The growth in the population of Birmingham in the 18<sup>th</sup> century has been well recorded, and is not discussed in detail here, but some idea of the magnitude of the growth is revealed in the figures showing that the population of the Town was 31000 in 1770 and had reached 50000 by 1780. Such rapid growth brings with it the problems of housing supply and infrastructure, and, naturally enough, the Church of England was caught up in these problems. St Martin's was from time to time to face two major problems; overcrowding of the church on the one hand and the provision of suitable burial space on the other. For five hundred years the only Christian burial ground in Birmingham had been less than half an acre at St Martin's. William Hutton <sup>1</sup> describes how through centuries of interment in the same churchyard "*A considerable hill had arisen*" and he could safely remark that "*the dead are raised up*". Furthermore, he made the gruesome observation that "*instead of the church burying the dead, the dead would, in time, have buried the church*". The building of St Philip's helped alleviate the problems, indeed a directory of 1774 <sup>2</sup> comments that "*The churches are those of St Martin and St Philip, the latter of which has a churchyard that for beauty and extent is thought to surpass every other in this kingdom*". St Philip's was built under an Act of 1708 <sup>3</sup> which provided not just for a church, but for a parish to be taken out of St Martin's parish and for a rectory. Building was started in 1711 and the church was consecrated in 1715, before it was completed. There were difficulties in raising funds and the church was not completed until 1725. The site was given by the widow of Roger Philips, to whose name the dedication alludes, and the King himself, George I, gave £600 in 1725 to help finish the job.

The problems of space, for worship and for burial continued. Seats in St Martin's were in great demand in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. A solution was sought in establishing chapels of ease to the parish church. In rural areas the purpose of a chapel of ease was said to be for the ease and comfort of those living some distance from the parish church. For Birmingham distance was not the

problem, it was the increasing number of potential worshippers, and burial space. With the Town expanding to the east a new place of worship was built in 1749 at the eastern edge. This was St Bartholomew's, a chapel of ease to St Martin's. The site was given by John Jennens, a Birmingham ironmaster, whose wife gave £1000 to the building of the chapel, according to Hutton "*at the solicitation of Mrs Weaman*", the rest being raised by subscription. The rector of St Martin's had the right of presentation of a potential incumbent to the bishop. St Bartholomew's became the focal point of the Jennen's estate; indeed a Jennens Road exists today, as does Bartholomew Row and Bartholomew Street in the old Masshouse area, close to the site of the original chapel. It had not been possible to use the name St John for the new chapel as this had already been assigned to the chapel in Deritend.

It was around this time, according to McKenna <sup>4</sup> that other prominent local landowning families, some of whom had moved away from Birmingham, made their land available for building use. One of the first to do this was the Colmore family. The Colmores originated at Tournai in France, and acquired part of their New Hall Estate and other property in Birmingham as land speculation on the dissolution of the Priory or Hospital of St Thomas in 1536. Joseph Hill's Conjectural Plan of Birmingham for 1553 <sup>5</sup> shows land owned by one William Colmore. According to Chinn <sup>6</sup> the wealth of the Colmore family was founded on the buying and selling of fabrics in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In the early 1700s Ann Colmore had taken over the estate and in 1747 she had a private Act passed under which the Colmore estate could grant building leases of 120 years. The estate, of some 100 acres to the north of the Town, became available for development. By 1750 most of Colmore Row and Ann Street had been developed. Charles Colmore succeeded to the estates while his mother Ann was still alive. To the northeast of the town there was the Weaman estate. This estate had been under development for many years, and there was already a Weaman Street on Westley's map of 1731 <sup>7</sup>. There is a manuscript in the City Archives <sup>8</sup>, dated 1745, about land adjoining Weaman Street that meets "*with the approbation of Thomas Weaman of Birmingham, gent, and Dorothy, his wife*".

It was to be 1771 before pressure for new places of worship emerged again. By this time the Colmore development had reached Lionel Street, but development of the Weaman estate had slowed down. Both estates were ripe for development. St Mary's chapel was built on land given mainly by Mary Weaman, and St Paul's chapel was built on land given by Charles Colmore. The century had started with just the parish church of St Martin in St Martin's parish. It finished with the parish church of St Martin, three chapels of ease and the parish church of St Philip. Each of these places of worship provided only a small number of free seats, most of which were reserved at the main

services for Sunday School children. An exception to this pattern was to occur with the building of Christchurch in 1805 at the junction of Colmore Row and New Street, where the whole of the ground floor was given over to free seats, indeed the church became known as the Free Church.

Thomas Hanson's Map of 1778 <sup>9</sup>, illustrates well the positioning of the chapels, with their churchyards for burials. There is space for further expansion east and south east for St Bartholomew's, and space for St Mary's to the northeast as it became the focal point for the Weaman estate, which later became the Gun Quarter. The development of the Colmore land to Lionel Street is evident, and there are green fields around St. Paul's, but not quite as green as this map suggests. James Watt had moved to Regent's Place on Harper's Hill in 1777, quite close to the site of the new chapel.

### **The sources of information**

There are three "books" that are the source of most of the information in this account. They are:-

The Town Book of St Martin's and St Philip's <sup>10</sup>

The Minute Book 1771 <sup>11</sup>

The memorandum notebook of Henry Kempson

As the Victoria County History points out a parish was like a separate local government authority with responsibilities for the relief of the poor and for the maintenance of the roads. Furthermore the churchwardens were able charge a levy on the inhabitants for the cost of repairs of the church. As they were very much concerns of the Town these Vestry meetings of St Martin's were written up as the Town Book of St Martin's. By law there was an Annual Vestry Meeting on Easter Tuesday at which two churchwardens were to be elected, one churchwarden was nominated by the incumbent and the other by the inhabitants of the parish, in this case therefore by the inhabitants of the Town. (To this day anyone living in a parish can attend the equivalent of the Annual Vestry Meeting so long as they are on the register of local government electors). A typical record of an Annual Vestry Meeting at St Martin's would include the election of the churchwardens and sidesmen, the appointments of surveyors of the highways, the submission of repair costs and the determination of the levy, then page after page of names and their levy. St Philip's comes into it because its repair costs would be included and possibly St Bartholomew's. One of the values of the book to this account is in seeing the names of the people from St Martin's who were running affairs and who would eventually be the trustees for the chapels. The Victoria County History points out that it was in Birmingham that a distinction was made between Vestry meetings and Town meetings, when they were essentially the same. Meetings could be at the church, but if capital expenditure was involved it was

a Town meeting and held in the chamber over the Old Cross, when usually about 25 people attended.

A proposal for new chapels certainly involved the inhabitants of the Town and capital expenditure and so the first meeting to discuss the proposal was held at the chamber. Perhaps it was regarded as more than a vestry meeting, as it was decided to keep a special book, the Minute Book 1771. The frontispiece declares:-

*“Proceedings and Resolutions of the Inhabitants of the Town of Birmingham for Building one or two Churches in the said Town”*. It records the meetings up to the granting of the Act, and all of the meetings are held at the chamber. Then it changes to the meetings of the trustees for building St Mary’s, and the meetings are no longer at the chamber but at various hostelrys. Strictly, it is no longer a Vestry meeting or a Town meeting but purely a trustees meeting, but the same book is used. What is recorded are, in the main, the resolutions passed, rather than minutes of discussions. There are many meetings without resolutions. The minutes end with the final meeting of the trustees of St Mary’s. There is no mention at all of St Paul’s.

Fortunately, Henry Kempson steps into the breach. As secretary to the trustees of St Paul’s he kept a notebook with a great deal of detailed information in it. It dried up about a year before the consecration, but it is a valuable source of information.

Other sources include the well known histories of Hutton <sup>1</sup>, Dent <sup>13</sup>, Langford<sup>14</sup> and Gill <sup>15</sup>, and Victoria County History for Birmingham online. Browsing Birmingham archives online has led to some surprising finds.

It is tempting to try to estimate what, say, £1 in the 1770s is worth today, but different inflation indices can give a very wide range of answers. Instead, it may be worth quoting a range of incomes. The National Archives state that in the 1770s a labourer’s wage would be about 7 shillings/week and a skilled craftsman some £3/week, with an average of 17-20 shillings/week. Quickenden <sup>16</sup> quotes from a survey of England and Wales for 1760 which estimates that the average inn-keeper earned £100/annum, the average merchant £200, the wealthiest tradesman £400 and the wealthiest merchant £600/annum. At the top end of the scale the 150 wealthiest families had annual incomes in the range £6000 to £20000. This may help in setting the scene for appreciating the value of donations of say, £10 on the one hand, and of £1000 on the other.

## **Preparing the Bill to put to Parliament**

The first the public at large knew about new chapels was an announcement in Aris's Gazette, the principal newspaper of the day, on October 14<sup>th</sup> 1771, which read:-

*"The Inhabitants of the Town are desired to meet at the Chamber over the Old Cross, Tomorrow, at Ten o'clock in the Forenoon, at the Tolling of a bell, to consider of an Application to Parliament for Building a Church".*

The Old Cross, built in 1702, was the earliest building in the Town used for public meetings that is known. The upper room, or chamber, added in 1703, was designed as a meeting place for the Birmingham manorial courts. It stood in the High Street near the Bull Ring and was demolished in 1784. The Minute Book reveals that 91 people attended the meeting in the Old Cross Chamber with Thomas Faulconbridge in the Chair. (Faulconbridge, a merchant in Great Charles Street, was a churchwarden at St Martin's in 1768 and was one of 50 commissioners appointed under the Improvement Act of 1769<sup>17</sup> to implement the Act's recommendations. He was to chair their meetings more than anyone else for many years. Almost half of the so called Street Commissioners, in fact 22 of them, attended this first meeting). Nine resolutions were passed, the first being *"That application be made to Parliament in the existing sessions for an Act to build one or two churches and that a subscription be immediately opened to raise money for that purpose"*. There followed a resolution confirming the subscription. The 91 names of those attending is given and a resolution is passed that they *"be appointed a committee and any seven of them be a sufficient number to do business"*. We learn that Thomas Harold, Thomas Faulconbridge, Daniel Winwood, Thomas Salt (a churchwarden at St Martin's at the time) and Richard Conquest are to wait on the bishop for *"his approbation"* and on Mr Tennant, the patron of St Martin's *"for his approval"*. Thomas Meredith, an Attorney at Law in Temple Street, is appointed solicitor for the Act, the time, date and place of the next meeting is determined and, fortunately for us, it is resolved that *"a minute book... be kept"*. We know, from later documents, that Daniel Winwood was a toymaker and Richard Conquest and Thomas Salt were merchants. One well known figure at the meeting was Dr Ash, M.D. of Temple Row, the founder of the General Hospital. According to Langford a Church Extension Society was formed at the meeting but there is no mention of that in the minutes. Some twelve people at the meeting, including Daniel Winwood and Richard Conquest, were later to become trustees of St Paul's chapel.

At the next meeting at the Chamber a week later the committee reported that they had met Mr Tennant, the patron of St Martin's, to solicit his concurrence with the plans but found that *"he claims and expects the perpetual advowson on any church or churches built in the parish of St Martin"*. A good description of the nature of an advowson has been given by Grant<sup>18</sup>, and included the following:-

The advowson was a technical term in the Church of England to cover the twin rights of (i) nominating and presenting a potential minister to the bishop for his approval and (ii) of being entitled to the income of the parish.

The owner of the advowson was also the patron of the church.

An advowson was an asset that could be traded on an open market. It could be purchased by a man or a woman, a layman or a priest, or by a collegiate body such as a Dean and Chapter of a cathedral.

The owner could be a Christian or a non-Christian and did not have to live in the area.

Where a clergyman owned an advowson he was his own patron and he could ask the bishop to induct him.

The advowson owner did not own the freehold of any of the parish's assets but was entitled to the income from those assets, and was responsible for the smooth running of the parish, including the upkeep of the fabric of the minister's house and of the chancel of the church.

The owner could also sell the right of presentation.

There was much abuse of the advowson system in the 18th century when some people bought a number of advowsons, took the income from their lands, arranged for the Holy Sacrament the requisite three times a year, but otherwise neglected the parishes. Clearly, Mr Tennant thought that being patron of St Martin's entitled him to the patronage of any chapels of ease in the parish. The response of the committee to Mr Tennant's claim was to pass a resolution that the Bill should contain a clause allowing them to sell the advowsons and to apply the money to the building of the chapels. They were not going to give the advowsons away, but were prepared to sell them. They also resolved that the committee should divide into six "*companies*" for different parts of the town to raise money, that Thomas Salt be Treasurer and that Mr Meredith should try to get hold of some similar Acts for building new churches or chapels, so that they could see what they needed to do.

The committee acted swiftly to solicit help for their petition. Messrs Meredith and Winwood were to apply to Lord Dartmouth for his advice and opinion and to request his assistance in Parliament, if necessary. William Legge, the Earl of Dartmouth, whose estate was at Sandwell, just five miles from Birmingham, was at that time a member of the Privy Council and was to be Secretary of State for the Colonies and President of the Board of Trade from 1772-75. In addition they were hoping that Lord Beauchamp and other noblemen and gentlemen would accompany them on a visit to the bishop. Mr Meredith meanwhile was to write to George White, Clerk at the House of Commons, asking his opinion on "*the business*". The minutes for December 3<sup>rd</sup> show that £251 had so far been collected for the expenses of the Bill and that Daniel Winwood and others were to visit a Mrs Weaman "*to know her*

*sentiment respecting an offer which has been reported at this meeting in favour of the scheme*". Two weeks later there is real progress when it is reported that *"Miss Weaman offers £1200 and 2½ acres in consideration of which she expects to be invested with the Perpetual Advowson"*. (The manuscript referred to earlier <sup>8</sup> shows a Dorothy Weaman as wife of Thomas in 1745. Another manuscript in the City Archives, this time dated 1775 <sup>19</sup>, relates to a lease by Dorothy Weaman of Sutton Coldfield, widow, and Mary Weaman, spinster. If this is the same Dorothy, then Dorothy and Mary cannot be sisters, but could be sisters-in-law. They could also be mother and daughter). It was Mary making the offer and she would become patron of the church built on land both she, and Dorothy, donated. It was to be named St Mary's chapel. The offer seems to meet the objectives of the committee and flies in the face of William Tennant's claim. The committee still needed land, and money, for the second chapel, and a resolution was passed that they would *"Write to people with land adjoining the Town to tell them of the Scheme and Miss Weaman's offer"*.

