

Archaeological recording in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral, 2007–8

Sitecode PKB07



**John Schofield
Cathedral Archaeologist**

February 2009

Contents

Introduction and scope	4
The Knights Bachelor Chapel	4
The proposed scheme	12
Photographic survey of the ledgers before their re-arrangement	14
Moving of a ledger slab and associated works in the south part of the crypt	18
Conclusions	24
List of contexts	24
Acknowledgements	24
Bibliography	24

Figures

Fig 1	Extract from the survey drawing of the existing arrangement in the proposed chapel, from Purcell Miller Tritton drawing SP180 5216B (May 2006); above, the location of the south-east corner bay within the cathedral crypt.....	5
Fig 2	Overlay of the Wren building and the outline of the medieval cathedral at the south-east corner of both buildings. The octagonal bases are the assumed positions of piers in St Faith's undercroft (13th century). The general position of the ledgers within the proposed chapel is shown.....	6
Fig 3	The west side of the west screen. This screen was to be dismantled, and the Tijou panel kept	7
Fig 4	The north screen, looking north-east. This screen was to be retained in situ.....	7
Fig 5	Ledgers 3–5 (Waters, Roth and Taylor), looking north	9
Fig 6	Ledger 3 (Waters) which it was proposed to move, looking north-west. The grille over the underfloor heating duct is also shown. The duct passed under the ledgers.....	9
Fig 7	Ledgers 5–7 (Taylor, Wilson, Dunt), looking north through the north screen.....	10
Fig 8	Ledger 4 (Roth): one of the earliest surviving ledgers from the Wren building, of 1696.....	10
Fig 9	Ledger 5 (Taylor). His burial in a vault in 1766 is one of the earliest noted in surviving registers, but the site of the vault is not known.....	11
Fig 10	The grille and doorway on the south side of the chapel, looking south. Ledger 3 (Waters) is in the foreground.....	11
Fig 11	Proposed arrangement of the new Chapel; extract from Purcell Miller Tritton drawing SP180 5238A.....	13
Fig 12	Waters ledger, inventory no. 1445	14
Fig 13	Roth ledger, inventory no. 1446.....	14
Fig 14	Taylor ledger, inventory no. 1447	15
Fig 15	Wilson ledger, inventory no. 1448	15
Fig 16	Dunt ledger, inventory no. 1449.....	15
Fig 17	Foley plaque, inventory no. 1444.....	15
Fig 18	Comyn ledger, inventory no. 1450.....	16
Fig 19	Jackson ledger, inventory no. 1451	16
Fig 20	Marion Holman-Hunt memorial, inventory no. 1404	16
Fig 21	View of site before insertion of Knights Bachelor Chapel, looking east from outside	16

Fig 22	View of interior of chapel before refurbishment, looking east	17
Fig 23	Reused Tijou panel in the west partition, which was to be removed and stored (back view, looking west)	17
Fig 24	Site as existing: PMT drawing SP178 SP5284A (March 2007)	18
Fig 25	Stripping out: PMT drawing SP178 SP5285A (March 2007).....	18
Fig 26	Details of ramp: PMT drawing SP178 SP5286A (March 2007; incorrectly titled 'North Ramp', which is a similar ramp on the north side already built).....	18
Fig 27	Plan of the south part of the crypt south-east of the Nelson chamber and east of the Displaced Monuments aisle, showing the location of ledger (inventory no. 2349) before removal	19
Fig 28	The ledger to be moved (cathedral inventory no. 2349), before removal, looking west	19
Fig 29	The area of the crypt in which the ledger lay, before removal, looking south.....	20
Fig 30	Removal of the ledger in progress (J Schofield)	21
Fig 31	The end of the casket [11] within decayed remains of the wooden coffin, inside the brick grave lining [10], looking west (scale 0.2m).....	21
Fig 32	The brick vault [10], decayed coffin (with nameplate) and casket [11], looking west (scale 0.2m).....	22
Fig 33	The nameplate on the coffin [11]	22

Figs 24–26 are on un-numbered pages following page 18.

