This is a big topic, so I am going to set myself some boundaries. I propose to set my terminal date sometime in the 1860s. Also, I don’t propose to discuss theological doctrines in detail, but just give you an outline to provide a framework in which to set movements of thought, and how they affected liturgy, or perhaps how liturgy affected them, for the Church of England’s doctrines are largely expressed in its liturgy, rather than in doctrinal statements. That’s why making changes to the liturgy is so contentious. But I want to begin with some background about religion in England in the period from 1700.

Anyone who ‘did’ history at school or university more than thirty years ago, is likely to think that the eighteenth century was the nadir of Christianity in England. Dora Robertson in Sarum Close, quoted a reference to the eighteenth century as ‘the glacial period’ of the Church, when the life of the spirit burned low, and Canon Jones, the author of the Diocesan History in the early 1900s, wrote of the mid-eighteenth century clergy as, ‘the most remiss of their labours in private, and the least severe in their lives’. It used to be claimed that no intelligent person after 1714 took religion seriously, that bishops were political toadies and nepotists, that clergy were idle and greedy, milking the system, and that they merely preached about morality, that church attendance was very poor, and that those that did go, slept through the sermons, and eyed up the opposite sex, that John Wesley came along, and challenged all this, and preached to the poor, and then Evangelicals revived the Church, preaching about personal conversion, and leading the campaign to abolish slavery, until, in the 1830s, some Anglicans thought that they had discovered what everyone else had forgotten that Bishops were successors of the apostles and that the

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1 A lecture delivered on 30 September 2014
sacraments of Holy Communion and baptism were instituted by Christ, and were more than mere memorials. Almost none of this is true.

Most historians of the eighteenth century for the first two-thirds, perhaps three-quarters of the twentieth century were sceptical about Christianity, and its influence on people’s lives, or dismissed it as an eccentricity of a minority, not to be taken seriously. They did not notice that the diaries and letters of rulers, politicians, artists, musicians, show they took Christian practice very seriously, that in a world where death confronted people on every side, people were concerned about their ultimate fate. Almost no one, apart from a distinguished historian who became Dean of Winchester, Norman Sykes, was interested in the Church of England in the eighteenth century. What was written, was mostly by people who had an axe to grind

- Methodists writing about how wonderful Wesley was, and how bad the Cof E was,
- Evangelicals writing about how important early evangelicals were in preaching to save people from conventional religion provided by other clergy,
- Nonconformists writing about how time-serving Anglicans persecuted them, and that only they taught and practised the true faith,
- and after the 1830s, people who became part of the party that emphasised the apostolic succession claimed that everything that had been done by their fathers and grandfathers was wrong, or, at best, unsatisfactory.

Little new research was done, and there was a tendency to repeat what previous generations had said.

With the advent of county and diocesan record offices in the 1950s and ‘60s, and a new interest in social history, research began to be done by people who were not just grinding a denominational or churchmanship axe, on bishop’s papers and diocesan and parish records that were being deposited and made available, and over the past thirty years a new picture has emerged of the Church in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, which questions much of what had previously been written. Even politicians and Hanoverian kings have emerged as people of faith.