Lobbying continued and at the first meeting in the New Year, on January 7<sup>th</sup> 1772, Mr Faulconbridge is in the chair and he reports the he had *"been in London and had taken an opportunity of consulting the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of the Diocese and Lord Beauchamp and told them of the opposition threatened by Mr Tennant. All wished success and promised to support. The Archbishop wanted to know if the fees of St Martin would be diminished, told not so- said he saw no pretence for an opposition on the part of Mr Tennant. The Bishop thought the necessity of the Case would preponderate over any opposition Mr T could make"*. This had to be very good news for the Committee, reinforced when it was reported that Mr White had written from the House of Commons giving encouragement, and that the arrangement with Miss Weaman had been revised and accepted. But they were not letting up as an instruction was given to *"tell Miss Weaman and elicit her contribution to obtaining the act"*, i.e. a contribution to the cost of getting the Act itself.

On February 11<sup>th</sup> it was decided to forward the petition to Mr Skipwith, the Member for *"this county"* with a request that it be presented to the House of Commons, which it was on February 18<sup>th</sup> 1772. This was reported to the trustees meeting on February 25<sup>th</sup>, with Daniel Winwood in the Chair, as was the fact that the Lenches Trust had given 1/3rd of an acre to help make the burial ground (for St Mary's) *"more commodious"*. Furthermore they had enquired of Charles Colmore what he might give and Mr Holloway (who was probably the equivalent of estate manager or land agent for Colmore in Birmingham) reported that he had been in London (to see Colmore) and the answer was *"3 acres in the Hill Piece, 20 yds wide and 50 yards deep for a house, £200 in money and the Presentation for the lives of the first incumbent and his own, and the Perpetual Advowson for his heirs"*. As against the £1200 being donated by Mary Weaman, Charles Colmore was

offering to the committee £200 and the right of presentation to the bishop of an incumbent they would select. This right would last for Colmore's lifetime, during which he would retain the advowson, i.e. remain patron, which he would succeed to after the consecration. (The arrangement guaranteed a perpetual curacy for the first incumbent.) Thus both Mary Weaman and Charles Colmore would be retaining the perpetual advowson. Although there was just £200 in money, the committee resolved to accept Colmore's offer for the second chapel. They set up separate subscription books immediately for the Weaman and Colmore chapels, and ruled that when the collection of the subscriptions started it was to be in instalments of 25%. Within days it was decided that four of the committee would determine the boundaries for each chapel of ease. Mr Winwood was to join Mr Saul and Mr Kempson and another to stake out the land for both. This is the first reported involvement of Mr Kempson, the land surveyor. They did not yet have the Act, as was clear in the minutes of March 4th when it was resolved that "*£3000 be subscribed to each church before the buildings are begun, if the act be obtained*" and that "*Faulconbridge, Winwood and Meredith were to attend Parliament on the business*".

Of particular interest is the detail of what Colmore proposed giving. He offered £200 in money, compared with £1200 by Mary Weaman, but he was giving the right of presentation to the committee for his lifetime and that of the first incumbent, and he was to remain patron with his heirs succeeding him. Presumably it was thought that this arrangement would equate to the Weaman offer. As explained, it was not illegal to dispose of the right of presentation. The first indication of the magnitude of the sums of money to be raised for building a chapel comes in the figure of £3000 for the amount to be subscribed before building started.

It was time for the committee to lay its plans before the inhabitants, and this happened on March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1772 when a statement appeared in Aris's Gazette. It began with the reasons for the plan:-

*"The great Want of Public Places of Divine worship in this Town, having induced Numbers of the Inhabitants to take into Consideration the Expediency of building one or more additional Churches, several public meetings have been held for that Purpose; when it has been unanimously resolved that at least two additional Churches were wanted for the Accommodation of the Inhabitants, the present not being capable of containing One Tenth Part of those professing the Doctrine of the Church of England: To take off so great a Reproach from Civil Society, and remove even the Appearance of Contempt for Holy Religion it was determined, if possible, to obtain so pious and valuable an acquisition, and to that End*

*Application was made to the Several Proprietors of Land contiguous to the Town requesting Land for so good a Purpose”.*

It was explained that Miss Weaman and Charles Colmore had not only agreed to give the necessary land, but had subscribed liberally towards the cost, although no figures were given. It was intended to build one chapel near to Catherine Street (now Whittall Street) on the Weaman Estate, and the other near New Hall, which was the former home of the Colmore family. Money had to be raised to prepare and submit the application to Parliament, and they had a plan ready to put in the application. The plan proposed, inter alia,

*“ That separate Subscriptions be opened to raise Money for building the Churches, with Houses for the Residence of the officiating Clergymen; such Subscriptions to be paid by Four equal instalments, giving six Months’ public Notice of the Days of Payment*

*That the Gentlemen in the Neighbourhood and every Subscriber of Twenty Pounds be appointed Trustees for the Conduct and Direction of the Business.*

*That the Salary to each Officiating Clergyman be fixed by Parliament, at not more than Two Hundred Pounds, nor less than One Hundred and Fifty Pounds, per Annum, to arise from the Kneelings.*

*That the rents of the Kneelings between the two extremes be fixed by the Trustees.*

*That no Diminution be made in the Fees of the Incumbents of St Martin’s; on the contrary, that they receive their full fees for all Offices performed at the new Intended Churches.*

*That certain Districts be marked out for the Officiating Clergymen, to have the cure of Souls, visit the Sick, and do the necessary Duties; but that such Districts be not deemed separate Parishes, or be subject to separate Assessments, but the Buildings to be kept in Repair by the General Levy of the Town*

*That two Wardens be appointed to each of the Churches, who shall take a proportionable part of the Town in collecting the Levy.*

*That the Pews and Kneelings be disposed of to the Subscribers by Ballot, according to their respective Subscriptions, with such other Clauses and Regulations as are usual, or as Parliament may think proper to adopt.*

*That separate Deeds of Subscription will be handed about, so that every individual will make which Church he chooses the object, no Persuasions being intended to be used; but they hope, and have no Doubt, that the Necessity of the Case will plead for itself, and that every Individual will cheerfully contribute his Quota, influenced only by a Desire to promote so pious and necessary a Work”.*

The proposed ground rules had been set down; there would be separate subscriptions for the two chapels, and the rent from sittings, called kneelingings here, not sales of the freehold, would provide the salary of the incumbent,

with a minimum and maximum set by Parliament. The method of allocating kneelings would be by ballot of the subscribers, according to how much they subscribed. Presumably those who gave most would get more kneelings, probably near the front. Districts would be established for each church and the buildings would be kept in repair by a General Levy in the appropriate District of the town and would be collected by the churchwardens, an enviable arrangement! St Martin's would get the full fees for any office performed in the church, or more accurately, the rector of St Martin's would get the fees, to compensate for any loss of income to him. The committee also seem at pains to point out that they had acted fairly and even-handedly in their approaches to landowners.

The system for raising the money was that subscription books would be placed in various places in the Town, and if you were interested in donating you wrote your name in it with the amount you were proposing to give. It was said to be a binding obligation. In time a notice would appear in the newspaper and elsewhere informing people that the first call was being made, and 25% of the amount to be subscribed was then due in six months time. Eventually a second call would be made with another six months notice and so on, an arrangement that could be attractive today.

The bill had been presented to the House of Commons by Mr Skipwith on February 18<sup>th</sup> 1772 and according to Langford <sup>14</sup>, Aris's Gazette reported on March 30<sup>th</sup> that "*Last Tuesday a Bill was ordered to be brought into Parliament for one or more Churches in this Town*". On May 18<sup>th</sup> the Gazette was able to state that "*On Friday last the Committee of the House of Commons went through the Bill for the Building of two Churches in the Town. Mr Tenant has given up opposition upon Consideration of the Town's not opposing a Bill which he intends petitioning Parliament for next sessions, in order to make St Bartholomew's Chapel a Parish Church*".

Mr Tennant had lost his claim for the patronage of the new chapels, but he still intended petitioning for an act to make to make St Bartholomew's a parish church. According to Langford, the Gazette reported that "*On May 22<sup>nd</sup> the bill was read a second time in the House of Lords, through which it passed in the same month and received the royal assent*". To date, the best estimate of the date of the Act is from this statement, viz., between May 22<sup>nd</sup> and May 31<sup>st</sup>. It was on October 15<sup>th</sup> 1771 that the first public meeting had been held, and it was on March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1772 that the statement to the public had been made and subscriptions asked for to send a bill to Parliament. Just under three months later the Act <sup>20</sup> had been passed, some seven months from the meeting at the Old Cross. The last minuted meeting of the committee was on March 13<sup>th</sup>, still at the Chamber of the Old Cross. They

passed a resolution “*That as soon as the Bill is settled by Counsel and printed a printed copy be obtained and sent down for the approbation of the Gentlemen in the Town*”. They also agreed to adjourn, without a date being set, to the Swan Inn, but this time certain of them would be meeting as trustees of the Act.

## **The Act of 1772**

The Act reveals that Dorothy and Mary Weaman had to combine not only with the Lench Estate but with sixteen other small landowners to make a piece of land big enough for St Mary’s chapel, burial ground and roads. The Colmore chapel was named as St Paul’s chapel with Charles Colmore providing three acres and a plot 12 yards wide, rather than the 20 yards of the earlier statement, by 50 yards deep for the residence of the minister and other land for roads. In addition, Mary Weaman would subscribe £1200 and Charles Colmore £1000, (there is no mention at all of £200) and all on condition that “*they and their heirs for ever shall be invested with the right of nomination and presentation of the respective ministers*” (with no mention of Colmore donating the right of presentation). All of this had the consent of Brownlow, the Lord Bishop of the Diocese, William Tennant Esq., the patron of the parish church of St Martin, and William Chase, the rector of St Martin’s. The Committee ought to have been pleased to see the consent of Mr Tennant. The three acres of Colmore land was from “*the said land called Harpur’s Hills*”, subsequently known as Harper’s Hill and mentioned on maps until quite recently. The Act also laid down that there should be “*a road way or street 20 yards wide to the new laid out street, Great Charles Street, in a straight line*”. This was at first known as Church Street, being an extension of the Church Street off Colmore Row. A plan of Birmingham dated 1825<sup>21</sup> shows that it had become Ludgate Hill.

There is no talk of kneelings in the Act, or of sittings, but of pews. The pews were vested in the minister and could be rented by any person who was an inhabitant of Birmingham. The pews were to be numbered and the renters were to hold the pews “*without molestation*” and they were forbidden to re-let them for larger sums. The rent per pew per annum was to be settled at a general meeting of the trustees to be held for that purpose within one month after the consecration. Thereafter it could be altered every three years. The total rent from all the pews was to provide income for the minister and was to be a maximum of £200 per annum and a minimum of £165 (This had been raised from £150). Out of the rental income the minister was to pay the officiating Clerk £15 per annum. If the £200 was exceeded the Bishop could fine the minister £5. Those contributing most had priority in the allocation of pews, the allocations being determined by ballot. Thereafter their rights could be passed on to their heirs and assigns. If the rent was unpaid for two months

the rights were lost and the holder could be sued. Similarly, anyone who did not pay the amount they had subscribed, i.e. had promised, could be fined.

A number of trustees were named in the Act. The Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry was the principal trustee, the Town being part of this diocese at the time. There are then the Earls, headed by the Earl of Dartmouth, previously referred to, two Lords, seven Knights, some of them local landowners, including Sir Charles Holte, Sir Thomas Gooch and Sir William Bagot and a number of gentlemen. Perhaps the presence of the nobility as trustees was required by the Church and by the necessity of getting the Bill through the House of Lords, for there is no evidence that they played any further part in the building of the chapels. In addition, *“all and every other person and persons who shall at any time hereafter, subscribe or contribute the sum of £30 or upwards towards building and furnishing the said new intended chapels, or either of them”* would qualify as a trustee. One change from the Bill is that the qualification of having to subscribe £20 was now raised to £30, and a new clause stated that if the number of trustees fell below 20 they could elect anyone who had subscribed at least £10.

The vaults were vested in the trustees and any nine of them could *“grant sell or dispose of such vaults, as well before as after consecration to such persons who shall be willing to purchase the same for burial places”*. Fees for burials in the vaults or chapel yard were double the fees usually paid for burial at the church of St Martin’s, out of which the minister had to pay the rector of St Martin’s his accustomed fees. Whatever sums of money were raised by the trustees in selling vaults had to be put to the *“ornamenting and beautifying”* of the chapels. The trustees had also to build the two parsonages for the ministers. Some details of services were also determined in the Act, probably standard in the Canons of the Church of England at the time. There was to be a sermon in the morning and evening every Sunday and the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper at Christmas, Easter, Whitsunday, and the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in the month, after Divine Service in the morning. The minister had to read prayers on all holy days and every Wednesday and Friday. Every Easter Tuesday the Ministers had to meet with the inhabitants to elect four Church Wardens, (two for each chapel), two proposed by the Ministers and two by the inhabitants. The Churchwardens could not be Quakers.

There is also in the Act a Seven Year rule. It is stipulated that *“if the Chapel shall not be erected or shall be begun to be erected but not sufficiently finished for Divine Service and consecration within the space of seven years from the time of passing this act”* then the trustees, or any nine of them, had to convey back the land to the person entitled to it, sell all materials and pay

back Mary Weaman and Charles Colmore or their heirs what they had donated and anything left over could be paid to subscribers pro rata.

The Act is often described in the literature as a private Act brought by Mary Weaman and Charles Colmore. In fact it is a private Act brought, and paid for, by the people of Birmingham.

The trustees were instructed, in the Act, to meet at the Swan Inn on or before June 30<sup>th</sup> 1772.