Introduction and scope

This report is of two archaeological recording exercises in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral, London, in 2007–8. They share the Museum of London sitecode PKB07. The projects were:

1. Refurbishment of the bay at the extreme east end of the south aisle to form a new Knights Bachelor Chapel;
2. Recording of a coffin and casket containing human bones when being moved, in the south part of the crypt.

The sitecode PKB07 had previously been used for another small watching brief, within the same project as no.2 here (i.e. small works in the crypt, largely to improve disabled access): recording of human burials and a separate ledger stone during works to the floor on the north side of the crypt; this recording was undertaken by the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS). This is reported separately: Wroe-Brown 2008.

The level of the crypt floor is at about 13.45m OD.

Briefs for all three pieces of archaeological work were prepared by the present author, the Cathedral Archaeologist. There was a separate archaeological assessment for the refurbishment of the bay to become the Knights Bachelor Chapel (Schofield 2006), but there was not an assessment of the crypt access works which generated the other two pieces of work. The archaeological recording was required by the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England and funded by the individual projects (Dean and Chapter; Order of Knights Bachelor).

The report has been prepared within the relevant standard of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA, 2001). There were no artefactual finds from either of the two projects reported here..

The Knights Bachelor Chapel

In 2006 the Order of the Knights Bachelor approached St Paul's Cathedral with the suggestion that a chapel for the Knights Bachelor should be made by adapting and refurbishing the easternmost bay of the south aisle of the crypt of the cathedral (Fig 1). This was at the time fitted up as a chapel, with screens containing doors on both west and north sides. It communicated on the north side with the existing OBE Chapel.

