

The Seaxe



Newsletter of the Middlesex Heraldry Society

Joint Editors - Don & Marjorie Kirby, 2 Jamnagar Close, Staines, Middlesex TW18 2JT (01784 456049)

No.18

(Founded 1976)

July 1997

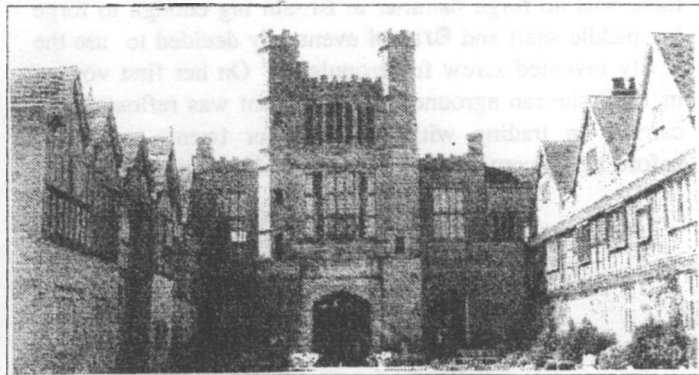
Editorial Note

As a result of the decision to curtail the number of meetings it is hoped to publish Seaxe five times every year - in February, April, July, September and December. Contributions are always welcome - even (or especially) from non-members!



Visit to Coughton Court, Warwick

from Frances (Fay) Robson



When I awoke to wet and windy weather on 4th May I appreciated how kind the gods had been to us the day before on our visit to **Coughton Court**. Although it did start to spit with rain soon after three o'clock we had had pleasant sunshine until then and the house and gardens looked delightful. Twenty people came - fifteen from our own Society, three from the Chiltern Heraldry Group and two visitors. As a special concession five photographers were allowed into the house early and had three quarters of an hour before members of the general public were admitted. They were permitted, under the surveillance of a National Trust guide, to go beyond the ropes to take photographs of the individual glass panels in the windows - some of which are sixteenth century and of very fine quality. We spent the



house are:- *Gules on a chevron Argent three bars gemel Sable* with the rather unusual but delightful crest of an

elephant's head couped *Sable* armed *Or*. The motto *Virtus sola nobilitas* translates as **virtue is the only nobility**. We toured the house individually and apart from a wealth of heraldry in glass and textiles, on woodwork and on stone and silver, as well as on the enchanting stair-carpet, there were many non-heraldic items of considerable interest. Among them were the priests' hiding places, the chemise of **Mary, Queen of Scots**, the famous **Throckmorton** coat made in less than a day and the original abdication document of **Edward VIII**.

The splendid view from the top of the gatehouse is well worth the effort entailed in getting up those awful, narrow spiral stairs whilst down on the ground again the **Guy Fawkes** video is gruesome enough to satisfy the most bloodthirsty schoolboy!

My thanks to everyone who travelled such long distances to support this expedition. I hope that everyone found it worth the effort and I also hope that one day there will be an opportunity to see the photographs which were taken enabling us to savour, once again, the unique qualities of **Coughton Court**.

[Editors' Notes - (a) Neither your Editors nor, as far as we know, members who were there found the well researched history of **Coughton Court** anything but short and comprehensive, adding interest to our individual wanderings round the house later in the afternoon.

(b) Mrs Clare McLaren-Throckmorton, the family member in residence apologised to Fay for not spending time with us and pleaded pressure of work. Under an agreement with the National Trust she is responsible for the catering arrangements and, at the time of our visit, had just lost two of the senior catering staff without any warning whatsoever. We take off our hats to her for taking personal charge of the counter in the restaurant and to husband, Andrew, who took on the task of clearing tables. *Noblesse oblige* indeed!

(c) The reddest face belongs to one of your Editors who accepted Fay's invitation to an early photographic visit and took some unique and stunning pictures of heraldic glass ----- without a film in his camera!

(d) And finally, from all of us - thank you Fay, for an enjoyable and memorable day].

Bristol grew up between the end of the sixth century and the middle of the tenth century - known then as **Bricg-stowe** (the place of the bridge) - and it was a small but flourishing town by the time of the **Norman Conquest**. In 1068, three sons of **Harold**, with a fleet of ships manned by "wild Irishmen" sailed up the River Avon and attempted unsuccessfully to sack and plunder the town. The need for greater protection for such an important port was recognised by **William I** and orders were given to **Geoffrey Mowbray**, Bishop of Coutance and Exeter to build a large



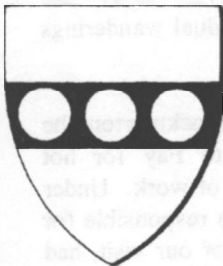
Mowbray

castle. The stone was brought over from Caen and the cost of building was levied as a tax on the people of the town. Arms:- *Gules a lion rampant Argent*.