A convincing case has emerged that England in the ‘long eighteenth-century’ was a ‘confessional state’, ie that from 1660 until c1832 theological ideas were the basis of politics, and people’s worldview. Being English was about being Anglican,
only c6% of the population were not Anglicans in the early 1700s, and that did not begin to change until the 1780s. Church was at the centre of people’s lives. For most of the 1700s collections of sermons were the bestselling books. Diaries and letters show people of all sorts reading sermons, reading them aloud to their family and friends, and taking notes on sermons they heard in church. A group of mostly lay people established, first, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge [SPCK] to raise funds to produce simple tracts and leaflets for clergy and lay people to distribute free to the poor, to distribute information about how to set up schools to teach poor children, and to provide books to form libraries for poor clergy, and public libraries in market towns; and second, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel [SPG], to raise funds to recruit and pay chaplains and missionaries to work in the North American colonies. Two of their missionaries in the 1730s were John and Charles Wesley, People paid good money to rent pews in churches, and also invested in building proprietary chapels, which were small businesses bringing in enough income to pay for a priest, singers, a pew opener and verger, and pay a dividend to investors. Devotional books went through many editions. The King and the court went to daily prayers in the Royal Chapel; great houses had chapels as splendid as saloons in which the chaplain read daily prayers which the whole household, including the servants, attended. Going to daily prayers in church was part of the routine of town dwellers and spa visitors – Bath Abbey and St James’s Piccadilly were noted as being full on weekday mornings. Laypeople were enormously generous in contributing to building, and rebuilding and beautifying churches. Nearly every church had a ‘Georgian makeover’, most of which were subsequently obliterated by a Victorian makeover, as we will see here in Salisbury. People gave tons of silver plate for use at celebrations of Holy Communion, far more than in the nineteenth century, which suggests they took the sacrament seriously. Better-off people saw it as part of their Christian duty to fund schools to teach children the Catechism and to read, write and reckon, and to find apprenticeships for them when they finished at school, and monitor how they were being treated in their apprenticeship, as well as to be generous to the poor in terms of charities, almshouses, hospitals, for example here the Infirmary. People paid a tax of a tithe on the produce of land to fund their parish priest, mostly without too much grumbling.

There was no separation between sacred and secular. Most eighteenth century wars were as much religious as political. There was a deep-rooted popular antipathy
towards Roman Catholicism. Suspicions that the Roman Catholic James II was attempting to Romanise the Church, and establish an autocracy lost him his throne. His son and grandson might well have recovered it, if they had become Anglicans. They remained popular, and people kept in touch with them, to the great anxiety of George I and George II, who only occupied the throne because they were not Roman Catholics, and Walpole and his successors. All six wars in the century were against France, the dominant Catholic power, and had a religious dimension eg to preserve Canada as a protestant colony in the 7 Years War and American War.

Politics was much influenced by religious issues – most obviously the offers of the throne to William III and George I. For the first fifteen years of the eighteenth century Parliament was in almost continuous uproar over religious matters, High Churchmen, who were high because they had a high view of the relationship between Church and State, were totally opposed to allowing dissenters any civic role, for fear that again they would attempt to overthrow the monarchy and the Church, were bitterly at odds with ‘Low Churchmen’ who were ‘Low’ because they were willing to be more inclusive towards dissenters, and permit them to have their own meeting houses, and occasionally to receive communion to qualify themselves to take up civic offices. In 1717 Convocation, the assembly of clergy and bishops, was prorogued because it was feared that the fury of the debates arising out of a sermon preached by Benjamin Hoadley, subsequently bishop of Salisbury, might lead to civil disturbances, as a sermon had in 1708, and topple George I from his throne. Convocation was not allowed by the Crown’s advisers to meet again until 1852. For the next century ministers of the Crown always tried to avoid doing anything that would arouse the opposition of bishops and clergy. However, this did not mean they did what bishops wanted, like permit bishops to be appointed to oversee the Church in the North American colonies, but generally they avoided upsetting the bishops. Only in 1828, when ministers brought in legislation to repeal the Acts preventing dissenters holding civil offices, and in 1829 an Act permitting Roman Catholics to vote, did they, without expecting it, seriously upset many bishops, clergy and churchmen, some of whom saw Parliament as laying sacrilegious hands on the Church, and claimed that the doctrine of apostolic succession meant that the Church could and should resist parliamentary interference in the Church, and launched the Tractarian or Oxford Movement.
One of the chief driving forces behind late-seventeenth and eighteenth century Anglican theology was an idea that had inspired English Reformation theologians, to reform the Church of England as much like the ‘Primitive Church’ as possible, ie the Church in the first four centuries, when it was believed to have been at its most pristine and effective. This, however, was a fraught enterprise, because there was disagreement about the findings of research, and most especially ancient controversies were, revived. Scholars in the eighteenth century Church of England disagreed about whether all doctrine must be able to be found in Scripture, which, of course, represented the understanding and doctrine of the earliest Church. If that was the case, then the more developed definition of Jesus as true God and true man finally arrived at in the fourth century, might be questioned, as well as the doctrine of the Trinity, and understanding the Church as a divine institution, for John’s Gospel described Jesus saying, ‘My Kingdom is not of this world’. Tremendous disputes erupted from time to time over these matters, and denunciatory epithets were applied to one another, not just ‘High Church’, ‘Low Church’, but ‘Arian’, ‘Deist’, ‘Socinian’, ‘Atheist’. People’s publications were crawled over for evidence of their heterodoxy, or crypto-popishness, and careers were blighted by the suspicions aroused. Recent research has questioned to what extent people who were denounced actually held the views ascribed to them, and whether their opponents had not merely developed their ideas far beyond where they had taken them, or would wish to take them. It has been suggested that no one can be identified as having claimed to be, or admitted to being an ‘Arian’, ‘Deist’, ‘Socinian’ or ‘Atheist’: that they were actually terms of abuse, which subsequent generations, especially nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century authors accepted as true. [1892 words]

