

Long Gallery Q & As

- Is the image on the boss in Bishop Underhill's portrait of his wife?

It is generally believed that the image is of Bishop Underhill's sister, Elizabeth, who lived in the Palace with him (source: original catalogue of the Bishop's Palace paintings). Bishop Underhill was unmarried.

- Who pays for the portraits?

The bishops' portraits are paid out of the bishops 'funds'

- Can a Bishop veto a portrait if they don't like it?

It wouldn't get to that stage as the bishops have quite a few sittings and get to see the painting while it's in its different stages, so if they felt they didn't like some 'aspects' of it along the way they could voice their opinion so that they are happy with the final result.

- How did Dee Price end up in the portrait? (There are various stories about this and it would be nice to know the correct answer)

Dee Price is the only spouse that appears in any of the portraits and this portrait was specifically chosen to be painted in the Bishop's Chapel. This is because Dee put her heart and soul into the restoration of the chapel, helped to design and choose the alter and chair, made the hangings that go on the wall behind the alter, made the stoles and copes to match for the different seasons in the church calendar. She also set up Tuesday at Noon. Peter Price was very adamant that Dee sat alongside with him to acknowledge and mark a different time in the history books. He is quoted as saying: 'Having Dee in the portrait was my tribute to her and to all of the amazing work she's done. Throughout our ministry we have always worked together.'

- Do we know for certain where Bishop Mews sustained the injury to his face?

Not for certain. The image is generally attributed to either sometime in the civil war (1642-51), possibly at the Battle of Naseby, or later at the Battle of Sedgemoor during the Monmouth Rebellion (1685). Research of known images would point to the injury being sustained during the civil war.

- Why is Bishop Mews wearing the garter robe?

The Bishop of Winchester has almost always (that is, except during the period of the Commonwealth until the Restoration of the Monarchy) held the office of Prelate of the Order of the Garter since its foundation in 1348. Membership in the Order is strictly limited to: the Monarch, the Prince of Wales, not more than 24 companion members, and various supernumerary members (known as "Royal Knights and Ladies of the Garter" such as other members of the royal family, and "Stranger Knights and Ladies of the Garter" such as overseas monarchs). In addition, there are six officers: the Prelate, the Chancellor, the Register, the Garter Principal King of Arms, the Usher, and the Secretary. The offices of Prelate, Register, and Usher were created on the order's establishment. The monarch alone can grant membership. He or she is known as the Sovereign of the Garter, and the Prince of Wales is known as a Royal Knight Companion of the Garter. Bishop Mews was translated to

Winchester in 1684 and remained there as Bishop until his death in 1706 (he apparently died from the accidental administration of the wrong medicine, presumably for a health problem.)

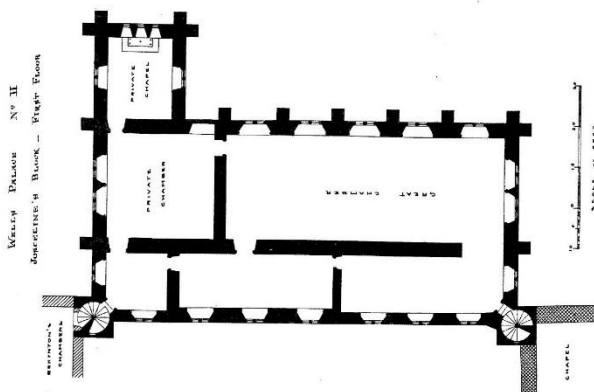
- Why did Bishops used to wear black and white and now they wear purple?

There is no clear explanation for this from sources consulted. The choice of these colours probably evolved as did the evolvment of vestments. From the 6th century onward, many local synods passed regulations forbidding clerics from wearing richly styled clothing, light or skimpy clothing, bright colours, and extravagant ornaments and jewellery. As the liturgical calendar developed so did the development of liturgical colours which, by the 1200s, were white, red, green, black, violet or purple. In the same period the cassock became the distinct garb of the clergy alone (worn by many of the bishops in their portraits). Black symbolised poverty, simplicity and humility. In addition, it was (and still is), the colour of mourning and death for the priest – symbolically, dying to oneself to rise and serve the Lord as well as giving witness of the Kingdom yet to come. Some sources state that around the 1500s other regulations came in stipulating the use of black, not only for its symbolism but also because of its cheapness as a dye. Post the Reformation, changes occurred in the rules relating to what vestments could be worn – the movement was away from vestments that were worn in the Church of Rome. Additionally, there was an increasing requirement for clerics to be soberly attired.

During the 20th century In the Church of England, bishops began wearing purple as a sign of their office.

- Do we know for certain that the Long gallery used to be portioned into 3 rooms or is this an educated guess?

This is an educated guess and I have not been able to find any information to throw light on this. The following illustration is from an article by Edmund Buckle in Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society's Proceedings, 1888, Vol 35, p54. The author states that this is how he imagines the room to have been divided.



- Why is Bishop Bickersteth the only bishop wearing a scarlet cassock?

The Clerk of the Closet is head of the Royal College of Chaplains of the Ecclesiastical Household of the Sovereign of the United Kingdom. The monarch chooses from a shortlist of three, but research has not revealed who comes up with the shortlist.

The Clerk and the chaplains wear a scarlet cassock as a badge of office. Bishop Bickersteth is the only Bishop of Bath & Wells to have been appointed to this post.

The position of Clerk to the Closet dates from 1437 and carries an annual salary of £7.00. Since 1714, the post has always been held by a diocesan bishop. Prior to that it had been held by some cathedral deans as well as bishops and pre 1588, exclusively by other clerics. The current Clerk (at time of writing – November 2024) is the Bishop of Hereford.

Amongst the duties of the Clerk of the Closet are: the presentation of bishops to the Sovereign when they do homage after consecration; the reading and vetting of any book which is written and dedicated to the monarch to ensure that it is suitable – the book could be of any genre but more likely to be theological; the suggestion of possible names to the Sovereign when a vacancy occurs in the list of royal chaplains.