### ***The building of St Mary's Chapel***

The committee, or rather those of them who had subscribed a minimum of £30, either in total for the two chapels, or for one of them, met on June 30<sup>th</sup> 1772 at the Swan Inn, now as trustees. Their first action was to have the Act read to them. Although everything had gone in their favour there was still some concern about Mr Tennant. There was the possibility that he would apply to Parliament for an Act to make St Bartholomew a distinct parish, rather than the district of a chapel of ease. If it was successful it might affect the district of St Mary's, and they were seeking some way of countering it. In addition the rector of St Phillip's had been mentioned as someone whose fees may be affected, so there was work to do with the bishop and the two rectors to resolve this issue. Meanwhile Mr Meredith was to write, probably as a matter of courtesy, to the various noblemen and gentlemen who had been appointed trustees requesting the honour of their attendance. Taylor and Lloyds, the first bank in Birmingham, was appointed treasurer to the trustees.

At this stage there are changes in the names of the prominent characters. Daniel Winwood had chaired a number of committee meetings but John Turner, ( a street commissioner, who was also active at St Martin's) generally takes the chair for this period. A John Turner has been identified as a partner with Samuel Hammond and John Dickinson in a firm of buttonmakers in Birmingham in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, which eventually became Hammond Turner. (Samuel Hammond, describing himself as a buttonmaker, became a trustee for the building of St Paul's) John Cottrell, (who had served as a highways supervisor) a plater, became the collector of the subscriptions. By the end of July the trustees decided to move on the building of St Mary's chapel, so it must be assumed that they had subscriptions of at least £3000 for that chapel so far. As usual, the public were informed through the Gazette. On August 2<sup>nd</sup> there appeared:-

*“All and every person and persons who hath or have subscribed any Sum or Sums of Money towards erecting, finishing, and completing one of the said Chapels, .....upon the land of Mary Weaman, and in the said Act*

*distinguished by the name of the Chapel of St Mary, are required to pay into the Hands of Mr John Cottrell, of Walmer Lane, in Birmingham aforesaid, the Collector appointed by the said Trustees, on or before the second day of February next, after the rate of 25l. Per cent. in respect of all and every their respective Subscriptions. By order of the said Trustees      John Meredith, Clerk.*

*N.B.As Great numbers of Persons who have not yet subscribed to this laudable Undertaking, promised they would subscribe as soon as the Act was obtained; the Trustees again take the Liberty to request their Assistance, to which End subscription Books will be left open at S. Aris's, Printer, and Mr Meredith's, Attorney, in Birmingham aforesaid; and it is hoped that the Subscriptions will be so liberal as to enable the Trustees to set about and accomplish both the said chapels with Expedition."*

As the bricks and stone required must have constituted the biggest item of cost they immediately set about trying to reduce it, first by seeing if there was clay on the Weaman land and evidently there was not, and second, by applying to the Committee of the Navigation to bring in the stone, by canal, Toll free. At the fifth meeting of the trustees on November 4<sup>th</sup> they agreed a short specification for the chapel. It was to be "*vaulted round the inside...and to be an octagon...to be gallery'd, covered with slate, and a tower, brick, stone covering, 1000 sittings, 22ins each. Wainscoated with oak, whole estimated at between £3000 and £4000*". There was a strong belief at that time that the octagon shape was better for preaching. A subsequent advertisement invited architects and builders to submit their plans, elevations and estimates in a sealed envelope to John Cottrell. Their requirements for the design had now softened to the point that an octagon, or any other form, would be considered, and the breadth of the seats was now 35 inches, the middle aisle 8 feet wide and the outside aisles 4 feet wide, and there was no mention of the target price.

In February 1773 the trustees met to discuss an octagon plan submitted by Joseph Pickford of Derby, generally regarded as one of Derbyshire's finest architects. He was a friend of John Whitehurst of Derby, a member of the Lunar Society, through whom he became acquainted with a number of midland intellectuals. It is thought that it was through them that he met some of his most important clients. The trustees agreed with Pickford's octagonal design and with his payment plan which was as follows:- "*Mr Joseph Pickford purposes to execute the chapel agreeable to the plan and estimates delivered in and receiving his money in the times and manner as under mentioned viz., £1000 in September next, £1000 in February 1774, £866-16-6 in May'74, and £800 when the work is completed and £400 left in the hands of the trustees for 6 months after the business is done*".

Including the contingency of £400, the total at £4066 was just over the top of the range of £3000-£4000 set by the trustees. If they had reached the £3000 necessary before they could start the build, then this total must have been seen as achievable. The trustees put one condition on Pickford, that the trustees would only bind themselves to pay their respective proportions of the money, and not each of them to bind themselves to the total. In effect this would mean that if any trustee defaulted on his share, the remaining trustees would not pick it up. Pickford agreed and the deal was done. The trustees had each subscribed at least £30 to become a trustee, and together would be responsible for the difference between the total amount raised and the total cost, including the cost of the house for the minister, if it were greater.

Henry Kempson had been involved in staking out the churchyard and his calculations were used for the levelling of the ground in the churchyard. On one occasion Pickford's men had been used to raise the ground around the foundation, and in a nice touch the trustees gave the men 5 guineas "*as a treat*". In another resolution the trustees had agreed "*That a closet be made in the side of the vestry for depositing anything necessary*".

On April 1<sup>st</sup> 1773 Dorothy Weaman, a contributor of some land, had laid the first brick. In September the trustees decided to have the ceiling "*ornamented*" as designed by Pickford, at a further cost of £150. The price of vaults was set at 12 guineas each and later reduced to £10 and every "*corps*" buried in a vault incurred an additional charge of 2 guineas, over and above the normal fees. By May 1774 the raising of money had become a concern and so Friday May 6<sup>th</sup> was set as the day when "*four companies*" were to canvas the Town for new subscriptions. In July the trustees decided that the time was right for consecration, so John Cottrell was to solicit the Revd Parsons, the then rector of St Martin's, to write to the bishop inviting him to consecrate the chapel on August 24<sup>th</sup>, St Bartholomew's day. Money must have been tight as they found it necessary to write to Mary Weaman in a fairly severe tone to remind her that the trustees expected her to pay £300 (probably the last call of 25%) as it became due.

### ***The assigning of sittings and setting of rents***

As the day of consecration approached the minds of the trustees will have been focussed on two important issues, one being the method of assigning sittings and the other being the determination of the rent per sitting. It is worth going into this in some detail as no details exist for St Paul's chapel and it is highly likely that a similar approach was used there. For the sittings the trustees were working to a plan designed by Henry Kempson and they made it

quite clear that anyone who had not paid the full amount of their subscription would be excluded from ballots for the sittings. It transpired that a Mrs Elisabeth Walker had made a large donation and so the first decision the trustees made was that Miss Weaman and Mrs Walker would have “*Two double seats on each side of the pulpit*”, then:-

£50 subscribers would have the choice of 8 sittings, or a “*compleat seat where they please*”. This suggests a pew was 8 sittings.

£42(40gns) a complete seat where they please

£25 or upwards 7 sittings, followed down by a sliding scale to

2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>gns to 5gns 1 sitting.

The sittings were to be balloted for over two days, starting with those with 7 sittings, then 6 and so on down to 4 (at 10gns) on the first day, and the rest on the second day.

The resolution on these proposals was passed on August 29<sup>th</sup> 1774, five days after the consecration, but they must have been circulated earlier. On the back pages of the Minute Book, which was otherwise only half used, there is “A List of Subscribers taken June 21<sup>st</sup> 1774”. It does not give names, but the numbers at different subscription levels, and the allocation of sittings. It is not entirely consistent with the authorised scheme, but a number of interesting facts emerge. The donation of Mrs Elisabeth Walker was an impressive £500 and the double seats that she and Mary Weaman were allocated were 10 sittings each. The list shows that 875 sittings were taken up from subscriptions totalling £4175. From the planned 1010 sittings this left 135 not taken up. Another list, again on the back pages, gives subscriptions, and the names of the subscribers, throughout the rest of June and into August for the remaining sittings. At the basic price of 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>gns per sitting, this would yield some £354, making a grand total of about £4530. Some of the subscribers were to make their second, and in one case a third subscription. One notable name on the list, making his second subscription, is Doctor Small, a close friend of Matthew Boulton and member of the Lunar Society, who died some six months later in February 1775. If Miss Weaman and Mrs Walker are excluded, the pattern of individual subscriptions is not dissimilar to the first list of subscribers to the proposed General Hospital in 1765, where Bunce<sup>22</sup> reported that there was no single donation larger than 50 gns and only three between 30 gns and 10 gns.

There was an interesting reaction to the sittings scheme in that some people started joining up their subscriptions. Looking at the possibilities in doubling up, the £10-£15 band looks particularly attractive. For example two subscribers of 11gns each, with 4 sittings each could make up a pew of 8 sittings at a cost of 22gns, whereas it needed 40 gns to get a pew directly.

Furthermore it would put them at the top of the ballot. The trustees reacted quickly and passed two resolutions, viz., *“That no subscribers shall join their subscriptions together without an advancement”* and *“That any two subscribers of 11 guineas each shall subscribe 4 guineas more if they join”*. There were just two subscribers at 11gns.

The trustees then had to determine the rents of the sittings. They would need to split the sittings up into areas of different worth, and then assign the annual rent to these areas so that the total amount raised got as close as possible to the maximum allowed in the Act as income for the minister viz., £200 per annum. With around 1000 sittings this would mean an average rent of 4s per annum, so the “better” seats would have to be a bit more, and others less. Two plans were proposed, one by Henry Kempson, whose scheme was used for the sittings, would raise £199-10s from the 1052 sittings, and another, by Elias Wallin, a bucklemaker of 9 New Hall Street, would raise £193-17s. It was resolved by all at the same meeting on August 29<sup>th</sup>, except Mr Westley, a plumber and glazier of 114 Snow Hill, and Mr Simcox, a bucklemaker in Livery Street, that the Wallin plan should be adopted. Under this the cost per sitting per annum varied between 2s/6d and 4s/6d. As an example the front row of the gallery was 4s/6d per sitting, the second row 3s/6d and the third row 3s/0d. It must have taken quite an effort to work out the detail, and get so close to the maximum.

There have been many references in the literature to the purchase of the freehold of the pews, particularly at St Paul’s chapel. As an example, in the book on Matthew Boulton published in association with the 2009 Exhibition <sup>23</sup>, there is mention of Boulton and his attendance at St Paul’s church and that *“The freehold to his pew would have cost him £5”*. We know that although trustees could have subscribed to either chapel or both, there is some continuity across the two chapels, and that Henry Kempson was very involved in the first and deeply involved in the second. There is every reason therefore to suppose that similar systems on sittings and rents would be used in both chapels. To reiterate, the pews and hence all the sittings were vested in the minister. The number of sittings allocated to an individual depended on the amount subscribed, and the money from subscriptions were put towards the cost of the building. Every sitting had an annual rent assigned to it. Any default on payment of the rent led to the loss of the sitting.

The Act makes clear that the sitting rights could be passed on. Indeed, there are in the City Archives two certificates of assignment of a sitting in St Paul’s chapel, one for 1791, and one for 1798 <sup>24</sup>. The former states that *“Mr Wm Waight his Heirs or Assigns hath a right to the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Sittings in No38 in the West Gallery in this Chapel”*. The system is therefore like leasehold, with a rent payable, but without a fixed period. In the same way as there could be a perpetual advowson or a perpetual patronage, the arrangement on the sittings

could be described as a perpetual leasehold, with the rents administered by the trustees, and eventually, the churchwardens. Matthew Boulton could not have bought the freehold, and judging by St Mary's, a £5 subscription would have got one sitting rather than a pew!

According to the Act the sittings could not be re-let for larger sums than was set for them. Presumably they could be re-let for the same sum. Given the distribution of sittings after balloting, it would not be at all surprising if there were a considerable amount of trading to bring families or friends together, or apart, or to get better sittings. If, for whatever reason, a sitting or sittings became vacant, any intended occupier would presumably have to pay to the trustees the cost of the original subscription.

The Minute Book carries a statement that "*In consideration of the great pain Mr H Kempson has taken to serve this undertaking he shall have a whole seat No 44 on the North Aisle*". The number of people subscribing £30 or more purely to St Mary's, and becoming trustees, is ten. A rather different pattern develops at St Paul's.

### ***The Music Festival***

St Mary's chapel was consecrated on August 24<sup>th</sup> 1774, but the chapel had not been completed and there was still work to be done and money to be raised. What better way than to hold a Music Festival in September on the pattern of that held in 1768 to raise funds for the General Hospital? The advertising in the weeks before the festival was quite extensive, appearing in the Birmingham and Oxford newspapers every week and also in the St James's paper, the London Evening Post, and Lloyd's Chronicle. It was advertised as raising funds for the completion of St Mary's chapel, and typically the festival started with Handel's Grand Dettingen Te Deum, Jubilate and Coronation Anthem at St Philip's in the morning of the first day and Alexander's Feast at the New Theatre in the evening. The next day it was Judas Maccabeus at St Philip's followed by a Grand Concert at the Theatre in the evening, and on the third morning it was Messiah at St Philip's. On two of the evenings there were Balls which were described in the Gazette as "*uncommonly splendid, and were honoured with the presence of many persons of the first rank and distinction in this Kingdom*". The trustees decided that the profit from the Balls would go to the General Hospital and it is reported in the Gazette that the musical entertainments would produce about £800 to go to the completion of the chapel.

***An estimate of the expenses and receipts in building St Mary's chapel***

We know from the Minute Book that by the time of the consecration all of the sittings had been subscribed, as described, giving receipts estimated at £4530  
The proceeds of the Music Festival at £800 makes it:- £5330

On expenses. Pickford's quotation was:- £4066  
Extra ceiling work by Pickford at £150:- £4216

At this stage the surplus would be over £1000. However, at a meeting in October 1774, the trustees learned that after defraying all expenses they had a surplus of £450. A possible explanation for the difference lies in the proceeds of the Music Festival. At another festival for raising funds for St Paul's and the General Hospital in 1778, a similar figure of £800 was reported, but this was for the gross proceeds, the amount net was £340. If that applied here the receipts would be £4870. Further receipts could be expected when St Paul's paid their share of the cost of obtaining the Act, put at £138 19s 4d.