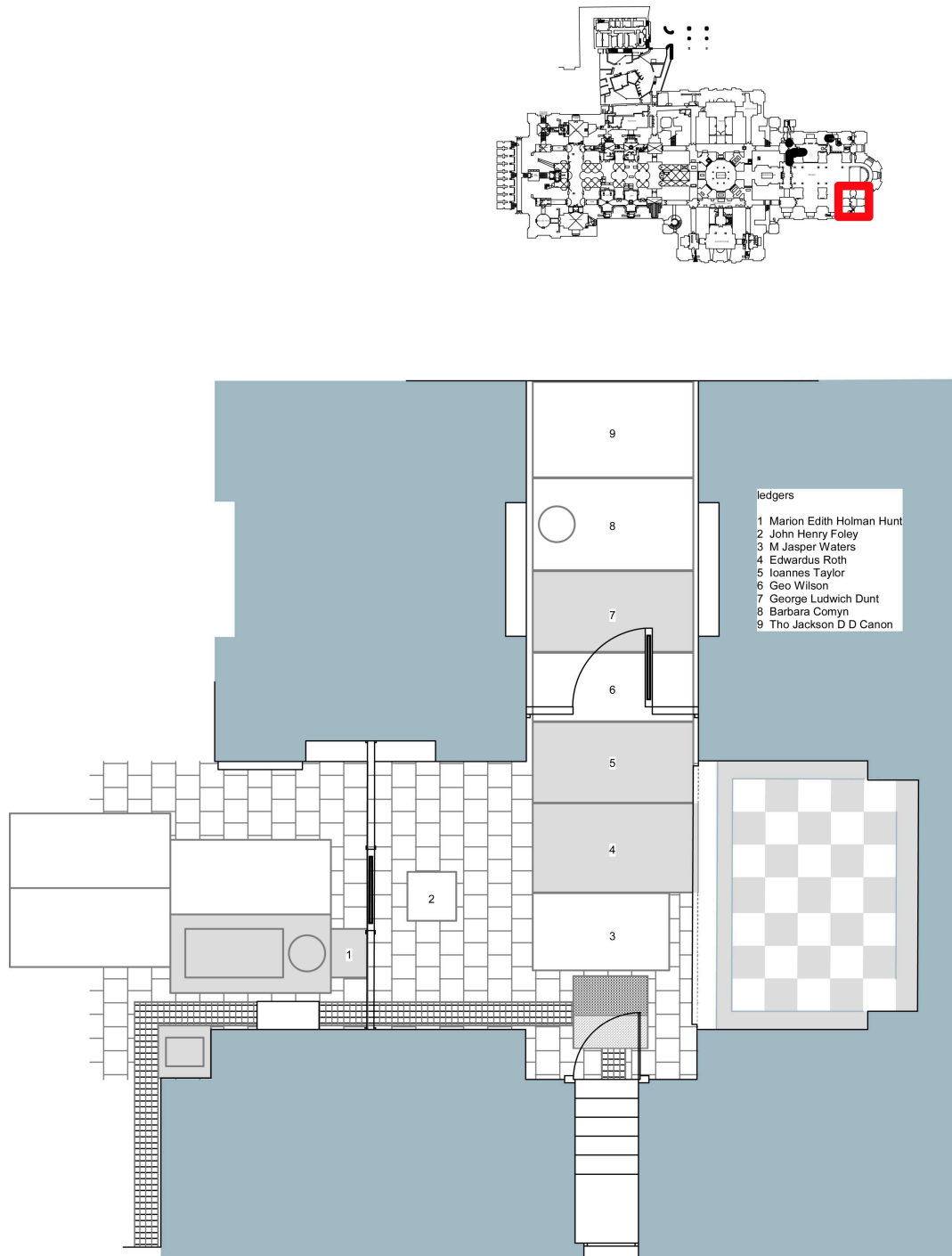


Fig 1 Extract from the survey drawing of the existing arrangement in the proposed chapel, from Purcell Miller Tritton drawing SP180 5216B (May 2006); above, the location of the south-east corner bay within the cathedral crypt

This corner of the cathedral is where construction first began in 1675. The Wren corner is just inside the site of the south-east corner of the medieval cathedral (the medieval corner itself survives outside the Wren wall, in a manhole). The overlay of the two buildings in this area is shown in Fig 2. Within the footprint of the Wren building, the medieval foundations have never been known to survive except as disturbed footings at some distance below the floor.



Fig 2 Overlay of the Wren building and the outline of the medieval cathedral at the south-east corner of both buildings. The octagonal bases are the assumed positions of piers in St Faith's undercroft (13th century). The general position of the ledgers within the proposed chapel is shown

The desk-based archaeological assessment (Schofield 2006) focussed mainly on two matters: fragments of original Tijou ironwork in the two screens (on the west and north sides) and the nine ledgers in a row north–south. These lay over a concrete trench for the present heating system; and it was proposed to re-arrange them.

The two screens are called the west screen which faces the south aisle of the crypt to the west (Fig 3), and the north screen, which is in the narrow passage northwards out of the bay (Fig 4). It is thought that these were constructed by Lord Mottistone, presumably as ancillary parts of the OBE Chapel arrangement, in the 1950s. Both screens incorporated a small panel of Tijou ironwork, from an unknown earlier location.



Fig 3 The west side of the west screen. This screen was to be dismantled, and the Tijou panel kept



Fig 4 The north screen, looking north-east. This screen was to be retained in situ

Ledgers and floor

There are nine ledgers (this term will be used though one of them, no. 2 Foley, is a memorial plaque) within or on the borders of the proposed scheme. As far as could be ascertained, no. 1 Mrs Holman Hunt of 1931 and no. 2 Foley of 1874 were in their original position; but the others had all been brought from elsewhere in the cathedral (probably from places in the crypt) since it was known that a broad duct for the heating system lay beneath them. This ran north from the square grille on the south side of the chapel (shown in Fig 1 and Fig 6); it was seen during the refurbishment of the OBE Chapel to the north in 2002–3. It comprises concrete walls about 1m apart and is a trench about 1.1m deep, with working heating pipes within it. The date of construction is not known in detail but is probably of about 1900. This would then be the date of laying ledgers 3 to 9 over the duct. All the ledgers are seen in their present positions in plans of the ledgers produced by the cathedral in the early 20th century, now in SPFA.