Bristol continued to grow in importance over the next three centuries and, at the **Siege of Calais** in 1347 twenty three ships were sent by **Bristol** - only two

less than **London**. In recognition of this assistance to the Crown, **Edward III** rewarded **Bristol** in 1373 by making it a County so that it could manage its own affairs without reference to the authorities of neighbouring shires. In the **Wars of the Roses**, the City adopted a "Vicar of Bray" approach changing allegiance as best suited to its interests. **Bristol** had become a wealthy city and **Henry VII**, on a visit in 1490, was received with the best the city could afford. In return the King made all citizens worth over £20 pay 5% of the value of their property as a "fine" because their wives were so splendidly dressed!

About this time probably one of the best known figures associated with **Bristol** was **John Cabot**, a Venetian who left his native land and settled as a merchant in the city. In 1497 **John** and his son, **Sebastian**, set sail westwards in the **Matthew** - a tiny ship with a crew of only eighteen. They eventually sighted land and took possession of it under the name of **Primavista** or, as it is known today - **Newfoundland**. On their return to England they reported 'teeming fisheries' off the new lands. In the reign of **Edward IV**, **Sebastian** was appointed the first Governor of the Merchant Venturers of **Bristol**, a society originally founded to secure effective control of merchant shipping using the port.



Penn

Nearly two centuries after **Cabot's** first voyage, a member of a well-known **Bristol** Quaker family, **Admiral Sir William Penn**, who had rendered distinguished service to his country in the capture of **Jamaica** in 1655, was given a grant of territory in North America called **Pensilvania** in his honour. Later his son - also

William - founded a Quaker colony here as **Pennsylvania** in which the rights of the local **Indians** were respected and slavery outlawed. Arms:- *Argent on a fess Sable three plates*.

In 1697 **Bristol** established a workhouse for the poor, the first town or city in England to do so - and, in 1702, the first newspaper outside London, the **Bristol Post Boy** was published. It was not a very imposing affair, printed on

both sides of a coarse and dingy sheet of paper - smaller in size than half a sheet of ordinary letter paper - the total content would not fill threequarters of a column of a modern daily newspaper.

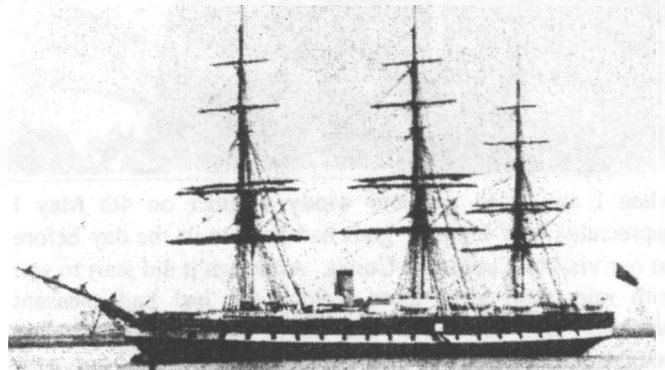
There are many names famous (and infamous) associated with **Bristol** such as :-

John Loudon McAdam - Scottish inventor and engineer who, in 1716, was appointed surveyor to the **Bristol Turnpike Trust** and who built local roads with a new method of construction - basically a foundation of large stones in a shallow arch with small stones on top.

Robert Barker - who who first printed the **James I Authorised Version of the Bible**.

John Romsey - a member of a company formed in 1708 with the avowed object of making money by raiding in the Spanish Indies. On his return to England, evidently well satisfied with his share of the booty, he paid for a pair of heavy silver candlesticks to be made and these he presented to **Bristol Cathedral** where they still stand on the altar in the Lady Chapel.

Isambard Kingdom Brunel - who designed the **Great Western**, the first steamship to cross the Atlantic without the need to re-coal - she was a paddle steamer launched in 1837 and her first trip to New York was completed in fifteen days. In 1839 the more famous **Great Britain** was laid down in the **Bristol** yard but the ship was so large that there was no forge hammer in Britain big enough to forge her paddle shaft and **Brunel** eventually decided to use the newly invented screw for propulsion. On her first voyage in 1843 she ran aground off Ireland but was refloated and carried on trading with Australia for twenty-one years before being converted to a sailing ship. Her sailing days



Trading days over - waiting for a buyer

over she was treated ignominiously becoming a coal hulk in the Falklands. However, a few years ago, she was towed back to her home port and is now in her own dry dock in an advanced stage of conversion to museum, restaurant and centre for social functions.