Further expenses included the payment of £140 to Thomas Salt for his inspections of the building work, plus the cost of a bell, which was "*not to exceed 12cwt*", and communion plate from Boulton and Fothergill which was to be ordered immediately and "*not to exceed £60 or thereabouts*".

Summarising, the suggested receipts were about £5000 against expenses of about £4700, some surplus, but probably not enough to pay for the parsonage. To help pay for it, in February 1775 a number of trustees were charged with raising money by selling the vaults, which were vested in the trustees. There is no information on when the parsonage was purchased or what it cost.

The last meeting of this period recorded in the Minute Book was on June 22<sup>nd</sup> 1779, shortly after the consecration of St Paul's, and was held in the Vestry of St Paul's. This was the 58<sup>th</sup> meeting of the trustees for St Mary's and they discussed raising the rents of 136 sittings from 2s 6d to 2s 7d per annum. The next entries in the Minute book are in 1811 and relate to the repeal of part of the 1772 Act to enable the minister to have a higher income. There is then a further gap until the late 1830s, when some meetings are recorded.

All of the meetings of the original committee had taken place in the Chamber of the Old Cross. The first meeting of the trustees had taken place in The Swan Inn, as determined in the Act. The Swan Inn was near the Old Cross just off the High Street. Further meetings had taken place in a number of hostelries. The Swan in Weaman Street, the Lamp in Bath Street and Mr Dutton's in Weaman Street were all quite close to where St Mary's was to be

built. Other places were the Royal Exchange, the Green Man, the Bird in Hand, the Nag's Head and the Golden Lion.

The chapel and churchyard were bound by Whittall Street and Loveday Street, and by Weaman's Row and St Mary's Row, as shown in John Kempson's map of 1810 <sup>25</sup>, and is now the site of the Dental Hospital and the Children's Hospital.

### ***The collapse of part the gallery of St Mary's chapel***

In 1776 part of the gallery in the chapel collapsed during morning service. There were reports that nobody was hurt but that some ladies lost their handkerchiefs and some gentlemen their hats. However it was a serious matter and it called for a Town meeting of the inhabitants in the chamber over the Old Cross, and was written up in the Town Book. The meeting resolved that "*Mr Wyatt of Burton be applied to make a thorough inspection into the state of the chapel and to recommend what he would do to put into a Good, Firm, Substantial Condition*". Mr Wyatt, a well known architect, was to be used by the trustees of St Paul's. The signatories at this meeting included Henry Kempson, James Kempson, Elias Wallin, John Startin and Thomas Lutwyche. Seemingly there was not much response from Wyatt, as at the next meeting it was resolved "*to fix upon a surveyor to inspect St Mary's chapel*". Mr Eykyn of Wolverhampton was to be asked to do it immediately. Mr Eykyn was also to be used by the trustees of St Paul's. There was no further mention of Eykyn on this matter.

The next stage was to talk to the chapel architect, Joseph Pickford, but there may have been some reluctance on his part, as towards the end of the year a special messenger was to be sent to him to request his presence at a meeting. In early January of 1777 it is resolved that "*Edward Winfield and Henry Kempson be appointed to enter into Arbitration Bonds in behalf of the Town with Mr Joseph Pickford to settle all matters of dispute between the Town and him relating to St Mary's Chapel and a group appointed to fix the Arbitrators and settle things*". Six months were to pass and then we learn that "*Mr Pickford offered £400 in settlement*", but they were not ready to settle because they still wanted the views of Samuel Wyatt and Mr Hiorne. This is the first mention of Mr Hiorne. Brothers William and David Hiorne were architects who had had a number of assignments in Birmingham including, it is thought, the design of St Bartholomew's chapel, but David had died in 1758 and William in 1776. Francis Hiorne was the elder son of William and succeeded to his business as an architect and builder. There was to have been a joint report from Wyatt and Hiorne, because we learn that "*the meeting of Messrs Wyatt and Hiorne is very precarious on account of Mr*

*Hiorne being out of the country*". This nicely fits with Francis Hiorne as his record shows that his assignment on the building of St Anne's church in Belfast finished in 1776. Nonetheless they decide to settle. By mid September the £400 is in the hands of the churchwardens of St Martin's and St Phillips and the wardens of St Mary's, and the meeting resolves that Mr Hiorne be asked to survey the chapel. In November the survey arrives and reports that *"The roof is very safe and likely to continue so as long the Timbers are kept dry, and the gallery may be made safe by drawing in timbers and supporting the same with a number of Iron columns"*.

The suggestion by Hiorne in 1777 of the use of cast iron columns structurally in this way, albeit on a very small scale, was probably regarded as very innovative at the time. The first major structural use of cast iron was to take place in 1779 with pioneering technology involved in the building of the Iron Bridge in Shropshire. The use of cast iron columns in industrial buildings did not start until the 1790s, to be followed by cast iron beams. The use of cast iron columns in churches has not been researched here, other than noting the claim of St John's church at Hanley that the church, built in 1788, *"is probably one of the world's earliest surviving buildings to be constructed with cast iron"*. However, it is also claimed by St George's church in Everton, built in 1814, that it was *"the first church building in the world to be constructed substantially from cast iron"*. The use of cast iron columns at St Mary's, and doubtless an understandable sensitivity by the trustees to safety, are likely to have resulted in the use of the four cast iron columns as gallery supports at St Paul's chapel.

Another problem St Mary's seems to have had was in the payments of their sexton. The Town Book records that there was a Vestry meeting at St Martin's church on March 14<sup>th</sup> 1775 at which two resolutions were passed. The first was *"That every grave to be dug at St Mary's chapelyard shall be dug at least 6ft deep from the surface of the ground and that the sexton for digging every such grave shall be paid one shilling and six pence and for every grave deeper to be paid at the same rate as in other churchyards already fixed"*. The second resolution was to the effect *"that the sexton be paid for Ringing or Tolling the bell at every funeral for the first hour sixpence and for every hour afterwards one shilling"*. It is surprising that this needed the signature of J Parsons, the Rector of St Martin's, and J Riland, the Curate of St Mary's (otherwise known as the minister), Elias Wallin and Thomas Lutwyche, the churchwardens of St Martin's, and others, presumably the wardens of St Mary's and also Daniel Winwood.

### **The building of St Paul's Chapel**

In the early stages of the Bill, the trustees had enquired of Charles Colmore what he would be prepared to give, and the message back from George

Holloway had been the land, £200, and the right of presentation during his lifetime and the life of the first incumbent in return for the perpetual advowson. In the published Act the requirement was rather different, viz., the land and £1000 in return for the perpetual advowson. There was no mention of £200 or of a special arrangement for the right of presentation, so something had happened between the time the committee accepted Colmore's offer and the final drafting of the Act. The Act appeared to deal with Mary Weaman and Charles Colmore in similar fashion, albeit with Mary Weaman donating £1200 to Charles Colmore's £1000. Similarly, there is no mention of the £200 or the right of presentation in the consecration sermon, where it was confirmed that Colmore was to become the patron immediately after consecration. It has been assumed in publications since then that Colmore donated £1000 in money. However, there are manuscripts that throw a light on what actually happened. One such, in the City Archives <sup>26</sup> is a deed labelled "*no.270060 Deed of Covenant by the Trustees of St Paul's concerning the nomination of the Minister thereto. Dated 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1778 88cm x60cm 2 leaves*". The back leaf starts with a reference to the "*parties to the Indenture dated 21<sup>st</sup> day of November 1777*" and is followed by what is essentially a restatement of the main paragraph in the Act about Mary Weaman and Colmore, what was expected of them and their rights. It is confirmed that immediately after consecration Charles Colmore would be patron, own the advowson, and could nominate and present to the bishop a candidate for minister. However, the document continues:-

*"by certain articles of agreement on or about 19<sup>th</sup> November 1774 between Charles Colmore and Daniel Winwood Toymaker of Birmingham"* and then relates that prior to the passing of the Act when Charles Colmore was consenting to give the land for the chapel, instead of Colmore donating £1000 towards its building, Daniel Winwood agreed with Charles Colmore to pay £800 of the £1000 towards the building in return for the right of presentation and nomination during the life of Charles Colmore. This means that the original proposal of a donation of £200 money and the right of presentation, approved by the committee, had been rejected by the lawmakers, and the £1000 substituted for it. Winwood and Colmore must have known of this before the Act was passed as they made this private agreement before the Act. Colmore had set out ready to donate £200 and the right of presentation and finished donating £200 and effectively selling the right for £800.

It is suggested that Colmore had a money limit of £200, and if the deal was to go ahead, Winwood had little option but to agree to find the £800, which was a very large sum. An alternative scenario that Winwood and his fellow trustees were desperate to have a particular person as minister is highly unlikely as the person they eventually nominated was only 17 at this time! It is surprising that the arrangement reached was not made public, and because

£1000 was mentioned in the Act it has been assumed ever since that that was what Colmore donated.

It has to be said that most accounts of the donations of land and money for the building of churches seem to regard them as acts of pure philanthropy, but they are hardly that. The landowners were selling or leasing the land for financial gain, indeed as the Act itself put it “*the building of a chapel upon the land...will increase the value of such of their lands as be adjacent to the intended chapels*”. Ettliger and Holloway<sup>27</sup> reported that in 1821 a Mr Drake commented that Colmore’s gift of land “*had not altogether been disinterested piety, since the enhanced rent roll of the estate provided him with a handsome return for his gift*”. In the case of St Bartholomew’s, John Jennens gave the land and his wife donated £1000, so perhaps this was the “going rate”. The likelihood that the Weaman land would increase in value more than the greenfield land around St Paul’s and that they would be developed faster may explain why the Act required Mary Weaman to donate £1200 compared with Charles Colmore’s £1000.

There were other things agreed at the meeting in November 1774, one of which was that Colmore and Winwood placed a maximum figure of £8000 on the amount of money to be raised, which suggests that Winwood was optimistic about raising the money, but is very surprising as he is likely to have known about the costs and the fundraising at St Mary’s. They also determined that the minister’s house should cost not less than £400 and not more than £500 and it had to be built within three years of the consecration of St Paul’s chapel. Until it was built the minister would be paid “*an annuity or yearly sum of twenty pounds by two equal half yearly payments*”.

It becomes clear in the document that the way Daniel Winwood copes with the requirement of £800 is to involve the trustees in an indenture, not the honorary trustees but the people who had paid £30 or more. They were to pay the £800, which, together with the money subscribed would see to the erection of the church and the building of the house for the minister, paying any shortfall in such “*shares and proportions*” as Daniel Winwood and his fellow trustees determined. They committed themselves to this in the indenture dated November 21<sup>st</sup> 1777. There were 31 trustees who signed and sealed the indenture.

### ***The action begins***

As St Mary’s had been consecrated in August 1774 it is understandable that Colmore and Winwood met again in November 1774 to confirm the understanding they had reached in their meeting before the passing of the Act. The trustees would have checked the subscription books for St Paul’s, but evidently not enough was subscribed to get them going. The big difference

between St Mary's and St Paul's was that St Mary's had £1700 in two large donations; St Paul's had £200 in one donation. It has been asserted that Matthew Boulton subscribed £600 in 1776 for a Chapel in Soho. Ettliger and Holloway<sup>27</sup> wrote that as there was no chapel in Soho, he must have meant St Paul's. However, at a conference on Boulton at Birmingham University in 2009 it was disclosed that Boulton did indeed have ideas about a chapel at Soho and promised a contribution of £600 for it, but soon after changed his mind and dropped the whole idea, this, apparently, being typical Boulton behaviour.

There are no reports in the press of anything happening in the remainder of 1774, nor through the whole of 1775. It was on March 18<sup>th</sup> 1776 that an announcement was made in the Gazette by George Holloway on behalf of the trustees:-

*“Birmingham March 14<sup>th</sup> 1776 RELIGION—At a meeting held this day, of the Trustees appointed by Act of Parliament, for Building two Chapels in this Town, it was resolved to begin St Paul's, as soon as a sufficient Sum shall be subscribed for that Purpose; and they intend waiting on the Public to solicit their generous Contributions for so necessary an undertaking. George Holloway.*

*N.B. Subscription Books are also left with Pearson and Rollason, Printers of this Paper”.*

It was almost four years since the Act was passed and yet, if they were following the earlier resolution, £3000 had not been subscribed. With only three years left on the seven years rule the trustees must have been feeling anxious.

For the next important development we are indebted to Henry Kempson, who, as mentioned earlier, kept a small notebook headed *“Memorandums relative to St Paul's Chapel”*, which is held in the City Archives.<sup>12</sup> It measures some 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>” x 4” and Kempson has written on 63 pages. The notebook is best known for the reasons and excuses subscribers used for not paying up when it came to the first call, but there is much more to it than that. Kempson records the comments of the two architects who viewed the model of the proposed chapel. He lists his cash deposits from his collection, withdrawals of cash from the bank and payments for goods and services up to May 1778, and some subscriptions. He bought another book the same size as his memorandum book to record the detail of his collections, but this has not come to light. Kempson was a surveyor, and a trustee of St Mary's, for whom he did much, as has been explained. He was appointed secretary of St Paul's trustees, for

which his own records show that he received an honorarium of £25. There is no evidence that he was a trustee of St Paul's.