The details of the ledgers, from the cathedral inventory, were given in the Appendix to the assessment. They are, briefly:

1	Marion Holman Hunt, 1931
2	John Henry Foley, 1874
3	M Jasper Waters, 1774 and Deborah Waters 1788
4	Edward Roth, 1696
5	John Taylor, 1766
6	Edmund George Wilson, 1781
7	George Dunt, 1706
8	Barbara Comyn, 1750
9	Thomas Jackson, 1797

and views of the area, to compare with the plan, are given in Fig 5 to Fig 10. These are from the assessment, some with notes as to significance.



Fig 5 Ledgers 3–5 (Waters, Roth and Taylor), looking north



Fig 6 Ledger 3 (Waters) which it was proposed to move, looking north-west. The grille over the underfloor heating duct is also shown. The duct passed under the ledgers



Fig 7 Ledgers 5–7 (Taylor, Wilson, Dunt), looking north through the north screen



Fig 8 Ledger 4 (Roth): one of the earliest surviving ledgers from the Wren building, of 1696



Fig 9 Ledger 5 (Taylor). His burial in a vault in 1766 is one of the earliest noted in surviving registers, but the site of the vault is not known

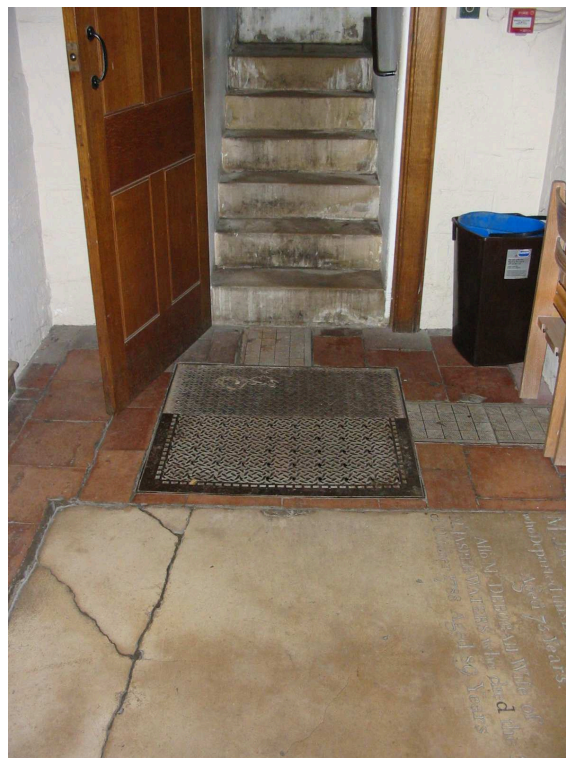


Fig 10 The grille and doorway on the south side of the chapel, looking south. Ledger 3 (Waters) is in the foreground

The proposed scheme

The chapel arrangement, in its flooring, was in two parts: the east part where there was an altar on a single step, and the west part. The altar part was not to be altered. The changes concerned the flooring of the west part, including several ledgers.

The proposals are shown in Fig 11. From the archaeological point of view, they comprised:

- (i) removal of the west screen, with storing elsewhere of the Tijou panel within it;
- (ii) moving ledger 3 to a new position in the north passage, and bringing ledger 7 to the south, so that the new arrangement has all black ledgers in its floor, and the cream-coloured ones are all in the passage;
- (iii) removing the square heating grille and its ducts to the south and west;
- (iv) replacing the tiles with stone flooring.

Ledgers or memorials nos 1 and 2, to Mrs Holman Hunt and Foley, would not be affected.