That is a brief sketch of the context of the Church. How did it play out in Salisbury Cathedral, especially in relation to architecture and liturgy?

The Close was a private world, ruled by the Dean and Chapter, with its own rules, officials, customs, traditions, lands and revenues. but it was not secluded or genteel. There were shops, at least one alehouse, three or four schools. It was used as a burial ground. There were constant complaints about the mud. Viscount Torrington in 178? thought that it looked like a cow common.

But the authority of the dean and chapter was deeply circumscribed. The prebendaries were appointed by the bishop, but their only duty was to preach once a
to attend the Pentecost chapter meeting, and to elect from their number five of the six residentiary canons, the sixth being appointed by the bishop. The statutes required the residentiaries each to be in residence for two months at a time, on a rota, along with the dean. When in residence they were required to attend Morning and Evening Prayer daily, and to celebrate Holy Communion monthly, and manage the cathedral’s business, and to keep open house. Otherwise they lived on their prebend, or another parish they held, to do duty there. Managing the cathedral was not easy. The Vicars choral were an independent corporation, individually appointed by the dean and chapter, but otherwise wholly independent. With their own estates, and income, from which they paid the lay vicars, their stipend of £20 a year each, which had been fixed in 1624, and which they refused to increase. When in 1793 the lay vicars appealed to the chapter in 1793 for an increase, which the vicars choral had refused, thought the chapter thought that the lay vicars’ claim was reasonable, learned counsel advised that the agreement of 1624 was binding, and it was not overturned until 1868, by an Order in Council. Everyone, prebendaries, residentiaries, vicars choral, lay vicars, chapter clerk, vergers, held a freehold office, and were irremovable, except by death, or gross moral misconduct. Once appointed, people remained in office for many years, sometimes until well past the time when they could personally satisfactorily exercise their office. The residentiaries had trouble, from time to time, in securing the regular attendance of the vicars choral and lay vicars. They issued a rule in 1806 requiring lay vicars to make 630 attendances at Morning and Evening Prayer a year. Retirement was unknown, for there were no pensions, unless in desperation the chapter made an offer. If they were not willing to or could be persuaded to appoint a deputy this could have a major impact on the quality of music or administration. The same situation, of course, applied in the law, the army and the civil service.

This was a structure that facilitated maintenance and continuity, not radical change. The dean and the residentiaries managed the maintenance of the cathedral by taxing their common income from the chapter estates, and also, in various emergencies, asking prebendaries to give a percentage of the income from their estates. Securing agreement for, and funding changes in the cathedral for liturgical or architectural reasons must have been very challenging. It is hardly surprising that after reequipping the cathedral for Prayer Book worship in 1660, when silver candlesticks were acquired for the communion table, Lord Clarendon gave purple
velvet altar hangings, and a font, altar rails and pulpits for the nave and choir with cushions were installed, and a new organ was provided in 1661 and new anthem books were bought, not much happened. Seth Ward, bishop from 1667 had the choir paved in black and white marble, and also reinstated the enclosed feel of the choir for daily services, with a wooden screen possibly designed by Wren. Ward’s arrangements provided for the congregation to move out of the choir after the Nicene Creed in the Communion service, and to go into the nave, where box pews were arranged college chapel-wise for three bays, with a pulpit. The Hungerford chantry was fitted up as a pew for the mayor, and the bishop, when he was present, to hear the sermon. After the sermon they returned to the choir. Moving around during the liturgy is nothing new - it was commonplace from the Reformation until the mid-nineteenth century.