The first entry in Kempson's notebook, to be referred to as HK, is on November 12<sup>th</sup> 1776, eight months after the announcement in the Gazette. It reads "*I was appointed Secretary in the room of Mr Geo. Holloway who begs to decline*". On the next day "*Mr Winwood sent me the following books---The Minute Book, 4 Subscription Books, a small ditto of Gentlemen that have not subscribed, 81 Cards of printed summons's, A parcel of printed receipts*". This is the evidence that Kempson did have the Minute Book. It is possible that he bought another one, but that does not appear in HK. Unfortunately the four subscription books do not appear to have survived. On November 14<sup>th</sup> in HK, "*Waited on Mr Winwood to know when it would be agreeable to wait on Mr Holloway to re-stake out the land*" and on the same day "*Wrote to Mr Eykyn of W:Hampton to request the favour of his design*". On December 3<sup>rd</sup> HK writes "*Began to collect the subscriptions*". Suddenly it was all happening--stake out the area for the chapel again-- get a design (they must have been in some discussion with Eykyn already)--get some money in (the first call must have been made six months earlier)

### ***The Design of the Chapel***

Ettlinger and Holloway<sup>27</sup> suggest that for buildings such as St Paul's, the use of a famous model for the building and the checking of a surveyor's design by an architect are characteristic features of the period. They might have added that, compared with the use of a professional architect, it was almost certain to be a much cheaper solution. (St Mary's had employed a professional architect in Joseph Pickford). It is suggested that St Paul's could not use this approach because of the problems in funding, and that they had to seek a local surveyor with architectural experience. One candidate was Roger Eykyn of Wolverhampton, who first appeared as a master joiner, then nurseryman, then surveyor, as well as a stonemason. This is the same Eykyn who was asked to look at the structure of St Mary's chapel. It is to be noticed that he was described then as a surveyor, and that he did not appear to come up with a report. This did not deter the trustees from appointing him surveyor to this project. His original design for St Paul's was derived from Gibbs' Book of Architecture and St Martin's in the Fields in particular.

After HK had written to Eykyn requesting his design he showed him the proposed site. Eykyn had met Winwood and a model of the chapel had been made, which was "*to be left at the Hotel and no one to see it without a note from Mr Winwood*". On March 27<sup>th</sup> 1777 HK writes "*Mr Eykyn was fixed on as Surveyor at the sum of 200 guineas*". This did not mean just supplying the design but now acting as surveyor to the project. The evidence for this comes from HK's payments. There is no single payment to Eykyn of 200 guineas, but

staged payments, the last one recorded being of £50, “*on account of surveying*”.

At this stage an architect was called in for his views on the design, following the pattern that Ettliger and Holloway suggested was typical of that period. His name was Samuel Wyatt, another who was asked to examine the structure of St Mary’s chapel. Wyatt was an exceptional local architect and engineer, and also a successful building contractor and timber merchant. He was a close friend of many of the pioneer midlands industrialists and with his more famous brother, James, redesigned Soho House, and did other work for Boulton. Samuel and James each set up independent practices as architects in London in 1774. Wyatt presumably saw the model and drawings and HK noted twenty one observations he made, examples of which are-:

*“That the Middle Isle is too narrow and too Low  
That the Entablature above the Capitals is Ugly  
That he thinks the Truss over the Chancel is as bad nearly as  
St Mary’s  
That the Pediment at the West end is as Vulgar as can be and it  
would be much handsomer without it  
That the Venetian Window is good in itself but not proper in its  
Situation  
That Groin Arches are very pretty  
That there can be nothing uglier than the Chancel Windows in the  
Execution  
**That in General Terms he should be sorry they should build  
It So”***

On the evening of the next day, April 15<sup>th</sup>, HK “*Spent the evening with a Mr Gibson at the Hen and Chickens at Mr Startin’s request*” and on April 16<sup>th</sup> we have the remarks of Mr Gibson, presumably an architect, on the model. Mr Gibson had thirteen observations to make, such as:-

*“That to make the Chancel Square instead of Circular would lessen the  
expense and look as well  
That he would either have two rows of windows or light it all above  
the Gallery  
That he would have the doors at the West end instead of the sides  
That he would not have the pediment but let the cornices run around  
That it would be a vast deal better to raise the whole 2 or 3 feet  
That it would be more expense to raise the Middle Isle than to raise the  
walls  
That it is too low and Squat*

***That he would not advise to do it from the Model by no means with the windows throughout, they will be very disagreeable”.***

HK refers only to a Mr Gibson, but then following on immediately after Mr Gibson’s opinions appears the following in HK’s notebook:-

*“To Messrs Thos & James Gibson  
No. 31 Queen Ann St Portland Chap  
London*

*Upon Condition of his having the Estimate to peruse & if he should approve of it so as to engage in the Undertaking he would Advance 2000£ & subscribe 50£”.*

This was presumably a draft of a letter to the Gibsons. Nothing further is written about the Gibsons. Was this proposal discussed with them? It would have been an extraordinary move to borrow £2000, but it perhaps illustrates vividly the magnitude of the problem the trustees were having in financing the “business”. In Colvin’s “A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840” there is a Thomas Gibson, an architect employed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Marchmont to design Marchmont House Berwickshire. Among other references there is also a comment that he appeared to be a London architect. In addition a James Gibson, builder, has been found in documents of Marylebone for this period. It all looks plausible, and it will have been Thomas Gibson who met HK and gave his views on the design.

These criticisms must have dismayed the trustees, but Eykyn responded to them. For example, two of Gibson’s proposals were adopted, the suggestion that the chancel should be square rather than circular, and that there should be two rows of windows as at St Martin’s. Generally, Wyatt and Gibson shared similar views on the design; particularly that it was too low. A striking characteristic of both opinions is that no mention is made of a steeple. The Gibson comment that the building was too low and squat suggests that there was no steeple on the model. Yet there is evidence that a steeple was intended. Thomas Hanson’s map of Birmingham in 1778 shows St Paul’s with a steeple, as does the certificate of sittings assignment in 1791 previously referred to. The absence of any comment about it suggests that the trustees had already eliminated the steeple from the design. The overall opinion of Ettliger and Holloway is that *“Eykyn must have departed further from Gibbs in his original design for the interior, but as a result of Wyatt’s trenchant criticism the final plan is very close to St Martin’s( in the Fields)”*.

The west gallery of the completed building had two iron columns on each side of the middle aisle supporting it. It is difficult to resist the notion that the use

of cast iron was influenced by the experience at St Mary's. It was to be four years after Wyatt's comments, i.e. in 1781, that a letter from him was tabled at a Town meeting. The minute says "*A letter was produced from Mr Wyatt respecting his opinion given about St Paul's and St Mary's Chapels in which he requests Mr Faulconbridge to receive for him £5-5-0. The sum is agreed to be paid to him*".

### ***The Location of the Building***

HK did not take long to determine the plot of land for the Chapel. Appointed secretary on November 12<sup>th</sup> 1776, on November 18<sup>th</sup> he "*Attended the Trustees and Mr. Holloway and marked and staked out the land for St Paul's Chapel Yard as per Plan---282 yards from Gt Charles Street to the center The Chapel Yard 145 yards by 100 yards 0 ft 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>inches*"! Next day he "*Draw'd*" it out again and the yard was now 120yards by 121yards and 272 yards from Gt Charles Street. On December 3<sup>rd</sup> he showed Mr Eykyn where the chapel yard lay. Two days later he "*Took the points of the Chapel Yard by the Compass & found that if the streets were to be laid out east and West the top Street would reach to Mr Hammond's Building in Snowhill*". So the new Chapel was not to be on an East-West axis, but parallel to Great Charles Street.

Ettlinger and Holloway are "*rather critical of the way the church is simply planted in the middle of the square without any grasp of its scenic possibilities*" and further that "*the whole is obviously the work of surveyors-not of an architect*". Indeed, the whole was the work of a surveyor, and as for the position in the square, HK reported that "*the Majority of the Trust were for having the Centre of the Chapel in the Centre of the Chapel Yard*".

### ***Managing the Business***

HK had been appointed secretary towards the end of 1776, Daniel Winwood was Chairman of the trustees and a few other trustees, Mr Startin for example, are prominent in HK's notes. Nothing much is recorded for the winter months, then from April 1777 onwards there is a burst of activity, the design and the location are agreed. HK collects subscriptions, one of the first from the chairman, Daniel Winwood who pays up £7 10s, being 25% of the £30 to become a trustee. The delivery of materials commences. HK records the payment for the supplies which follows very closely the collection of money. There is no mention of a builder at all at this stage and the evidence points to HK and Eykyn managing the project, or the "business" as they called it. HK was not having an easy time collecting cash. It would be almost five years since some people had made their pledge in the subscription book, so it is hardly surprising that for some their circumstances had changed, others

had forgotten or moved away, some had died and their widows were not able to fulfil the pledge. For others there was a genuine concern about whether the chapel would be built at all. They wanted to see real progress before paying up. Typical of them was James Kempson, who some years later was to become clerk of St Paul's, and who "*has no objection to pay but chooses to see a beginning made first*". The same reason was used by Mr Simons, who, referring to St Mary's pointed out that "*We began sooner (to collect) than they did before, for they did not call for money till the chapel was out of the ground*". There were some who preferred to earn the interest on their money for as long as possible, such as Mr Ford of Livery Street who "*Objects to letting any body else have the interest of his money*". In total there are more than sixty people listed by HK who would not or could not pay the first tranche of 25%.

All of this must have been a real problem for the Trustees. They were starting from pledges, which is what signing the subscriber's book meant, but no cash. They had to get enough cash to start building to persuade some subscribers to put up their cash. The first thing HK had to do when he had got enough cash was to go to the bank with Joe Cottrell and pay him, acting for St Mary's, half of the cost of getting the Act through, a bill amounting to £138.19s 4d. The existence of this debt had upset a Mr Goodall, who "*objected to paying at first on account of the debt due to St Mary's for part of the Act*". This debt will have been due since 1772. The brighter side will have been new and increased subscriptions. Thus "*Mr Townshend is to make his up to 30£ and to become responsible*". In other words Mr Townshend in paying £30 would become a trustee, thereby joining with other trustees in becoming responsible for building the chapel. Mr Holloway, on the other hand, had a particular problem. "*Mr Holloway says he will pay me ....next week or leave it with Mr Winwood for me but he must write to Mr Colmore before he pays his 50£ who is now in France and it will be some time before he can have an answer*". Mr Holloway was set to pay his own subscription and in addition, as Colmore's manager in Birmingham, was to pay the first tranche of 25% of the £200 promised by Colmore, i.e. £50, but had to get his approval first. Colmore was paying by instalments, as did Mary Weaman. There is no evidence that Holloway became a trustee.

On supplies, there is a lot of detail. One of the first items was a search for a brickmaker, and there was a proposal to use clay on the Colmore estate, but, as with St Mary's, there was no clay on the estate. Supplies pour in to the chapel yard from the end of May to November, for example:-

---Mr Nathl Meacham will carry the Stone from the Proprietors Wharf to the Chapel Yard, Load it and deliver it at 14d per Ton.

---Job Pratt and Job Pratt's wife are paid for bricks at 13s per thousand. (St Mary's had a different supplier at 14s per thousand) They supplied some half

a million bricks.(Other than Dorothy and Mary Weaman, Job Pratt's wife is the only woman referred to in all the documents examined, other than the widows HK meets on his Collection calls).

---Mr Jones also supplied bricks.

Other suppliers were:-

---John Wall and Thos Huxley -- Lime

---B Greaves -- drift sand

---John Pyatt -- Bricklayers

---Various people -- "*pitching*" the brick deliveries. This appears with each brick delivery and is believed to be the stacking of bricks for the bricklayers.

Pitching 21,000 bricks cost 3s 6d.

---Abraham Simpson -- 2 wheelbarrows at £1.1.0

---John Tuckley-- tiles

---Jos Hands – sinking wells

---John Cottrell -- plating brick moulds.

---Mr Rollaston -- advertising the four calls.

---Mr Martin -- the pool Dam

One item attracts special attention. The individual who is paid for all stone deliveries is Eykyn. It is Bilston stone and Eykyn is from Wolverhampton, but more than that, as mentioned earlier, among his various skills he was at one time a stone mason. The cost of stone recorded by HK was £170.

With all of this activity Aris's Gazette is able to report:-

*"June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1777 --- On Thursday last, the first Stone of St Paul's Chapel was laid by one of the Trustees, and under the Stone was placed a Medal, with an inscription in Commemoration thereof".* This was followed by the usual exhortation to subscribe. HK reported that Mr Winwood laid the stone at the north corner. We have not found any indication on the wall of the church in the north corner as to where exactly the foundation stone might be.

The managing of the business was about to change. Although not mentioned at all by HK, a manuscript in the form of a signed and sealed bond in the City Archives <sup>28</sup> states:-

*" Know all men by these presents that we whose names are hereunto subscribed are held and firmly bound to John Standbridge of the borough of Warwick and Henry Couchman of Temple Balsall in the county of Warwick Builders in the sum of Four Thousand and Two hundred pounds of good and lawful money of Great Britain to be paid to the said John Standbridge and Henry Couchman at the times appointed for payment of the same by the Article for the Completion of the said Building".* The date of the bond is August 1<sup>st</sup> 1777. The 28 subscribers, trustees of St Paul's, were to pay equal shares of "*what sum or sums of Money shall be deficient in the Subscription Money which is or may be collected for the building of the said chapel*". The

trustees had accepted the builder's cost of £4200 and were to have a date of completion. The trustees who signed this bond are 28 of the 31 who signed up just a few months later to the Indenture of November 21<sup>st</sup> 1777 which bound them to meeting the £800 Colmore money.

It was not until November 10<sup>th</sup> 1777 that HK wrote “ *Delivd the Rough Draft of the Agreemn to young Mr Standbridge to send to his father & desir'd he would let me know when to call a meeting. Mr Carles says the Bond is to be only a Common Printed Bond*”. And on the 13<sup>th</sup> we have “*Copy'd the Agreemn for Messrs Standbridge and Couchman and they are to examine them & to be signed on Friday next*”. November 26<sup>th</sup> brought a highly significant entry “ *The Agreemn with the Builders was signed & they are to compleat it by March 1 1779*”. It had taken almost four months to agree the Article of Completion. The date agreed was three months before the deadline. It is highly likely that the bond mentioned here, being only a printed bond, was a standard builder's bond guaranteeing the cost and the completion date to the trustees.

Having signed up with the Builders it was possible for the Gazette to inform their readers on December 8<sup>th</sup> 1777:-

*“It is with Pleasure we can assure our readers, that the Chapel of St Paul, in this Town, will be ready for Consecration by the 1st of March, 1779. It will be a neat substantial Building, and is calculated to contain about One Thousand Sittings”.*

Payments to Mr Standbridge started only two days after the signing of the agreement, but payments for supplies continued into February 1778, and the records end on May 14<sup>th</sup> 1778. The only memorandum entry for 1778 in HK was for May 15<sup>th</sup> when he “*Was with Mr Snape setting out the Streets round St Paul's Chapel Yard 12 yards wide. The Chapel Yard is 126yds by 115 yds. Contains 3 Acres & 8 sq yds*”. Three of the streets were to be named after Charles Colmore's children viz., Lionel, Mary Ann and Caroline. In 1779 he makes only three memorandum entries, one of which, just two weeks before the consecration, is an estimate of the number of bricks required for the chapel wall.

