

## MEMORIALS

### Sir John Clobery Soldier, Restoration negotiator and MP

The grand upright alabaster statue of Sir John Clobery on the south side of the Cathedral's Retroquire is unmissable, even in comparison with Cardinal Henry Beaufort's chantry which it faces. Clobery's story and importance in British history came at a critical time in early 1660, as the Cromwellian Protectorate appeared to be ending but the restoration of Charles II had not been negotiated.

Clobery (sometimes spelt as Cloberry) was born in Bradstone, Devon in 1624. He studied law at the Middle Temple in London and entered the Commonwealth (Parliamentary) army after the execution of Charles I in 1649. By 1660, he was ranked as a colonel of horse.<sup>1</sup> Clobery continued as an occasional soldier and an MP, including for Winchester, at various times between the Restoration of Charles II in 1660 and 1685 before dying in 1687.

The Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell had died in 1658 and was succeeded briefly and ineffectively by his son Richard, known as "Tumbledown Dick". In late 1659 and early 1660, General George Monck (sometimes spelt as Monk) who was in charge of Commonwealth troops in Scotland, decided to intervene in national political life and marched to London in order to support the restoration of the Stuart monarchy.



The statue of Sir John Clobery

Clobery who had been converted to the Royalist cause in 1659 by his brother-in-law, John Otway,<sup>2</sup> had gained rapid promotion to colonel while serving under Monck in Scotland. Before Monck came south, Clobery came to London with a fellow officer Ralph Knight to negotiate with the army's committee of safety to pave the way for Monck's arrival.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Paula Watson, "Sir John Clobery", <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1660-1690/member/clobery-john-1625-88>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

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Monck's strategy to enable the return of Charles II was to recall the MPs of the Long Parliament, who had been stood down by Cromwell in 1648, then get them to vote itself out of existence and elect a parliament (known as the Convention Parliament) that would invite the king back from exile in Holland. By the third week of February 1660, Monck's plans were ready to proceed with John Clobery being one of his closest advisers and a key negotiator.<sup>4</sup> Clobery, who was highly regarded by fellow officers, parleyed between the Long Parliament MPs (known as "secluded" MPs) and senior army officers over the retention of land that had been granted to the soldiers.

At the end of the first English Civil War in 1649, Cromwell and the Rump Parliament (1648-53) did not have money to pay their army fully for their service. In place of cash, many officers were sold land which gave them income from rent and from farming activities. With the imminent return of Charles II, they gravely feared that the land would be taken back from them. It was a very difficult balance for Monck who 'needed to keep senior officers satisfied without antagonizing the secluded members'.<sup>5</sup>



Sir George Monck, after Samuel Cooper, c. 1700

Clobery was one of Monck's three negotiators, along with Thomas Gumble who became a canon of Winchester Cathedral in 1661.<sup>6</sup> They were able to convince the 73 secluded MPs to assure army officers they would retain their land. As a result, Monck was able to proceed further for the return of Charles II, who landed at Dover on 26 May 1660.

Monck's motive for his switch from being a moderate general in the Commonwealth army, and effectively the ruler of Scotland, was his belief that the

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<sup>4</sup> Henry Reece, *The Fall – Last days of the English Republic*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press (2024), p. 256.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 258.

<sup>6</sup> See *Record Extra*, October 2025, for an article on Dr Thomas Gumble's memorial.

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country was tired of conflict and desperately wanted stability and quiet.<sup>7</sup> He considered that the return of the Stuart monarchy was the best way to achieve these goals, which appears to have been the majority opinion in the country. Monck benefited from Charles II's return and became the Duke of Albemarle and a Privy Councillor in July 1660.

Clobery also benefited from his role in the king's return. He was elected as MP for Hedon in the East Riding of Yorkshire in April 1660 in the Convention Parliament and for Launceston in June 1660. Clobery was given an annual pension of £600 and knighted at the Restoration.<sup>8</sup> He did not stand for the House of Commons in the 1661 election.

In 1667, Clobery came to Winchester where he built a 'spacious mansion called Clobery-house in Parchment-street'.<sup>9</sup> He took out his freedom of the city two years later. In 1679 he was elected unopposed as MP for Winchester and served in the three parliaments – March 1679, October 1679 and again in 1681. He nominated for re-election in 1685 but stood down on the eve of the poll in favour of the official court candidate, Roger L'Estrange.