William Patterson - not such a well known name but a man in whose yard both the **Great Western** and the **Great Britain** were built.

Samuel Plimsoll - one of the best remembered names in the shipping world was the son of a **Bristolian** who entered Parliament in 1868 and at once began a campaign against the despicable and all too frequent practice of sending out ships, either overladen or in an otherwise unfit condition. Many a "coffin" ship sailed from harbour with her owners aware that she was unlikely to return but satisfied that the loss would be amply covered by insurance.

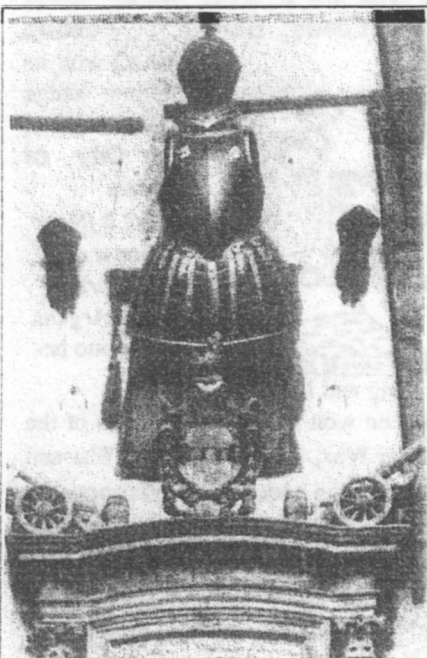
He finally succeeded in arousing public opinion and, in 1876, a **Merchant Shipping Act** was passed, introducing, *inter alia*, a load line on every vessel.

Alongside privateering went slave trading and **Bristol** had an unenviable history in this nefarious trade. In 1709 there were fifty-seven **Bristol** ships engaged and, two years later, the **Corporation of Merchant Venturers** declared that the city's prosperity was founded on the slave trade. A reminder of this period has survived to the present day with the names of two adjoining sections of a major thoroughfare - **Whiteladies Road** and **Blackboy Hill**.

At the end of the 19th century, **Bristol** was ranked high on the list of ports in Britain but the bulk of its trade with the **West Indies** - sugar, rum and molasses as well as slaves had begun to be transferred to **Liverpool**. As a port, **Liverpool** had considerable advantages over **Bristol** where difficulty in navigating a serpentine tidal river and inadequate docking facilities - ships had to lie on the mud at ebb tide, thereby risking a broken back - became an increasing liability. In the 1870s larger and deeper docks were constructed at **Avonmouth** and **Portishead** at the mouth of the **River Avon** which were large enough to accommodate the biggest vessels then afloat. Trade revived somewhat and by the 1930s Bristol was a major importer of grain, bananas and tobacco. After World War II, the importance of **Bristol**, as a port, declined rapidly and the city docks have been redeveloped for permanent housing and trade fairs and the floating harbour is used only by pleasure craft.

Manufacturing activities in the city have also declined in the post war years, due partly to rationalisation - e.g. the transfer of the operations of the Imperial Tobacco Company to Nottingham and to the demise of some smaller industries - such as the manufacture of heavy leather Navy boots. The decline has been partially offset by a major increase in service industries - many insurance and banking operations have been transferred to **Bristol**.

The nadir of **Bristol's** civic pride occurred some twenty years ago when the city lost its county status to the new



Funeral accoutrements on the monument to Admiral Penn in St Mary Redcliffe

Avon County Council - but from April this year its citizens can take fresh heart from the restoration of civic pride in that Bristol has regained its own City and County status.

But, however brief, no history of **Bristol** would be complete without a reference to the City's two most famous landmarks. Firstly the church of **St Mary Redcliffe** is almost universally accepted to be the finest example of

Gothic architecture in England. On her visit to the church in 1574 **Queen Elizabeth I** is reputed to have described it as the *fairest, goodliest and most famous parish church in England*. Construction of the present church began in 1280, on the site of an earlier Norman building which had probably fallen into decay. In 1446 the spire was struck by lightning and crashed through the roof of the nave. The restoration was carried out by **William Canynge**, a wealthy local merchant, and it was in his time that the pre-Reformation church was in its greatest glory. After the death of his wife **Canynge** became a priest and celebrated his first mass on Whitsun Day 1468. This event is commemorated every year when the church is strewn with rushes and the service is attended by the Lord Mayor and Corporation.