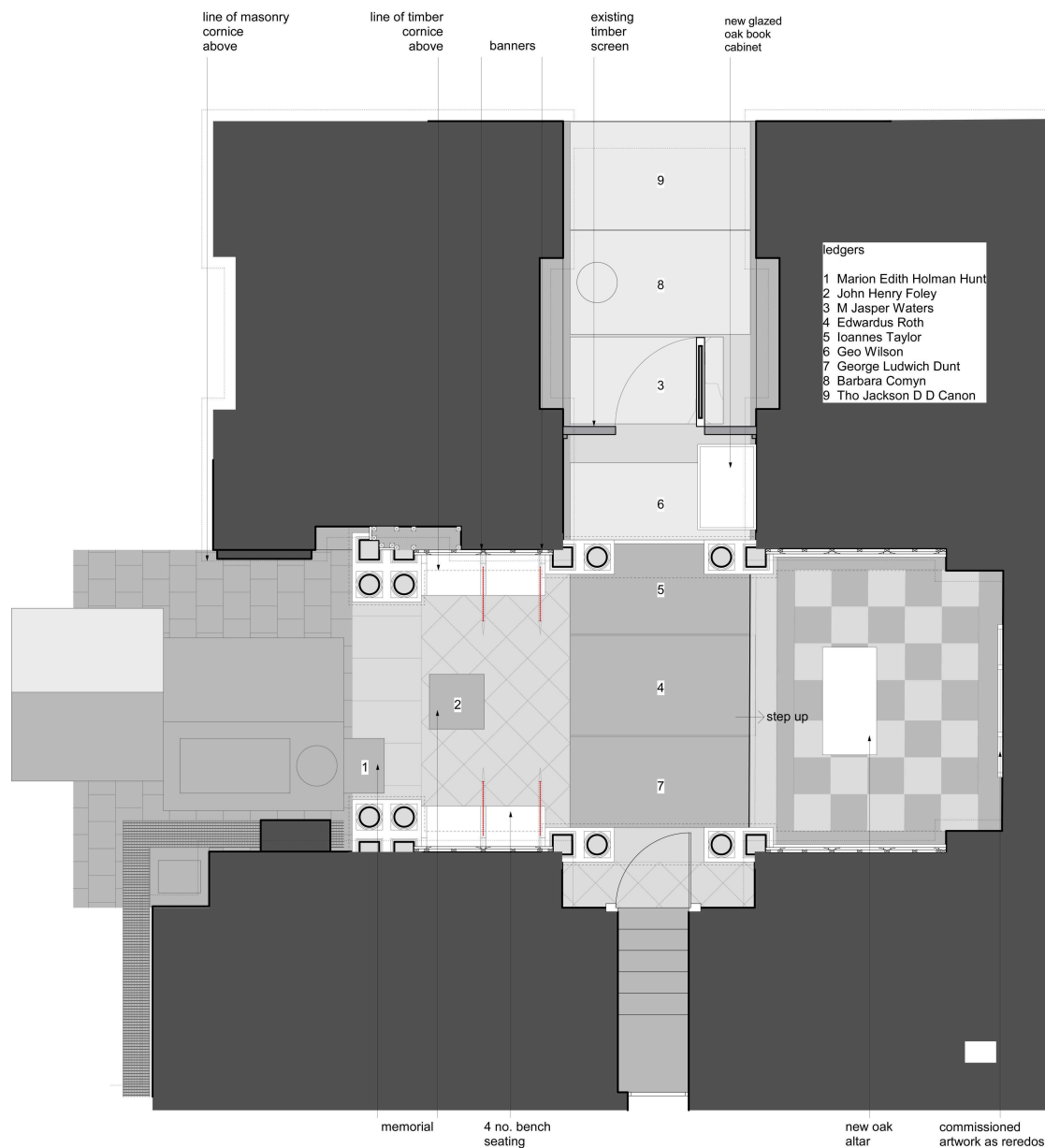


Fig 11 Proposed arrangement of the new Chapel; extract from Purcell Miller Tritton drawing SP180 5238A

The relaying of the ledgers and replacement of the floor would require some disturbance to the bedding layer beneath the floor, perhaps to a depth of 200mm. This layer is of recent date (? 19th century), and although the work would be monitored by an archaeologist, it was not thought likely that any remains worth recording will be exposed. Any medieval deposits would be at a lower level, and would be untouched.

The recommended archaeological recording necessary to accompany this proposal was in two parts:

- (i) professional photography of the existing layout of ledgers in the floor, and of the screens, prior to any work;
- (ii) archaeological monitoring of the re-arrangement of the ledgers and the reflooring. This would happen during the work.