Clobery maintained his military standing soon after he came to Winchester in 1667 when he applied to the Vice-Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral for funding to raise a troop of fourteen mounted soldiers, following 'a commission which his Majesty had granted'. The reason was 'sudden and imminent danger of the kingdom' from the Dutch who had defeated the navy in the Raid on the Medway when Britain's largest warships were captured.<sup>10</sup> Clobery was made a captain in Prince Rupert's Horse with his troop which was to be stationed at Rye. Charles II quickly made peace with the Dutch in the Treaty of Breda on 31 July 1667. Later that year, in December, the Chapter ordered that horses 'kept out in the service of his Majesty' were to be recompensed at 'three pounds for every horse so furnished by them' to be paid by the Cathedral Treasurer.<sup>11</sup>

Ever the old soldier, Clobery served as a volunteer against the Duke of Monmouth's rebellion at the Battle of Sedgemoor in Somerset on 6 July 1685. Lord

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<sup>7</sup> Anna Keay, *The Restless Republic. Britain without a Crown*. London: William Collins (2022), pp. 340-41; Reece, *The Fall*, p. 23.

<sup>8</sup> Watson, "Sir John Clobery".

<sup>9</sup> John Milner, *The History, Civil and Ecclesiastical & Survey of Winchester*, Vol. I. Winchester: James Robbins (1798), p. 419, n.1. By the time of Milner's history, the house had been demolished and replaced by 'a new county hospital'.

<sup>10</sup> Winchester Cathedral Chapter Order Book 1666-1738, (DC/B4/2), 15 June 1667.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 December 1667.

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Lumley chose him, now in his early sixties, to be lieutenant-colonel and second-in-command of a new cavalry regiment, the Queen Dowager's Horse (later the 6<sup>th</sup> Dragoon Guards).<sup>12</sup> Ill health forced his resignation in the following year.<sup>13</sup> Clobery's name, however, does not appear in the main reports on the battle when the army of James II defeated the rag-tag alliance of his nephew. It was also in this battle that the Bishop of Winchester, Peter Mews, helped turn the tide of a night-time battle by using his coach horses to turn the guns towards the Monmouth's attackers.<sup>14</sup>

John Clobery died soon after, of oedema, aged 63 in January 1687 and was buried at night in the Cathedral in a 'stately and magnificent' funeral later that month.<sup>15</sup> Clobery-house was shrouded in black fabric, cathedral bells rang and the choir sang.

### The Clobery monument

His monument, erected by his widow Anne in 1691, is a grand representation of a life spent in the margins of politics. It was executed in the workshop of Sir William Wilson who had made a statue of Charles II at Lichfield Cathedral.<sup>16</sup> The statue is in an almost theatrical pose and is the first example in Hampshire of a standing funerary figure.<sup>17</sup> Clobery is portrayed with the right hand stretching forward with a staff, while the left hand is placed on his hip.<sup>18</sup> Originally, the upper part of the monument was decorated with flags, helmets, pikes and guns but these were removed in the nineteenth century.<sup>19</sup>

There is a long epitaph in Latin on the memorial which shows the family's adoration of their husband and father but it overstates his importance in the Restoration. John Milner translated it for his history of Winchester in 1798:

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<sup>12</sup> Watson, "Sir John Clobery".

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> See *Record Extra*, March 2025, for an article about Bishop Peter Mews, his role in the Battle of Sedgemoor, and his memorial in the Guardian Angel chapel.

<sup>15</sup> John Vaughan, *Winchester Cathedral, Its Memorials and Monuments*. London: Selwyn & Blount (1919), p. 190.

<sup>16</sup> Julie Adams, "Forget me Not: A House of Remembrance", *Record Extra*, 2021, pp. 13-14.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Cathedral legend has it that the statue's staff is a modern broom handle placed there by a virger.

<sup>19</sup> G.H. Blore, *The Monuments of Winchester Cathedral*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Winchester: Friends of Winchester Cathedral, (1983), p. 18.

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Sacred to the memory of  
Sir John Clobery, knight.  
Excelling, as he did in every thing,  
He in such manner cultivated the military art,  
And not only thoroughly to understand it,  
But also to apply it to the best purposes.  
Becoming the prop of his falling country  
And of the House of Stuart,  
He planned those measures  
With his friend Monk in Scotland,  
Which, when they came to London,  
They happily brought to pass ;  
By which peace was restored to England,  
Charles II to his throne,  
And unbounded joy to the whole nation.  
Amidst the noise of arms and public business,  
(A rare example to soldiers)  
He applied himself to intense study,  
And to the cultivation of his singular talents,  
So as to appear to have spent his life  
Rather in the academy than in the camp.  
At length his corporal strength failing him,  
He withdrew himself from worldly concerns,  
That he might better prepare himself for heaven,  
Which had long been the only object of his wishes.  
He died in the year of our Lord 1687, of his age 63  
His faithful widow  
Caused this monument (the last mark of her love)  
To be here erected.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Milner, *History*, pp. 60-61.