Brunel, as well as famous steamships, also designed the **Clifton Suspension Bridge**. Construction work began in 1836, was abandoned due to lack of funds in 1853, restarted in 1860 and finally completed in 1864. The chains for the bridge had a chequered career, originally ordered for they were transferred to the suspension bridge at **Hungerford** but when it was condemned they were brought back and used at **Clifton**. The bridge is 245 feet above high water and, over the years, has been a favourite site for suicides. Three people are known to have survived the fall - the most remarkable being a young woman who, in 1895, made the leap but her descent was retarded due to her long skirts opening like a parachute - and she floated down!

Bibliography:- **Our Bristol** by **Harold G. Brown MA**

Arms of Bristol - *Gules on the sinister side a Silver castle with two domed towers on each a banner charged with the cross of St. George standing on a cliff proper and in dexter base barry wavy Argent and Azure and issuing therefrom a Gold ship sailing from a port in the tower of the castle masts and rigging Sable and on each mast a Gold round top a sail spread on the foremast and a sail furled on the mainmast both Argent.*



Crest - *On a wreath Argent and Gules two bent arms arising from clouds the forearms crossed the dexter hand grasping a snake and the other holding a pair of scales -*

the arms and snake Proper and the scales Gold.

Supporters - *Two unicorns sejant Or their horns, hooves and manes Sable.*

Motto - *Virtute et industria* - By virtue and industry

Scott-Giles says *the arms clearly express the City's ancient character as a fortified port* and **Pedrick** states that *the position of the castle was such that it commanded the entrance to the ancient town. It had a secret port through which vessels of considerable build passed easily right into its area, the Avon being thus made to communicate with the dŭch, and the archway to which the ship is being guided is considered to represent this secret harbour.*

In the Time of Queen Bick

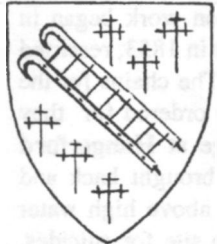
by Cynthia Liddard Cannings

2. Tripp of Boulogne

A simple scaling ladder was the ladder of fortune for a younger son of the **Howards** during the Hundred Years' War. With his own way to make in the world, caution was not a virtue he could afford. So, when the ladders went up at the siege of Boulogne, young **Howard** was the first to go up with them. He always claimed that the French were sleeping off their dinner and that there was little opposition. Whatever may be the truth of it, he soon found himself safe within the walls. Swiftly he despatched men to open the gates and the King rode in.

That was quick said Henry, How did you manage it?

My men raised the ladder and I tripped up it, sire grinned the boy.



Tripp

Then henceforth let your name be Tripp said his liege lord, returning the grin, *and let you bear the ladder that bore you into my favour.*

So the **Howard** bend was supplanted on the boy's shield and his descendants bear *Gules a scaling ladder between six cross crosslets fitchy Argent* to this very

day.

(First published in the *Norfolk Standard* of January 1997 and reprinted with permission.)

[We must admit that we thought we were having our legs pulled over this one - but on recourse to Burke we were astonished to find complete confirmation of this piece of history. The only new bit of information we found was that he was the fifth son! Our apologies to "CLC" for even doubting the authenticity of her story - Eds]

+++++

Militaria No. 15 - The West Yorkshire Regiment



The West Yorkshire Regiment was raised in 1685 as **Sir Edward Hales's Regiment of Foot** and, like most regiments, its title changed with its colonels until 1751 when it became the **14th Regiment of Foot**. In 1782 the title changed to **14th (Bedfordshire) Foot** but in 1809

they changed their county allegiance to become **14th (Buckinghamshire) Foot**. This title remained unchanged until 1876 when they became **14th (Buckinghamshire - The Prince of Wales's Own) Foot**. (The Prince of Wales was, in fact, the future King Edward VII.) In 1881 there were two changes, firstly, in May, to the **West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own)** and then, in July, to



Regiment of Yorkshire is very similar but has **YORKSHIRE** on the ground and has no scroll. During the first World War, in company with many other towns and cities and often with tragic consequences, Leeds produced its own **15th (Leeds) Battalion ('Leeds**



Pals') with its unique badge of the arms of the **City of Leeds** -

Azure a fleece Or, on a chief Sable three molets Argent. The motto is:-
Pro Rege et Lege - For King and Law.
The Victoria Cross has been won by seven members of the regiment - two in the Boer War, four in the Great War and one in World War II. In addition **Lieut. T. E. Waters** was awarded the **George Cross** posthumously for his bravery whilst a POW in Korea. Earlier **Private E. M. Elston** was awarded the **Empire Gallantry Medal** (later exchanged for the **George Cross**) for his actions during the Quetta earthquake of 1935.