Fig 14 Taylor ledger, inventory no. 1447



Fig 15 Wilson ledger, inventory no. 1448



Fig 16 Dunt ledger, inventory no. 1449



Fig 17 Foley plaque, inventory no. 1444

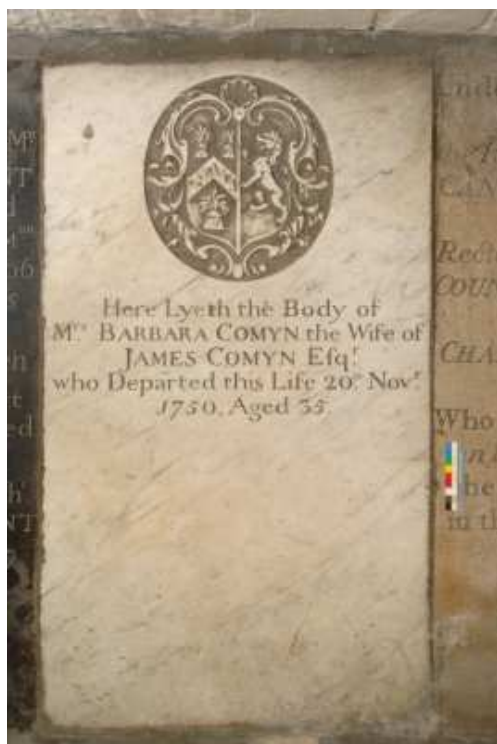


Fig 18 Comyn ledger, inventory no. 1450



Fig 19 Jackson ledger, inventory no. 1451



Fig 20 Marion Holman-Hunt memorial, inventory no. 1404



Fig 21 View of site before insertion of Knights Bachelor Chapel, looking east from outside



Fig 22 View of interior of chapel before refurbishment, looking east



Fig 23 Reused Tijou panel in the west partition, which was to be removed and stored (back view, looking west)

Moving of a ledger slab and associated works in the south part of the crypt

The second and separate project in the crypt reported here, which happened several months later in 2008, was the moving and turning through 90 degrees of a ledger in the south part of the crypt, and the associated slight movement (only a few inches) of the burial casket, within a coffin, which lay beneath it. Thus the ledger has been moved, but the casket and coffin not. This moving was required because a ramp for wheelchair use crossed the site of the ledger, in its former location, at right angles, and would have obscured about half the ledger. It was therefore thought better to move the ledger a short distance to the south, and to turn it through 90 degrees so it lay better in the narrow floor space available.

Three project drawings by PMT Architects explain the scheme: the site as existing (Fig 24), the arrangements for stripping out (Fig 25) and details of the ramp (Fig 26). The archaeological recording, by the Cathedral Archaeologist, used the same archaeological sitecode as the recording by MoLAS of disturbance on the north side of the crypt, which had preceded it by several months, i.e. PKB07: and continued with the context numbers, starting for this part at context [10]. Only two contexts were described (see List below). The site of the presumed burial beneath the ledger, according to the Cathedral Archaeologist's provisional plotting of structures of the time (2008) lay just inside (north of) the south arcade of the medieval choir, but it was not expected that any remains of the medieval cathedral would be found, and this proved to be the case (in that a brick burial chamber was exposed, but no other historic layers; and the chamber was not disturbed by the works). A further plan showing the position of the ledger to be moved (inventory no. 2349) is given as Fig 27.

Fig 24 Site as existing: PMT drawing SP178 SP5284A (March 2007)

Fig 25 Stripping out: PMT drawing SP178 SP5285A (March 2007)

Fig 26 Details of ramp: PMT drawing SP178 SP5286A (March 2007; incorrectly titled 'North Ramp', which is a similar ramp on the north side already built)