### ***Appointing the Minister***

With the planned date of March 1<sup>st</sup> 1779 for the chapel to be ready for consecration it is somewhat surprising that an advertisement for a minister for the chapel should be published in the Gazette some seven months before that date. The notice read as follows:-

“ADVOWSON

*Birmingham July 10<sup>th</sup> 1778.—The Trustees appointed by Act of Parliament in Building St Paul's Chapel in this Town, being desirous of fixing on a Clergyman to present to the Living (which will be worth upwards of two Hundred pounds per annum), give this Public Notice to such Gentlemen as may wish to treat for the same, that they may be furnished with further Particulars, by applying to Mr Daniel Winwood, in Birmingham, any Time before the 14<sup>th</sup> Day of August next”.*

What is surprising about this announcement is the use of the word “advowson” for the heading. Strictly it should have been headed “Nomination and Presentation of Minister”, because that was the arrangement with Colmore. At this point we come back to the Deed of Covenant already referred to. This is the manuscript with the indenture of 1777 and the references to 1774. The top page of the manuscript is dated December 23<sup>rd</sup> 1778 and it becomes clear that this was the date of the meeting to decide the man to be nominated and presented to the bishop. Details are given on the system for calling the meeting of trustees, for example the length of notice to be given and how notice would be served. A simple majority of electors was sufficient. The name of the successful candidate is not given in this manuscript, but it is in another, and it is not at all surprising for this chapel of ease to St Martin's that he was a curate at St Martin's, the Revd W T Young, a man probably very well known to many of the trustees.

### ***The Music Festival***

As had happened at St Mary's, a music festival was held to raise funds for the building of the chapel, but this one was held jointly with the General Hospital and was their second festival, the first having been held in 1768. That first music festival had been suggested to some members of the hospital board as a means of raising funds by James Kempson, who, as choir master and clerk at St Bartholomew's, had raised funds through musical concerts at St Bartholomew's for “*aged and distressed housekeepers*”. Kempson was the chorus master throughout the first festival, which had been a great success. According to Eliezer Edwards, as building work on St Paul's progressed, Kempson was offered, and accepted, the post of choir master and clerk at St Paul's and he was requested to start making preparations for a choir. (There is no evidence to be found in the Vestry Minutes for the period that he did become choirmaster and it was to be some years before he became clerk). Kempson knew that the General Hospital had not been completed and so he suggested to St Paul's that a festival might be arranged with the hospital, and the profits shared. It is recorded that “*Accordingly on May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1778, a deputation from St Paul's, consisting of Messrs. Jos. Green, Elias Wallace, and Thos. Green, waited on the Hospital Board with the proposal, and on*

*June 6<sup>th</sup> it was resolved by the Hospital Board that Mr Westley do inform the St Paul's Committee that the Committee assent to their proposal". Jos. Green. Elias Wallin (not Wallace), Thos.Green and Westley were all trustees of St Paul's.*

The dates for the festival were September 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 1778 and for each day the pattern was the same, music at St Philips in the morning, a concert at the Theatre in New Street in the evening and a ball each evening at the "Hotel". There were distinguished vocal and instrumental performers, including the "*celebrated WOMEN CHORUS SINGERS from Lancashire*". The gross receipts from the performances amounted to £800 out of which the General Hospital and the building fund of St Paul's chapel each received £170. The event on the first morning at St Phillip's was described as a service and included "*a sermon to be preached by the Rev. Mr Young*". On September 7<sup>th</sup> the Gazette reported that the music was performed to "*a crowded and respectable Company with universal approbation*", and also that an excellent sermon was preached which pointed out "*the necessity of a liberal and public spirited Support of the Objects under Consideration*". This festival was a forerunner to the famous triennial festivals.

### ***The assignment of sittings and determination of rents***

As with St Mary's the preoccupation of the trustees as the consecration approached will have been sittings and rents. Henry Kempson was deeply involved in this at St Mary's, so it is reasonable to assume his involvement here, and perhaps with Elias Wallin, a trustee of St Paul's, whose scheme for rents had been adopted at St Mary's. The trustees were certainly not short of experience, and may have been able to avoid the "joining" problem. However there may have been other difficulties. At St Mary's the number of people who subscribed £30 or over, apart from Mary Weaman and Elisabeth Walker, was 10. All would qualify as trustees, with the top three people getting 8 sittings, and the rest got 7, but this also extended down to 20gns, so there was no special privilege for trustees. At St Paul's the number of trustees on the Indenture of July 28<sup>th</sup> 1779 (see below) was 45, all of whom must have subscribed at least £30. Using the scheme used at St Mary's, a large number of sittings, perhaps over 300, would have been assigned to the trustees, and balloted for first. Rents would be similar to St Mary's; with 1000 sittings and a maximum of £200 to be raised per annum, the average annual rent would be 4s, if all the sittings were sold.

### ***An estimate of the expenses and receipts in building St Paul's chapel***

Up to May 14<sup>th</sup> 1778 HK had paid out, excluding payments to the builders, £1236, most of it for building supplies. This figure is near enough confirmed by his cash withdrawal figures. Together with the £4200 for the builders, the

minimum recorded cost was therefore £5436. Other costs probably outside the scope of the builders could have included the communion table, the altar rail, the bell, and an organ, but little in the way of vestments and internal decoration, and no clock or communion plate. A total cost estimate of about £6000 would seem reasonable.

Before the end of 1776 a meeting of the trustees had decided that HK should *“receive and pay all moneys relating to the Business (i.e.) first paying the same into the Bank & fetching it out as wanted. The Bills to be first allowed by the Trustees”*. The system HK was to operate followed these instructions, namely all the cash he collected had to be paid in, and separately cash was withdrawn to pay the bills, once the trustees had approved them. HK kept a record of the cash he collected and paid into the bank, which was Taylor and Lloyds, founded in 1765, the first bank to open in Birmingham, and who acted as treasurer for the original Committee. Records of cash withdrawals and of every payment, to whom, usually for what and how much were also made. HK also records when three of the calls for 25% tranches of the subscribed amount were made. The first call must have been made in June 1776, as collecting started in December 1776.

If £3000 had been subscribed before building started then the first call, at 25%, should have yielded £750. By plotting out the information in HK on cash deposits it can be shown that:-

the first call, for 25%, produced only £250,  
the second call, another 25%, produced £600  
the third call, for the third 25%, produced £950.

So by March 1778 the total cash collected was £1800, supposedly for three quarters of the subscriptions. The final call was made in April 1778 and there the records cease.

Without the subscription books it is impossible to understand what this is all about. With an anticipated completion date of March 1<sup>st</sup> 1779 the trustees had a year to raise at least £4200, from existing subscriptions, new subscriptions, events such as the Music Festival and their own guarantees. There had to be an enormous surge in the payments of subscriptions in response to the last call, and in new subscriptions if the trustees were not to be very heavily burdened. Yet at that at the meeting in 1774 a cap on fundraising had been set at £8000! One source states that 1000 people subscribed £5 to buy a sitting. If they had subscribed this amount, the £5000 plus £1000 would have delighted the trustees. There is no evidence of any sort in HK that this happened.

### ***A comparison of the two schemes***

St Mary's was designed for a thousand sittings by a professional architect, who carried out the building work. St Paul's was designed by a surveyor and was also for a thousand sittings, but the latter did not include a steeple. Eykyn and Kempson managed the scheme initially, but builders were brought in to complete the job. The estimated cost of St Mary's is £4700 and of St Paul's about £6000. On the face of it St Paul's should have cost less, but many of the actions of the trustees were affected by the difficulty in raising funds and the seven year rule, and it is suggested they influenced, heavily, the figure that the builders were able to charge to guarantee a satisfactory completion date.

On subscriptions St Mary's seemed to get off to a flyer, with two donations totalling £1700 a great help for reaching the target the trustees had set of £3000 to start building. Then the momentum was with them and the subscriptions totalling £4530 plus the proceeds of the Music Festival paid the cost and more, although not without some difficulties along the way. It was always going to be difficult to maintain the momentum into a second chapel. Those keenest for their own sitting will have gone to St Mary's, where the site itself may have been more appealing than the one almost in the country. The trustees of St Paul's must have been disappointed with the slow progress in reaching the £3000 mark, with the momentum lost, and with the consequences that brought. There is no record of the take up in sittings by the time of the consecration, nor of what the trustees had themselves to contribute. They had guaranteed the cost of the builders, guaranteed the £800, and the cost of building the parsonage, as well as paying the £30 cost of becoming a trustee. Certainly there was nothing spare after the consecration as the collection for the communion plate will attest.

### **The Consecration of St Paul's**

In December 1777 a notice in the Gazette had said that the chapel would be ready for consecration by the March 1<sup>st</sup> 1779. No public notice has been found yet of the date of completion, nor of the date of consecration, but we do have in the City Archives the manuscript <sup>29</sup> of the "*Sentence of Consecration of Chapel and Chapelyard*" dated June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1779.

It is a large parchment with faded ink and not very easy to read. It was "*Signed Sealed and Delivered by the within mentioned Lord Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry the parchment being first duly stamped and signed in the presence of us*

*N Fotheringham Archdeacon of Coventry*

*Thos White Principal Surrogate*

*B Spencer (?) Vicar of Aston*

*C NewlingMA Rector of St Phillip's Birmingham*

*R B RilandMA Rector of Sutton Coldfield*  
*J RilandMA Chaplain of St Mary's Birmingham*  
*John Darnal AB Vicar of Walsall*  
*A B HadenAB Curate of Castle Bromwich*  
*Calvt Clapham Notary Pub. Secretary*  
*T Buckeridge Clerk AM Depy Registrar*  
*Geo Hand Junr Notary Publick*

*Sentence of Consecration of the Chapel and Chapel Yard of St Paul in Birmingham Second day of June 1779 in this fifth year of our (the bishop's) consecration.*

*East to West about 80' in length from North to South about 64' in breadth -----3 acres".*

The earlier estimate of the date of the passing of the Act was on or just before May 30<sup>th</sup> 1772. The date here for consecration of June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1779 puts it just 2 days over 7 years since the Act. It was a tight run thing and it reads as though the Church was complete, as it had "*Communion Table and Rails, Pulpit, Reading desk, font galleries and convenient seats or pews, Belfry, a Bell, and all things requisite and necessary and the said seats or pews are sufficient to raise a competent yearly income salary or endowment for the maintenance of the several and respective Curates of the said chapel for the time being pursuant to the directions of the said Act. And whereas the said Charles Colmore and the Rev William Hinton Doctor in Divinity, the present Rector, and the Church Wardens and parishioners of St Martin's and other inhabitants of the said Town of Birmingham have duly petitioned us:-*

- the chapel may administer baptism,*
- the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper,*
- Church Women after Childbirth,*
- Instruct Children in the Catechism,*
- Burial of the Dead,*

*And others as is usual except the Solemnization of Matrimony"*

As well as consecrating the Chapel yard the "*several vaults made under the said Chapel*" were also consecrated. Just how many vaults were made under the Chapel is not known, but many memorial tablets in the Church refer to a nearby vault. From the NADFAS record <sup>30</sup> this could amount to 12 vaults. The necessity to pay the standard fees to the rector of St Martin's was made clear, and there had to be "*competent and reasonable allowances for the Clerk and sexton*".

Dent <sup>13</sup> described the chapel thus "*Shorn of the one redeeming feature (the steeple), the new Chapel presented a heavy gloomy appearance*" and also commented "*The rising ground beyond Great Charles Street, which was*

*selected as the site of the proposed chapel, was yet sufficiently removed from the busy hive of workers, although the town was gradually creeping across the fair demesne of the Colmore family, and bade fair at no distant date to provide the sacred edifice with an ample congregation close to its very doors.”* Hutton’s view of the chapel was that it was built “*upon the declivity of a hill, not altogether suitable for the elegant building it sustains, which is of stone ---plain beauty unites with strength. This roof like that of St Mary’s appears too full*”. There has been some discussion by C.Pickford <sup>31</sup> on whether there was a bell when the chapel was built in 1779. The consecration document confirms that there was a bell from the beginning but no details of it are available.

It is said that there was chalked on the walls of the town

*“A large town, a proud people  
A fine church and no steeple”*

To be a churchwarden you had to be officiating in a church. A chapel of ease did not qualify, so they appointed wardens. In the St Paul’s Vestry Minute Book of this period wardens were appointed. The first wardens were Daniel Winwood, who was Chairman of the Trustees, and John Startin. The day for the Vestry meeting, Easter Tuesday, when wardens were appointed, had passed, so it was the Vestry meeting in 1780 when the two were officially appointed, Daniel Winwood by the “*subscribing inhabitants present*” and John Startin by the Minister. It is recorded in the Town Book that at a meeting on June 27<sup>th</sup> 1781 the Churchwardens of St Martin’s and St Philip’s presented their accounts for the previous year, and wardens of St Mary’s and St Paul’s theirs, so that the levy may be determined. In addition a bill was produced for the consecration of St Paul’s chapel amounting to £56 19s 6d and it was agreed it would be paid out of the next year’s levy.

### ***The Consecration Sermon***

The parchment of the Consecration sermon also exists in the City Archives <sup>32</sup>. The sermon was read by the Rev Thomas White, the surrogate of the Vicar General. It explains the background to the Act, with the rector of St Martin’s, the churchwardens and the parishioners all keen to have a new chapel of ease for the use of the parishioners of St Martin’s and the inhabitants of the Town. Charles Colmore is confirmed as the patron with the right of nomination and presentation for him and his heirs etc. and it tells us that the patron “*and several others*” have raised the money, which is all being rather economical with the truth. It is notable that whereas in other documents Colmore is described as “*of Taplow in the County of Berks*” he is now “*late of Taplow etc*” and “*of Birmingham*”. (The Colmore family had left Birmingham some years earlier, but according to some assorted deeds, he now had homes in London and Birmingham.) Everyone had, for themselves and their Heirs to

*“Promise and vow respectively that for ever they will refuse and renounce to put this Chapel or any part thereof to any private secular prophane or common uses whatsoever but will endeavour in their several places and Rights that all may be wholly and only reserved and applied to religious uses and to the Glory of God and the salvation of their souls”*. It was also made clear again that all fees had to be double the St Martin’s fees, so that St Martin’s rector had his normal fee and a similar amount went to the minister. At the end of the sermon the Vicar General was asked to proceed to his holy function i.e. installing the new minister, the Rev William Toy Young.