Nicknames of **The West Yorkshire Regiment** are the

The Prince of Wales's Own) West Yorkshire Regiment. There was one more change when, shortly after the Great War they returned almost to the May 1881 designation as the **West Yorkshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales's Own)**

In 1958 the regiment merged with the **East Yorkshire Regiment (The Duke of York's Own)** to form **The Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire**.

The regiment served at Corunna, Waterloo and at Sevastopol in the Crimean War. They were at the Relief of Ladysmith and served in the Boer War. Among its many battle honours are Aisne, Armentières, Neuve Chapelle, Loos, Somme, Arras, Messines, Ypres, Menin Road, Passchendaele, Cambrai, and the Suvla Bay Landing at Gallipoli from the Great War and El Alamein, North Africa and Burma from World War II. In 1944, during World War II, the 1st and 2nd Battalions were engaged in the heroic defence of Imphal when a force of 100,000 Japanese were prevented from entering India and which proved to be the turning point of the campaign in Burma.

The regimental badge was described as the White Horse of Hanover on ground with **WEST YORKSHIRE** on a scroll in base. The badge of **The Prince of Wales's Own**

POWOS (acronym), **The Old and Bold** and **Calvert's Entire** after a doughty early 19th century Colonel, **Sir Harry Calvert**.

The motto of the regiment was *Nec Aspera Terrent* (Not do difficulties deter).

The Regimental Headquarters is 3, Tower Street, York and recruiting now covers the entire County of Yorkshire.



Is it a Scythe or is it a Sickle?

[to the Editors] from Roger Matthews

I have no doubt that this is but one of thousands of letters you have received on the subject of the difference between the artistic representation and the blazon of the arms of the Federation of Family History Societies. As it positively leaps out of the page at you I do not really have to point out that the blazon states quite clearly that the sinister supporter holds a **SCYTHE** proper whereas the lady equally clearly is holding a **SICKLE**.



[The Complete Oxford English Dictionary gives as a second meaning - *the attribute of Time or Death* which allusion very clearly suggests that the *Scythe* is a **long handled** implement.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary gives the following descriptions

Scythe = mowing and reaping implement having a long slightly curved blade swung over ground by usually crooked pole about five feet long with two short handles projecting at right angles from it.

Sickle = reaping hook, short handled semicircular-bladed implement now chiefly used for lopping and trimming, formerly for cutting corn.



[Perhaps **Iain Swinnerton**, founder chairman and first president of the Federation may care to comment. Eds]

Both illustrations are taken from **Fairbairn's Crests** - the *Scythe* is the crest of the **Pilkington** family and the *Sickle* is used by the Scottish family of **Cumming** among many others.



Corrigenda

In the article **In Search of Armorial Glass** by **Joss Froggatt** in **SEAXE** No.17 there were two errors:-

(i) the "thirteen different heraldic badges and 41 coats of arms" were in the church of St Mary at Battersea and not Gilling Castle.

(ii) the "450 coats of arms" were found in Lincoln's Inn and not York Minster.

[It is difficult to see whose fault it is - so we shall blame the computer - everyone else does! - Eds]



Seeing Red by Joss Froggatt

In the smallest room in the house we have a copy of **Cooke's Ordinary of Arms** dated 1340 edited by the late Garter King of Arms, **Sir Anthony Wagner**. Out of 56 coats of arms 36 contain *Gules* or red - so I am seeing red very regularly!

This red colour is extremely uniform - but what pigment is it? There was only one colour of this type available at the time - **Vermilion** - which led me to investigate the origin of this pigment. The naturally occurring mineral was in use for many years BC and was found in rock formation or lumps of earth in China, Egypt, Syria, Greece, Judea, Mexico and Peru. It was called **Kinnabari** by the Greeks, became **Cinnabaris** in Latin and was later corrupted to **Cinnabar**.

Evidence of the use of this pigment was found on Pompeian walls and on very ancient documents. so - the artificial pigment, as we know it today, was known to the ancient world in the 8th century AD. Chemically it is essentially Mercuric Sulphide made by heating Mercury and Sulphur, in a sublimation* process.

You will have to excuse me - I have to see a man about **Vermilion**!

[*For the benefit of morons like your editors the Oxford English Dictionary tells us that this is a more technical term for "distillation." - Eds]

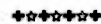


Annual General Meeting

will be held

on Thursday, 18th September, 1997

*Nominations for office should be sent
or given to the Chairman or
to any member of the committee*



The AGM will be followed by our annual

Members Evening

We look forward to seeing all those heraldic slides you have been taking since last September



*All meetings are held in The Library,
Ruislip Manor at 8.00pm*