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Three of Clobery's seven children, his only son and two daughters, are buried in the retroquire floor in front of the statue. Clobery had one son and six daughters.

From the outset, the Wilson's memorial with its alabaster statue was not universally appreciated. Daniel Defoe, author of *Robinson Crusoe* and a prolific travel



The Clobery memorial by Sir William Wilson (1691)

writer, commented in the mid-1720s that the monument was 'extraordinary, but more, because it puts strangers upon enquiring into his story, than for anything wonderful in the figure'. Defoe added, unfairly, that Clobery's dress although modern in his times was 'now so much out of fashion'.<sup>21</sup> Samuel Gale, who completed the first guide book on the Cathedral in 1715, refers to a 'spacious monument, with the statue of Sir JOHN CLOBERY' and includes the Latin epitaph.<sup>22</sup>

The Winchester historian John Milner starts well with his description of the statue as 'a marble figure, in an erect posture ... ornamented with all kinds of modern military accoutrements and emblems', then compares the monument with the chantry of Cardinal Henry Beaufort that faces it: 'the taste and execution ... are by no means calculated to prove the superiority of the 17<sup>th</sup> century over the 15<sup>th</sup>, in the cultivation of the liberal arts'.<sup>23</sup>

In the past century, John Vaughan described the statue as being martial if 'somewhat stiff and clumsy'.<sup>24</sup> George Blore thought that 'the General (sic) looks incongruous in the house of God' and that 'Sir John would look more in place on a Guildhall or in a barrack square'.<sup>25</sup> Michael Bullen *et al* describe it as 'a very stiff alabaster

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<sup>21</sup> Daniel Defoe, *A tour thro' the whole island of Great Britain, divided into circuits or journies, Letter III Containing a Description of the South Coasts of Hampshire, Wiltshire, Dorsetshire, Somersetshire, Devonshire, and Cornwall*. London (1725-27), <https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/travellers/Defoe/9>.

<sup>22</sup> Samuel Gale, *The History and Antiquities of the Cathedral Church of the Holy Trinity in Winton*. London (1715), p. 45.

<sup>23</sup> Milner, *History*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>24</sup> Vaughan, *Winchester Cathedral*, p. 188.

<sup>25</sup> Blore, *Monuments*, p. 18.

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statue<sup>26</sup> while George Saumarez Smith calls it ‘a proud, if rather pompous, classical monument’.<sup>27</sup>

The Clobery monument has an importance that has been overlooked, as it represents the post-Reformation change of attitude towards burials in the Cathedral. Burials within the walls became more frequent and no longer limited to eminent individuals. John Vaughan commented that ‘it becomes apparently a question of family relationship, or a question of paying fees. All sorts and conditions of men can be found buried there’.<sup>28</sup> Clobery’s monument, like that of Richard Weston, Lord Portland, in the Guardian Angel chapel (1635), was in the most expensive area of the retroquire surrounded by bishops’ chantries and important east end chapels.<sup>29</sup>

In death and over three centuries later, John Clobery has more prominence than he had in life when his negotiating skills briefly helped bring the nation back to the monarchy. His statue is a reminder of those turbulent times.

### Previous articles about Sir John Clobery

Being such a prominent statue, there have been other articles about Sir John Clobery written in Cathedral publications, including the Guide’s Handbook. They include: R.F.K. Goldsmith’s *The Military Memorials of Winchester Cathedral* (1974), p. 25 and Frederick Bussby, “Winchester Cathedral 1789-1840”, *Winchester Cathedral Record*, vol. 44 (1975), p. 21. They can be found on the FOWC archive, [www.wincathrecord.org](http://www.wincathrecord.org) along with the articles quoted from *Record Extra* on Thomas Gumble, Bishop Peter Mews and Julie Adams’ extensive survey of Cathedral memorials.

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<sup>26</sup> Michael Bullen, John Crook, Rodney Hubbuck and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Hampshire: Winchester and the North*. New Haven and London (2010), p. 596.

<sup>27</sup> George Saumarez Smith, “Samuel Walldin and Sir Henry Cheere in Winchester Cathedral”, *The Georgian Group Journal*, Vol. XXIII (2015), p. 66.

<sup>28</sup> Vaughan, *Winchester Cathedral*, p. 5.

<sup>29</sup> Saumarez Smith, “Samuel Walldin”, p. 66.

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### **Illustrations**

- 1) Sir John Clobery statue by Sir William Wilson, Winchester Cathedral (Tom Watson).
- 2) General George Monck, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Albemarle, After Samuel Cooper, c. 1700.  
(Courtesy of the Cromwell Museum, Huntingdon).
- 3) The Clobery memorial by Sir William Wilson, Winchester Cathedral (Tom Watson).