A document on the Form of Consecration has hand written on it that the collection at the door was £55-12-6.

### ***The Indenture of July 28<sup>th</sup> 1779***

After the consecration there was a further meeting to sign and seal this new indenture. It is a large manuscript of five leaves, No 270063, in the Local History Section of the City Archives <sup>33</sup> and has been entitled “Assignment of the Nomination of a Minister to St Paul’s Chapel during the lifetime of Charles Colmore Esq.”. Charles Colmore was not the patron until the chapel had been consecrated. He had nothing to sell until the chapel was consecrated, so it looks as though another Indenture was needed to confirm the arrangements. This time all of the trustees in the arrangement have their names written out, with their occupations, a number of times, and their numbers have increased from 31 to 45, plus two more that were the assignees of the Estate and Effects of John Goodall, who, since signing up, had become bankrupt. In effect the number used to determine the proportion each had to pay would be 46, the last one as a creditor of the Goodall Estate. The manuscript is largely a recital of all that went before, covering the 1774 meeting and agreement, the 1777 Indenture and the 1778 meeting. The Indentures need to be studied further. Some of the legal language has been difficult to interpret, for example there is mention of bonds and of penalties which are not understood, but the major points about the responsibilities of the trustees come through clearly.

### **The people**

The whole venture for the two new chapels arose from the problems at St Martin’s with space for worshipping and for burials. It is not at all surprising then to find a lot of names in the Town Book of St Martin’s of people who became trustees for St Mary’s or St Paul’s. People such as Thomas Westley, Thomas Bingham, Thomas Salt, Joseph Guest, Elias Wallin, Thomas Lutwyche, Daniel Winwood all served as churchwardens of St Martin’s, and

others such as Richard Rabone, Joseph Sheldon, John Guest, Josiah Pratt, Thomas Simcox, and Joseph Green were sidesmen or surveyors. The prominent men at St Martin's were the men who implemented the Act.

**Daniel Winwood**, a toymaker, was a churchwarden at St Martin's in 1775 and did a stint as a surveyor of the highways. He was at the first public meeting about the chapels and was deeply involved in the early negotiations on the bill. He subsequently chaired a number of committee meetings. Although he is not prominent in the building of St Mary's he is mentioned on one occasion when his advice was sought on an altar rail. In the minutes of the meeting when Henry Kempson is assigned his seat at St Mary's, Winwood was assigned a £20 seat, but it had been crossed out. Nonetheless it does suggest that he had made a significant contribution. Two years later he emerged as the chairman of the trustees of St Paul's and he had the unenviable task of recruiting men to become trustees, to meet the requirements of the agreement with Colmore and to become accountable for the building of St Paul's and the provision of a parsonage. Although describing himself as a toymaker in the Indentures, in trade directories of the time his name appears as a chapemaker, of 32 New Hall Street. Chapemaking appears to be a particular sector of toymaking, and he was one of only 9 in the town. A chape is a small piece of metal that forms the tip of a sword's scabbard, or a small plate attached to the scabbard, or alternatively it can be a part of a buckle. The directories also mention the partnership of Winwood, Dearman and Freeth as iron founders, suggesting he had interests in more than chapemaking. In an essay on the history of two old Cradley water mills, Peter Barnsley<sup>34</sup> discovered that on August 11<sup>th</sup> 1777 one of the mills, the Shilton Water Corn Mill was leased to Daniel Winwood, chapemaker, by Thomas Brettell. Just under a year later, Winwood mortgaged the property to Taylor and Lloyd for £1000. Apparently the money was to help pay off his creditors, and he sold other property, including a "*Blade mill*" at Halesowen, for the same purpose. This appears to have worked in the short term, but Barnsley writes that some years later, perhaps 1787, Winwood became bankrupt and at a public auction his lease on Shilton mill was sold. Also deserving a special mention is:-

**Henry Kempson**, the land surveyor, features throughout the whole undertaking. He was not at the first public meeting, but he is mentioned at the committee stage, staking out the plots for both buildings. He figures quite prominently in the account of St Mary's and towards the end he produces the scheme adopted for the assignment of sittings, and suggests one for the determination of rents. His contribution is recognised when he is assigned a pew. For St Paul's he was secretary to the trustees, in the beginning running the business with Eykyn, and it is highly likely that he contributed to the assignment of seats and determination of rents. His notebook is a rich source of information, probably better than a minute book would have been. The pity

of it is that he did not continue it to the end. A particular feature of his notebook is his use, from time to time, of shorthand. What more might be revealed if this could be understood? On top of this, his name appears frequently in the Town Book, indicating his approval of this and that, acting as a surveyor of the highways, there is barely a page without his name, and then, in 1781, *“Mr Henry Kempson having attended and settled the accounts in the Book sundry times it was agreed to make him a ? of ten guineas and to allow him 2 gns a year to continue his attendance on these occasions”*. He died in 1808, aged 63, his obituary stating that *“Religion Humility and Kindness ornamented the whole of his useful life, leaving the strongest sense of sorrow and gratitude in the minds of those who shared his friendship, and the universal esteem of all who had the pleasure of knowing him”*. The Minute Book has some entries for St Mary’s in later years, one with Peter Kempson a warden in 1811 and a John Kempson at the same time, and a still later entry in 1836 has a Samuel Kempson as a warden and a John Kempson. It really does look as though the perpetual leasehold of Henry’s seat was working well.

**George Holloway** died in 1789, aged 72 and was buried in St Paul’s Churchyard. His is another name that appears frequently in the Town Book. Although not at the inaugural meeting, Holloway’s name soon appears in the Minute Book, as agent or estate manager for Charles Colmore, bringing news of what Colmore was prepared to offer. Later, in 1776, he issued the notice about the intention to start building St Paul’s, but later declined an invitation to become the secretary of St Paul’s trustees. He was not a trustee, but undoubtedly gave Henry Kempson a lot of help.

**The Revd T W Young** died in 1817 aged 62 and is interred at the east end of the church, where there is a memorial tablet on the north wall in the sanctuary. Other than he was a curate at St Martin’s before his selection as minister for St Paul’s, not a lot is known about his ministry. Around 1790 he began to take an active part in the organising of the music festivals for the General Hospital and was invited onto the Festival Committee. There is a manuscript in the City Archives <sup>35</sup> showing that in 1816, acting, with others, on behalf of the governors of the General Hospital, he was involved in promoting a scheme for teaching the singing of oratorios. Apparently when the governors organised concerts for raising funds for the General Hospital they had to bring in singers from across the kingdom and at great expense. The intention of the teaching scheme, centred on the Oratorio Choral Society, was to provide adequate local resources and so reduce the expense.

**James Kempson** made an important contribution when he suggested sharing a festival with the general Hospital, not only for the money it brought

in but probably for the publicity created. He was an important figure in the musical world of the Town. In 1762, at the age of 20, he was choir master and clerk at St Bartholomew's and was involved with others in the creation of the Musical and Amicable Society, a group largely made up of the choirs of St Bartholomew's and St Philip's, who enjoyed singing and imbibing together. He emerged as a leading figure of this group and in 1766 he proposed the formation of a more strictly musical society, a Choral Society. There was soon a further offshoot, the Chapell Society that raised funds for charity, as described earlier. In the trade directory of 1774 <sup>2</sup> James Kempson is listed as a buttonmaker of 65 Snow Hill. The first recorded clerk of St Paul's chapel was Thomas Venables Cobbe in the early 1780s, a position he held until 1801, when Kempson succeeded him and held the position until his death in 1822 in his eightieth year. He was buried in St Paul's Churchyard and his epitaph reads "*I know that my Redeemer liveth. Sacred to the memory of James Kempson 21 years Clerk of this Chapel and upwards of 50 years assistant conductor of the Oratorio Choral Society of this Town, who departed this life on March 18<sup>th</sup> 1822 aged 79 years*". To have acted as assistant conductor for more than fifty years was an astonishing achievement and suggests that he had that position in the late 1760s, when his Choral Society was formed.

### **Rectors of St Martin's**

The Rector who gave his approval to the Act was William Chase and his name appears in the Act. There is no record of him attending any meetings. In 1772 he was replaced by John Parsons, who was replaced by William Hinton, Doctor of Divinity, in 1779. By 1781 he had been replaced by Charles Curtis.

### **Trustees of St Paul's**

By the time of the 1779 Indenture forty five men had agreed to meet the Colmore obligation and to be accountable for finishing the chapel and the parsonage. If ever St Paul's needed a Roll of Honour they have it ready made. Their names are given here in the order they appear on the Indenture. Their occupations are as they appear in the 1781 Directory of Merchants and Tradesmen printed and sold by Pearson and Rollason,<sup>36</sup> the printers used by Henry Kempson.

Daniel Winwood	Chapemaker	32 Newhall Street
John Dallaway	Plater	48 New Street
Elias Wallin	Buckle maker	17 Newhall Street
John Startin	Merchant	30 Colmore Row
Samuel Hammond	Buttonmaker	89 Snow Hill
Edward Hudson	Buttonmaker	99 Snow Hill
Thomas Simcox	Ringmaker	25 Livery Street
Richard Walker	Draper & Mercer	5 Dale End
Joseph Townshend	Brassfounder	Bread St Newhall
Richard Jefcoate	Enamelled button maker	Great Charles Street
Josiah Pratt	Steel Toymaker & plater	27 Cannon Street
Richard Hawkins	Buttonmaker	65/66 Edmund Street

Samuel Ford	Merchant	48 Newhall Street
Thomas Westley	Plumber and Glazier	Bull Lane
John Guest	Stay maker and Taylor	42 Brick Lane
Robert Gill	Toymaker	
William Barrs	Draper	Temple Row
James Pickard	Buttonmaker	26 Newhall Street
Joseph Green	Merchant	25 New Street
Thomas Smith M.D.		23 Newhall Street
John Bird	Grocer	31 Colmore Row
John Westwood	Dye sinker & Coffin Plate	
	Furniture Maker	37 Newhall Street
Thomas Green	Ironmonger	101 Snow Hill
William Hobson	Merchant	
Charles Twigg	Merchant	
Thomas Fletcher	Japanner & Painter	108/9 Snow Hill
Bernard Shepherd Heaton	Draper and Mercer	15 High Street
Richard Conquest	Merchant	47 Newhall Street
Thomas Bingham	Bucklemaker	14 Newhall Street
Samuel Brookes	Tea Dealer	77 High Street
John Iddins	Timber Merchant	32 Cherry Street
George Colley	Toymaker	
Isaac Anderton	Toymaker	31 Weaman St
Nathaniel Glover	Brassfounder	9 Great Charles Street
William Dickenson	Mercer	
William Walker	Merchant	11 Catherine Street
Francis Parrott Esq.	Surgeon & Man-midwife	52 Bull Street
William Villers	Brazier	
Joseph Rabone	Toymaker	7 Bath Street
Joseph Gibbs	Warehouse & Shops	31 Katherine Street
Thomas Lutwyche	Grocer & Tobacconist	138 Digbeth
Thomas Rock	Ironmonger	26 Great Charles Street
William Anderton	Toymaker	
Joseph Sheldon	Plumber & Glazier	18 Temple Street
Benjamin Parker	Gentleman	

Of the trustees 9 were toymakers, 7 merchants, and 5 buttonmakers out of 18 occupations that made a good cross section of the Town's business activities. One rather special entry in the 1781 Directory is "*James Watt Engineer Harper's Hill*".

A number of the trustees of St Paul's became officers of the Town under the manorial system in force then, as recorded by Hutton.<sup>1</sup> The positions were High Bailiff, Low Bailiff and Constables. It had become traditional that the High Bailiff position would be occupied by a church man and the Low Bailiff by a dissenter. The High Bailiff's responsibilities were for the markets and four trustees of St Paul's were elected to that office viz Thomas Westley 1773, Joseph Green 1778, Daniel Winwood 1780 and Richard Conquest 1787. In addition John Turner, the chairman for St Mary's trustees, had been elected

High Bailiff for 1760 and Thomas Faulconbridge, who chaired the public meeting and consulted the Archbishop of Canterbury, was High Bailiff in 1787. Nine of the trustees had served as constables. They were Elias Wallin, Thomas Bingham, Thomas Lutwyche, John Startin, Joseph Sheldon, John Guest, John Dallaway, Thomas Green and William Barrs.

In 1769 the Act of Improvement for Birmingham had been passed <sup>17</sup>, an Act *“for laying open and widening certain ways and passages within the Town of Birmingham; and for cleansing and lighting of the streets, lanes ways and passages thereto and for removing and preventing nuisances and obstructions thereto”*. Fifty commissioners were appointed, including well known worthies such as John Ash MD, Dr Small, John Baskerville and Samuel Lloyd and son. They were to be known as the Street Commissioners. Among them were Thomas Faulconbridge, already mentioned, and John Turner senior, who chaired the St Mary’s trustees. Four of them became St Paul’s trustees, viz., Thomas Bingham, Thomas Lutwyche, Elias Wallin and Thomas Westley. The latter two figured prominently throughout the building of the chapels. Wallin’s plan for rents had been adopted at St Mary’s (Westley was in favour of the Kempson plan), and it was Wallin and Westley who had approached the General Hospital about a joint festival with St Paul’s. Wallin, Westley and Bingham and four other trustees were present at the Vestry Meeting in 1780 when Winwood and Startin were made first wardens of St Paul’s.