Cathedrals were far and away the least interfered with liturgical spaces in the eighteenth century, probably because of their administrative and decision-making structures. Parish churches, governed by a vestry consisting, apart from the incumbent, of lay people, were far more often rearranged and updated. Cathedrals were not much used, apart from the sung daily services. It should be remembered that cathedrals had no diocesan function, except for the enthronement of the bishop, which was very often by proxy, with the bishop being subsequently installed in person, when he was next in Salisbury. After 1689, when Parliament began to sit annually usually from December to May, bishops spent the parliamentary session in London, which didn’t matter much for it would have been almost impossible for him to travel around the diocese, or for people to visit him in winter.

When John Fisher was elected bishop by the chapter in 1807, the result was announced by the two residentiaries, and the choir sang a Te Deum. Whether that was traditional, I don’t know. Enthronements were probably rather simple occasions. They only became great diocesan occasions when railways were invented. The only account I know of the enthronement of a bishop of Salisbury is of John Fisher. He was met at Bishop’s Down ‘by several clergy, gentry and citizens, who attended his coach to the city’ He was welcomed by the mayor and aldermen, and conducted to the council chamber, where a scholar of the Free School congratulated him with a Latin oration. He then went to the Sun and Lamb to robe, and exhibited his Letters Mandatory and Commission to the dean and chapter. The choir, singing, led the dean and chapter and the bishop through the north gate, where there was a second
oration, to the west door, where he took the oaths, and was then led to the high altar
for prayers, and enthroned by the dean and the senior residentiary. The Te Deum
was sung, and, after more prayers, the new bishop was conducted to the chapter
house.3

Ordinations were usually in the bishop’s chapel. It was not until the 1780s that
some radically reforming bishops began to hold ordinations in their cathedral. The
only ‘civic service’ to be held in the cathedral was the anniversary service for the
Infirmary, at which a sermon was preached to raise funds for the Infirmary.

The only diocesan function that took place in the cathedral was the consistory
court, which was in the ‘hall’ between the cloisters and the southwest door was
reinstated and refurnished in 1661 Here people came for hearings about complaints
about churchwardens’ failure to maintain churches and churchyards, and to keep
order during services, and the moral failings of parishioners, including blasphemy,
adultery, fornication, judicial separations, and usually most frequently defamation. It
was only sin that brought parishioners to the cathedral.

Salisbury was a centre of music and fashion, and the cathedral clergy and choir
played a leading part in musical activities. The cathedral received a magnificent new
organ by Renatus Harris in 1710. Music festivals were held annually in the cathedral
from about 1744 until 1787, and there was a triennial musical festival in the cathedral
from 1807 to1828. Musical meetings were held in canons’ houses. Concerts were
organised in the city by cathedral organists and lay vicars.

It was not liturgical change that prompted changes in the layout of the
cathedral. Liturgy changed very little in the Church of England between the revision
of the Prayer Book in 1662 and the mid-twentieth century, apart from the elaboration
of ritual and the introduction of non-scriptural hymns in the course of the second
half of the nineteenth century. It seems to have been primarily aesthetic reasons.

Daniel Defoe in his *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain* in the
1720s was very critical of Seth Ward’s choir arrangement, commented on it as

‘mean and more like the ordinary method of common Drawing Room or
Tavern painting than that of a church’

He described it as resembling

“a theatre rather than the venerable choir of a church, painted white with the panels golden, and groups and garlands of roses and other flowers intertwined run round the top of the stalls, each stall hath the arms of its holder in gilt letters on blue writ on it, and the episcopal throne with Bishop Ward’s arms on it would make a fine theatrical decoration, being supported by gilt pillars, and painted with flowers upon white all over.”