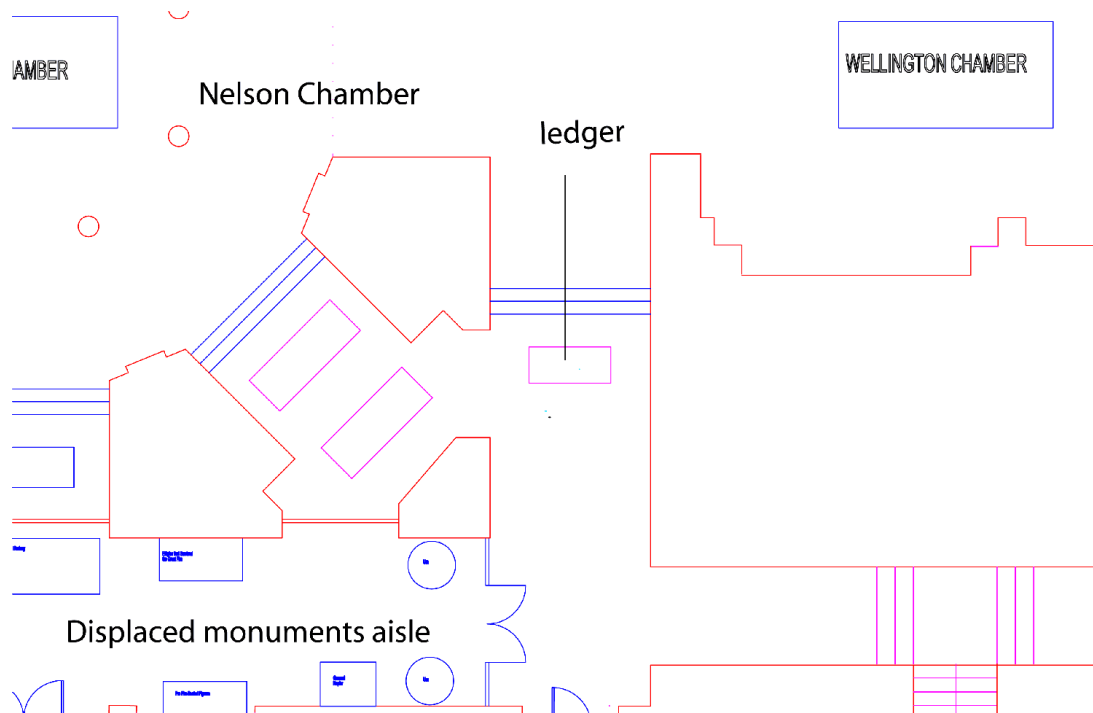


Fig 27 Plan of the south part of the crypt south-east of the Nelson chamber and east of the Displaced Monuments aisle, showing the location of ledger (inventory no. 2349) before removal



Fig 28 The ledger to be moved (cathedral inventory no. 2349), before removal, looking west

The ledger to be moved lay immediately east of the displaced monuments aisle on the south side of the crypt (Fig 28, Fig 29). An associated plaque is placed on the wall to its east; this was not affected by the proposed works, and remains in position.



Fig 29 The area of the crypt in which the ledger lay, before removal, looking south

The ledger, no. 2349 in the cathedral inventory, commemorates the burial in a single casket of the recovered remains of three military personnel: Edward Henry Palmer, William John Gill and Harold Charrington, who died in the Sinai in 1882. The ledger, in a red stone, is 2.045m long and 0.815m wide.

The ledger was carefully lifted to be moved a short distance to the south (Fig 30); it was relaid at right-angles to its former orientation, i.e. now north–south, which after the subsequent works puts it immediately west of the new ramp which crossed its east end..



Fig 30 Removal of the ledger in progress (J Schofield)

The removal of the ledger revealed the expected brick burial chamber beneath (context [10], including York slabs on top of it but beneath the ledger). This was 2.14m east–west by 0.98m north–south externally, one brick thick, with no brick floor, and 0.72m deep (Fig 32). Within, placed at the west end, was a lead box within the traces of a wooden coffin [11]. Handles and other coffin furniture were found, but they have been placed back in the grave and were not recorded. The lead box was 0.69m long east–west by 0.37m wide north–south and 0.42m high. The coffin, much decayed, survived for a length of 1.62m long and 0.52m wide. Originally on the top of the coffin, probably originally attached, was a lead inscription or name plate (Fig 33).