### **The Communion Plate**

A set of Communion Plate belonging to St Paul’s has been on display in the Assay Office Museum since 1987 after years in bank vaults or under the beds of incumbents. For many years the origin of the silver had been a mystery, but a press cutting in the Birmingham Post in June 1979 <sup>37</sup>, of the 100 years ago, 200 years ago variety, solved the mystery. The cutting quoted an announcement in Aris’s Birmingham Gazette of June 1779 as follows:- *“Birmingham....The Lord Bishop of the Diocese has appointed Wednesday next for the Congregation of St Paul’s Chapel in the Town. The Rev. Mr. Archdeacon Fotheringham is to preach the Confederation Sermon, after which a collection will be made to enable the Trustees to purchase a Service of Plate”*. As Archdeacon of Coventry, this is the same Archdeacon Fotheringham who witnessed the signing of the Consecration document, but just what the Confederation Sermon was is unknown. If the collection had been successful the trustees could have ordered some plate soon after. The Hallmark date of 1780, which is what the plate has, establishes with reasonable certainty that it was the trustees who bought the plate. The maker was the well known and highly reputable London silversmith firm of Hester Bateman.

We know from the Minute Book that the trustees of St Mary's resolved to buy Communion Plate from Boulton and Fothergill. This plate, hallmarked 1774, also found its way to the Assay Office. This then begs the question of why the St Paul trustees did not buy from Boulton and Fothergill in 1779. A probable answer is that the silver business of Boulton and Fothergill had been losing money and, according to Quickenden, the partners dramatically reduced production after they reached their highest production figure in 1776-7. As it happens, St Bartholomew's also purchased in 1774 a set of Communion plate from Boulton and Fothergill, from a gift by a Mrs Mary Carles of Birmingham. This silver is in the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. So all three chapels of ease to St Martin's had similar Communion Plate and they are well worth viewing. The two sets in the Assay Office Museum are displayed almost side by side and the contrasting styles of Hester Bateman and Boulton and Fothergill can be readily appreciated. Pieces from St Bartholomew's were exhibited at the 2009 Boulton Exhibition in Birmingham.

### **The Parsonage of St Paul's**

The Act stated that Charles Colmore had to provide a plot of land 12 yards wide and 50 yards deep for a parsonage. This was elaborated on later to the effect that it had to be "*a good and substantial dwelling house*" with "*necessary outbuildings and a walled in garden behind*". The cost was to be not less than £400 and not more than £500. Until the house was ready to be occupied the minister was to receive a yearly payment of £20, in two half yearly payments. The house had to be built within three years of the consecration. No information has been uncovered on when the parsonage was built, or how much it cost and how the trustees found the funds for it. The house was sold in 1870 and documents associated with that <sup>38</sup> show the plot at the corner of St Paul's Square and Brook Street, fronting the churchyard at 12 yards wide and 50 yards deep. It was a three storey house with seven bedrooms. Rann Kennedy, the minister who succeeded Young, had built a school at the back of the site, which was by this time a warehouse. A new parsonage was bought in Handsworth in 1870.

### **The Act of 1811**

In 1811 St Mary's secured an Act of Parliament <sup>39</sup> to repeal part of the 1772 Act. It was to do with the maximum sum that could be raised for the incumbent from the renting of pews. In the 1772 Act the sum was a minimum of £165 per annum and a maximum of £200 per annum. In the new Act it

became a minimum of £350 per annum and a maximum of £550 per annum, and it applied only to St Mary's chapel.

### **The Advowson of St Paul's**

As it transpired, Colmore died in 1794 before any further vacancy in the incumbency arose. At his death, the patronage will have passed to his heir, Lionel, who died in 1807, when Caroline will have succeeded him. The next vacancy arose at the death of the Revd Young, in 1817, but in readiness for that the right of nomination and presentation had been purchased by the congregation for Rann Kennedy, presumably from Caroline. If it is assumed that it cost at least £200, then it would mean that the net effect for the Colmore Estate was that they paid nothing of the £1000 and still retained the patronage.

Shortly before he died Charles Colmore had added a codicil to his will stipulating that if Lionel and Caroline died without issue, his estates were to go to his "*dear friend*" the Marquess of Hertford, failing whom, his son Lord Yarmouth. In 1825, when it appeared that Caroline was unlikely to marry, or more to the point, since she was then approaching 60, was unlikely to have issue, Caroline applied to the Court of Chancery for permission to raise large sums of money. As the Marquess of Hertford would be the beneficiary at her death he had to agree such a move. This he does in a manuscript in the City Archives <sup>40</sup> dated November 20<sup>th</sup> 1826 and entitled "*Release from the most Noble Francis Charles Seymour Conway, Marquess of Hertford, to Caroline Colmore....spinster, of messuages, lands and appurtenances in Birmingham, and the advowson and perpetual right of patronage and presentation of in and to the perpetual curacy of St Paul in Birmingham*". The assets to be disposed of included the advowson of St Paul's. Within days, on December 1<sup>st</sup>, another deed was signed <sup>41</sup>, this time for the conveyance of the advowson of St Paul's. The parties to the deed were Caroline Colmore, Edward Latimer of Headington, Oxon, and Edward William Forty Latimer of Lincoln College Oxford. This deed was held by the trustees of St Martin's and was deposited at the City Archives by the solicitors Ryland Martineau and Co. Edward Latimer was a well known wine merchant with premises in "the High" in Oxford. Through Mrs Latimer's aunt, the Latimers became Lords of the Manor of Heddington living at Headington House. Mrs Latimer gave birth to fifteen children in seventeen years, twelve of whom survived to adulthood. Of the twelve, Edward William Forty was the second son, and in 1826 he was studying at Lincoln College, obtaining his BA in 1827. The deed states that "*out of regard to the said Edward Latimer and to testify her sense of the services which he hath rendered to her...(she) hath determined freely and voluntarily to give and to grant the said advowson to the use and benefit of the said Edward Latimer his heirs and assigns for ever in manner hereinafter expressed*". Presumably the services Edward Latimer rendered

were those of a wine merchant. The “*manner*” Caroline had devised was then revealed. With the approval of Edward Latimer, and for a consideration of ten shillings, the advowson was to go to Edward William Forty Latimer, during Edward’s life. However, Rann Kennedy had a perpetual curacy so no vacancy arose at St Paul’s for many years. Edward William Forty looked elsewhere and became Rector of Waddesdon . Edward died in 1845 and in his will he left the advowson of St Paul’s to the fourth son, the Revd George Burton Potts Latimer.

At the retirement of Rann Kennedy in 1848, George Latimer presented himself to the bishop and became the next minister of St Paul’s, so a patron became a minister. What followed was a not-so-straightforward story still being researched.

### **The three Chapels of Ease to St Martin’s**

The two chapels of ease, St Mary’s and St Paul’s, established by Act of Parliament of 1772, were consecrated in 1774 and 1779 respectively. In 1841 they were given designated areas and licensed to publish banns of marriage and carry out marriages, but they were still chapels of ease. It was to be 1868 before St Paul’s became St Paul’s church, a parish church with its first vicar.

St Mary’s steeple was rebuilt in 1866. Because of need for land for the expansion of the General Hospital, and under an Act of Parliament in 1925, St Mary’s church was closed, pending demolition. The subsequent sale of the church land paid most of the cost of £20,415 to build another St Mary’s at Pype Hayes in 1929-30.

St Bartholomew’s was created a parish in 1847, and closed in 1937. The building was badly damaged by a German bomb in 1942, and was demolished by 1943, except for a fragment of the east end and east window. By 1961 it had disappeared entirely and the site was a car park.

For St Paul’s, Wyatt was back on the scene when a Vestry meeting in 1785 agreed to a new east window to be made by Francis Eginton to a design by Benjamin West and with the “*architecture*” by Wyatt. It took six years to complete, raising the funds being, again, a major problem. It was surprising to find in St Paul’s Vestry Minute Book an entry for September 30<sup>th</sup> 1794, just 15 years after consecration, as follows “*At a meeting of the Inhabitants of the Town held here this day it was determined that the Chapel be put into proper repair*”. Unfortunately no further details are given. On August 6<sup>th</sup> 1822 an Indenture, available in the City archives <sup>43</sup>, was signed by Matthew Seaborne, a stone mason of Birmingham, and a committee of subscribers, for

the building of a steeple for St Paul's chapel to the design of a London architect, Mr Francis Goodwin, and at a cost of £1097. Each of the 9 subscribers was responsible for one ninth of the cost, and they were:-

Revd Rann Kennedy	Minister
Thomas Pemberton, the younger	Brassfounder
Robert Wheeler	Gunmaker
William Aston	Button maker
John Chamberlain	Gentleman
John Walthew	Builder
William Baldwin	Buttonmaker
George Frederick Muntz	Roller of metals
William Henry Bates	Factor

The steeple was completed in 1823. On this occasion, and in contrast to the previous building contract, Seaborne made sure that if any of the nine defaulted, the others picked up his share of the cost. Muntz was a larger than life Birmingham character, as the size of his signature on this document attests.

As part of a plan to increase the number of seats, particularly for Sunday School children, a scheme devised by Hansom and Welch in 1832-34<sup>44</sup> included the forward extension of the west gallery. This then needed further cast iron columns, three on each side.

St Paul's survives, cleaned and restored, and in the rejuvenated Square it probably looks as fine now as it ever did. However there is one big difference in the building, a peal of ten bells. In 2004 the Vicar of St Paul's, the Revd Tom Pyke was asked by Richard Grimmett, the Master of St Martin's Guild of Church Bellringers, if he would be interested in having a peal of ten bells. In 2005 the Guild would be celebrating their 250<sup>th</sup> year and they thought that this would be an appropriate way of marking it. Tom, the PCC and the Diocese agreed and in November 2005, largely through the efforts of members of the Guild, the first peal was rung. It had cost some £140,000, raised by public subscription. Two hundred and thirty four years after the parishioners of St Martin's had made the first moves for a chapel of ease, the task had been completed. There could not have been a more appropriate group to do it than the bellringers of St Martin's.

### **Acknowledgements**

My thanks are due to David Temperley, who kindly pointed me in the direction of the Minute Book, and to Fiona Tait, the archivist who found it; to staff at Birmingham Archives and Heritage for their help with manuscripts; to

Margaret Richards and Jacqui Townsend, collaborators at St Paul's church, for their advice and encouragement.

## References

BAH Birmingham Archives and Heritage

1. William Hutton *An History of Birmingham* Pearson and Rollason 1783. Reprinted by EP Publishing 1976.
2. M. Swinney *The New Birmingham Directory and Gentleman and Tradesman's Compleat Memorandum Book* . M.Swinney 1774.
3. Act of Parliament 7 Anne,c13 (private act) 1708
4. Joseph McKenna *Birmingham The Building of a City* Tempus 2005.
5. Paul Leslie Line *Birmingham A History in Maps* p11 The History Press 2009
6. Carl Chinn *Birminghammail.net*. 2008
7. Paul Leslie Line *ibid* pp 42,43
8. BAH MS 28/575327
9. Paul Lesley Line *ibid* pp 41-45
10. BAH 286011 *The Town Book of St Martin's and St Philip's. Minutes levies and other memoranda with information relating to Birmingham generally*. 5 vols. 1723-1912.
11. BAH MS 1101 *Minute Book 1771. Proceedings and Resolutions of the Inhabitants of the Town of Birmingham for building one or two chapels in the said Town*.
12. BAH MS 3069/ 372721 Henry Kempson *Memorandums relative to St Paul's Chapel*.
13. Robert K.Dent *Old and New Birmingham A History of the Town and its People* Houghton and Hammond Birmingham 1880
14. J A Langford *A Century of Birmingham Life* Birmingham More & Co 1870.
15. Conrad Gill *History of Birmingham Vol1*. Birmingham City Council/Oxford University Press 1952.
- 16 K Quickenden *The Planning of Boulton and Fothergill's Silver Business Silver and Jewellery Production and Consumption since 1750*. p25. The Article Press 1995.
17. Act of Parliament 9 Geo111, c.83 1769

18. James Campbell Grant *St Peter's Church Martley - a history* J.C.Grant 2000.
19. BAH MS 58/48
20. BAH 17592 *An Act for the Building of Two New Chapels etc 12 Geo111, c.64 1772.*
21. Survey of Birmingham for the Earl of Plymouth 1825- Courtesy of A Sandilands.
22. J T Bunce *History of the Birmingham General Hospital and the musical festivals.* Birmingham Cornish Bros. 1873.
23. Sheena Mason (ed) *Matthew Boulton Selling what all the world desires* p191 Birmingham City Council/ Yale University Press 2009.
24. Certificates of assignment of a pew:-
  - a) BAH DRO 35/156 1791 for Mr Wm Waight.
  - b) BAH MS 1285/2/12 1798 for Mr John Matchett.
25. Paul Leslie Line *ibid* p57.
26. BAH MS 3069/270060 December 23<sup>rd</sup> 1778.
27. L.D.Ettlinger & R.G.Holloway *St Paul's Birmingham- midland planning in the eighteenth century* The Architectural Review 1947 pp226-28.
- 28 BAH MS 3033/436293 August 1<sup>st</sup> 1777.
29. BAH BDR/D1/37/1 1779.
30. St Paul's church archives. *Nadfas Church Record.* 2003.
31. C. Pickford *www.stpaulsbells.org.uk*
32. BAH MS 3069/270062 June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1779.
33. BAH MS 3069/270063 July 28<sup>th</sup> 1779
34. P Barnsley *Two old Cradely mills* [www.cradelylinks.com](http://www.cradelylinks.com).
35. BAH MS 3033/252645 1816
36. *The Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley, Bilston, and Willenhall Directory of Merchant and Tradesman Useful Companion* Printed and sold by Pearson and Rollason 1781.
37. St Paul's church archives *Birmingham Post Cutting* June 1979
38. BAH BDR/D1/37/5.
39. BAH 17694 *51Geo.,c68* 1811.
40. BAH MS 3375/406612 November 22<sup>nd</sup> 1826.
41. BAH MS 1280/17 December 1<sup>st</sup> 1826.
42. BAH MS 1280/27 May 20<sup>th</sup> 1861
43. BAH DRO35/76 1821
44. Incorporated Church Building Society *ICBS 01542 Folios 29ff,* Lambeth Palace Library. 1832-34.

John Sawkill © 2010