It all remained in place for another fifty years, until the 1770s when it was desired to enlarge the choir to accommodate Sunday, as well as weekday congregations. Who prompted it, and how it was negotiated through the chapter is not known. The bishop, John Hume, had been in office since 1766 and the dean, Thomas Green since 1757, but from 1777 until 1779 the cathedral was closed for ‘repairing, cleansing and beautifying’, and choir services were held in St Thomas’s. The work was undertaken by Edward Lush, a surveyor, and his son William, a builder. The nave pulpit and pews were disposed of, and Lord Radnor commandeered the Hungerford chantry, previously used as the mayor’s and bishop’s pew, to be moved into the choir and reconstructed in the fashionable gothick style as his pew. Wren’s screens were removed, and reused as panelling in 9, The Close and new screens, grained in oak were put up behind the choir, and boxes, with galleries above them, were built behind the prebendaries’ stalls, reached by stars from the aisles. There were similar arrangements at Norwich, Chichester, Winchester, and Wren had designed the prebendaries’ stalls in St Paul’s to have boxes behind and galleries above them. The altar was moved east. Three large charcoal braziers were introduced to heat the choir. In 1781 Lard Radnor commissioned the window of Moses holding the brazen serpent.

Less than ten years later in 1787 a much more radical scheme was initiated when Shute Barrington, who had succeeded Hume as bishop in 1782, wished to restore the cathedral as nearly as possible to the plan of the original architect. He commissioned the most sought after architect of the day, James Wyatt, with the approval of the Dean and Chapter. The bishop raised the funds from the nobility, clergy and laity of the diocese for the works, with George III, as a ‘gentleman of Berkshire’ giving a new organ. The cathedral was again closed, from October 1789 until September 1792. Wyatt endorsed the view of an earlier survey by Francis Price
that the Hungerford and Beauchamp chapel, beautiful though they were, should be removed. He sought to create a view down the length of the cathedral, and to reveal the lower parts of the crossing pillars, and to create a much more spacious choir and sanctuary, and to give greater and more even light.

This required a dramatic intervention, and the removal of most of the medieval fittings that had survived the Reformation. The organ screen was removed and a new one, repositioned, and with a wider entrance was provided, the surviving medieval stained glass was disposed of, along with the medieval rood beam, the tombs of bishops were removed and repositioned in the nave, and the floor of the Lady chapel raised a few inches, and the screen behind the high altar removed, and a medieval altar slab, which was found concealed by Ward’s altar, was placed against the east wall of the Lady chapel, the altar rails were removed, and a stained glass window of the resurrection, designed by Reynolds, was placed in the east window, and ‘mosaic’ glass was placed in the side windows of the Lady Chapel to ‘throw on this part of the building that sober light which befits a place of devotion’. The vaults were painted stone colour, for it was thought that the medieval paintings were not part of the original plan. It was thought that, by the addition of canopies to the choir stalls, new screens against the aisles, and a new pulpit and throne in a gothic style and painted in a ‘dark hue’, and the skilful employment or imitation of fragments from the chapels in the altar screen and elsewhere, Wyatt had succeeded in ‘rendering it a happy imitation of the florid gothic’. When it was reopened such crowds came to see the reordered cathedral that a court case arose, brought by Daniel Boyter, the sexton against William Dodsworth the verger, to establish his sole right to show the cathedral, and receive all fees and profits.

Wyatt’s alterations attracted comments. Favourable from the Society of Antiquaries, but not from Horace Walpole. Members of the congregation complained that in the boxes behind the stalls the light was insufficient to read by. John Milner in *Dissertation on the Modern Styles of Altering Ancient Cathedrals* in 1798 commented that that

“On looking into a dark recess rendered so by the dark glass in the side lancets, a diminutive object, without size of other marks of dignity, can just be discerned .... In short it has more the appearance of a toilet than a

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4 John Milner in *Dissertation on the Modern Styles of Altering Ancient Cathedrals* in 1798, p 38
communion table’, [and he added], ‘A personage ... respectable in his habits no less than for his situation ... declared lately in a public assembly that it was impossible either to hear or see from the choir what was going on at the communion table; and that, for the lack of rails, a dog sometime ago ate the bread prepared for the sacrament.”