Fig 31 The end of the casket [11] within decayed remains of the wooden coffin, inside the brick grave lining [10], looking west (scale 0.2m)



Fig 32 The brick vault [10], decayed coffin (with nameplate) and casket [11], looking west (scale 0.2m)



Fig 33 The nameplate on the coffin [11]

The nameplate (Fig 33) read:

Professor E H Palmer
Captain William Gill
Royal Engineers
Lieutenant Harold Charrington
Royal Navy
Killed 11th August 1882

Edward Henry Palmer (1840–82) was an Arabic scholar, professor of Arabic at the University of Cambridge. His death was noted in the house of Commons, as First Lord of the Treasury Gladstone concluded that ‘Professor Palmer has fallen a victim to his patriotism and courage’ (Hansard 2 November 1882). A portrait of Palmer is in the hall of St John’s College Cambridge.

A website which lists Victorian military dead and their places of burial (<http://glostons.tripod.com/egyptz.htm>) transcribes a memorial to Charrington in the parish church of Holy Trinity, Barkingside: ‘In memory of Lieut. Harold Charrington R.N. aged 26 years of Her Majesty’s Ship Euryalus and Flag Lieutenant to Rear Admiral Sir W.N. Hewell, Victoria Cross, KCB, Commander in Chief in the East Indies, who in company with Professor E.H. Palmer, of the University of Cambridge, and Captain W.J. Gill, Royal Engineers while engaged in an important and confidential mission in connection with the war in Egypt, were all killed by the Bedouin Arabs in the desert of Mount Sinai, about the 11th August 1882. Their remains are interred in the Crypt of St. Paul’s Cathedral. He was the second son of Spencer Charrington, Esqr. formerly of Great Gearies, in this parish. A tablet has been erected in the parish church of Hunsdon, Herts, by Admiral W.N. Hewett and the Officers of his Flag Ship Euryalus in affectionate remembrance of one who endeared himself to them all also Alethe Charlotte Pauline, wife of Spencer Charrington Esqr and mother of the above, died at Hunsdon House 20th February 1883 aged 52 years.’ The list of maritime memorials compiled by the National Maritime Museum (www.nmm.ac.uk/memorials) also lists the inscription (memorial M1249). The church of Holy Trinity Barkingside, of 1839–40 by Edward Blore, still stands, but the entry in the appropriate *Buildings of England* volume (Cherry et al 2005, 324) does not mention any memorials.

The date of the burial in St Paul’s, as stated on the adjacent plaque on the wall east of the grave, was 6 April 1883. The inscription on the plaque relates the story of the deaths of the three men, but adds that two others also died in the incident, a Syrian and a Hebrew, ‘whose remains lie with theirs’. Thus it seems likely that the casket contains the collected bones of up to five men, but only the British have their names on the coffin.

The ledger was moved to its new position a short distance to the south, but the coffin and casket were not affected by the construction of the new ramp along the east side of the passage.

Conclusions

The contents of this grave were recorded, but not affected. The ledger stone was moved to the south and turned through 90 degrees. The site of the original burial is now not marked and is covered over by new flooring, but its site is recorded by this project and the relevant architects' drawings, so it is not lost.

List of contexts

[10] rectangular brick lining of grave, 2.14m E-W, 0.98m N-s (externally), one brick thick, mortared, 0.72m deep, no brick floor; and its capping, two slabs of York stone, each 0.98m by 1.04m by 0.08m thick.

[11] lead box 0.37m N-S by 0.69m E-W by 0.42m high, in traces of wooden coffin at least 1.62m long, 0.52m wide, decayed. Lead nameplate on the top of the coffin [see text above for transcription].

Acknowledgements

The writer acknowledges information and assistance from Uli Knox of Knox McConnell Architects, Martin Stancliffe and Emma Hardisty of PMT Architects, and Martin Fletcher the Clerk of Works. All the photography given here, with the exception of Fig 30, is by Andy Chopping of the Museum of London Archaeology Service.

Bibliography

Cherry, B, O'Brien, C, and Pevsner, N, 2005 *London 5 East*, Buildings of England series, London

Schofield, J, 2006 The proposed Chapel of the Knights Bachelor at St Paul's Cathedral: an archaeological assessment, Assessment produced for Dean and Chapter

Wroe-Brown, R, 2008 St Paul's Cathedral crypt Access Project EC4: archaeological watching brief report, MoLAS