After 1814 the altar was moved back to site of the original high altar. In the 1820s and 30s there was much criticism of Wyatt’s work. During the 1830s, as I have noted, a movement arose in the Church of England, which did have an impact on liturgy and architecture, the Tractarian or Oxford Movement, which emphasised the dominical origins of the Church as an institution, and the sacraments, and the sacramental nature of the role of bishops, priests and deacons, and which looked not so much to the early Church, but to the medieval Church for authority and precedents. Adherents of the Oxford Movement were fiercely critical of most eighteenth-century interventions in gothic buildings, and mostly critical of the current liturgical practices of the church, and of the quality of church, and especially cathedral music.

In the 1820s Miss Maria Hackett, who was appalled by the conditions under which cathedral choristers served, especially at St Paul’s, had conducted a survey of cathedrals’ treatment of choristers and had noted in 1827 that Salisbury had long been noted for the excellence of its choral service, and that ‘the Choristers of Salisbury still enjoy advantages superior to the generality of their brethren’, receiving a good classical education.5 However to a reforming Tractarian eye some of the musical practices would have seemed unsatisfactory, for example that, on weekdays the head chorister left his place at the end of the psalms to inquire of the dean, or in his absence, the canon-in-residence, what service [setting] and anthem he wished to be sung, and he then, in a loud whisper gave the author and key of the service to the boys, and went up to the organ loft to tell the organist, and then went back to his place, although on Sundays the Services and anthems were selected by the Canon in Residence in consultation with the organist in the Vestry before Morning Service.

In the 1830s there was also a major national political movement to reform the great institutions of state, the franchise for electing the House of Commons in 1832, the Poor Law in 1834, borough corporations in 1835, and, from 1833, the financial

5 Maria Hackett
arrangements of the Church of England, and the governance of cathedrals, to divert
the income from the endowments of bishoprics and cathedrals to providing parish
clergy for a rapidly burgeoning population. Defending the Church against
Government and parliamentary intervention in the Church’s affairs was one of the
major spurs to action for the Tractarians. They thought that the Church was capable
of reforming itself, and that the first priority should be spiritual renewal, rather than
administrative reform, which would follow on from spiritual renewal. They looked to
renew the spiritual authority of bishops and clergy, especially expressed in the proper
conduct of worship.

Edward Denison, who became bishop in 1837, at the first opportunity
persuaded the dean and chapter to appoint a friend of his son’s, and his former
curate and successor as vicar of St Peter-in-the-East in Oxford, Walter Kerr
Hamilton, to be a vicar choral in 1841, and when the then precentor died in 1843,
appointed him precentor. Hamilton had been an evangelical, which may have made
him acceptable to the evangelical dean, Hugh Pearson, but he was a friend of Walter
Hook, the reforming high church Vicar of Leeds, and associated with the Tractarians
at Oxford, and had worked with the organist at St Peter’s in publishing new hymn
books and. He was determined to, as he put it ‘raise the tone’ of the daily services and
to improve the choir. He thought that the dean and all residentiaries should be in
constant residence. He thought that the cathedral should be accessible to the public,
but not used for ‘secular’ musical events, and introduced extra services, mostly
conducted by himself. He no doubt had strong views about the liturgical
arrangements of the choir, but the obliteration of Wyatt’s alterations had to wait
twenty years until 1863, when Hamilton was bishop, and ?? Scott undertook the
regothicisation of the choir.

While the liturgy of the Church of England did not change at all between 1662
and 1863, the interior of the ‘worship space’ in the cathedral underwent four radical
changes, in at least three of which the bishop – Ward, Barrington, and Hamilton
appears to have been the driving force, rather than the dean and chapter, who were
responsible for the governance of the cathedral. Ward and Hamilton were clearly
motivated by theological reasons: Ward to restore episcopalianism and orderly
worship after the Commonwealth, and Hamilton following the Tractarian agenda of
medievalising, and setting apart the sacred. The motives underlying the changes in
the 1770s and 1780s, seem to have been aesthetic. The changes over the period
c1660-1863 illustrate the regular, perhaps alternate generational flux in the interior arrangements of the cathedral, for the 1860s weren’t the end of the story.