



The Seaxe

Newsletter of the Middlesex Heraldry Society

Joint Editors – Don & Marjorie Kirby, 2 Jannager Close, Staines, Middlesex TW18 2JT

(Telephone: 01784 456049 – e-mail: seaxe@tinyworld.co.uk)

.....
No. 47

(Founded 1976)

March 2004
.....

Robin Clayton R.I.P.

In February we said farewell to one of our longest-standing and loyal members. Robin Clayton joined the Society in its early days, and has been one of our most regular attenders at meetings of all kinds. He served on the committee, edited *The Seaxe* for a time, and used his skills to make our reading desk, chairman's gavel, and a splendid projector case. Robin had worked with wood for much of his life, but more recently was a caretaker at Queensmead School.

When he joined us he had a phenomenal knowledge and memory for the pedigrees of the great families of the past, and a great interest in castles. He later became deeply involved with hatchments, and set himself the goal of recording all British hatchments in photographs. He had amassed a marvellous collection, mounted and identified in a series of albums which are eventually to go to one of the national collections. He was about two-thirds of the way through the hatchments of England, and was planning to complete the work on his retirement which was imminent. His childlike enthusiasm for his subject prevented him from recognising that not all his friends and colleagues shared his interest to such great lengths, but it was impossible to take exception in the face of his delight and his happy personality.

In September of last year he was unable to swallow, and after two weeks without any food, during which he continued to work, he was persuaded to see a doctor. It still took time for his condition to be recognised, but after hospital treatment he was sure he would recover and be able to continue his labour of love. He kept himself busy and cheerful by reorganising his collection. He was able to drive and to go out with his friends, and it was while enjoying a meal with friends that he collapsed and died.

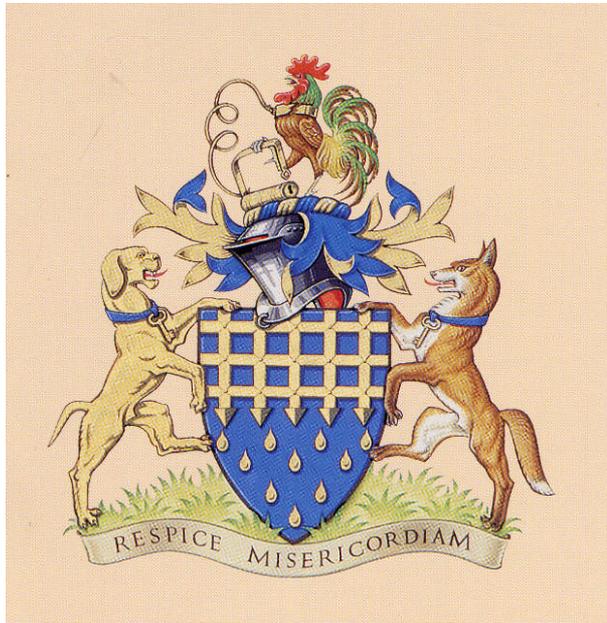
Several of us attended the cremation, where his friend, Bert May, gave a kindly, light-hearted tribute to a friend and 'character' who will be missed by all who knew him for his slightly eccentric manner, his boyish enthusiasm, and above all for his happy and generous nature.

May he rest in peace.

KH

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

The RSPCA's Coat of Arms symbolises their fight against cruelty to all animals.



The cockerel represents farm animals and birds. It is attached to an open fetterlock – an early form of padlock – which symbolises the release of animals from traps, cages, fighting and cruelty in general.

The shield is supported by a Talbot, a traditional Heraldic dog representing companion animals, and a fox, representing wild animals. The portcullis on the shield symbolises parliament; through constant and effective parliamentary lobbying, the RSPCA has helped introduce most of the significant animal welfare legislation over the last 170 years.

The golden drops represents mercy which 'droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath', and also the money which our many supporters give to enable us to carry on our work.

The motto 'Respice Misericordiam' contains a pun on the name and means 'shows mercy'

+++++

Heraldic Sculpture

In 1953 James Woodford was commissioned by the Minister of Works to produce a series of 10 life-size beasts for a guard of honour for her majesty the Queen at her coronation at Westminster Abbey. Where they went to after the coronation nobody seems to know. Since they were cast in plaster they have probably long since disintegrated and are now just a memory. However, permanent copies in Portland stone were made by Woodford and now form a permanent guard of honour outside the Palm House at Kew Gardens. What is not so well known is that Woodford's work can be seen in many other places throughout this country and further a field throughout the world.



His extraordinary talent brought him many commissions to produce the Royal Arms for Law Courts in this country and many Embassies abroad.

One such law court is Wandsworth County Court in Putney, South West London. Two heraldic beasts, one the English lion, the

other the Scottish unicorn, both supporting a shield of the Royal arms stand on pillars positioned either side of the main entrance to the Court. They both stand approximately 6 feet tall and are cast in aluminium and stove enamelled to protect against weathering. The animals stand free from the building so that the side view presents a good silhouette. The modelled surface is textured to contrast with the plain surface of the building.



More examples of James Woodford's work can be seen in his beautiful book 'Heraldic Sculpture and the work of James Woodford'.

+++++

The Bestaries

On a recent visit to Great Malvern we found a wonderful set of 14th and 15th century misericords in the Priory. One set depicts a Kalender of the months; twenty-two of the original twenty-four remain. The other set are miscellaneous subjects of monsters, beasts, birds, and scenes from life. One misericord from the miscellaneous



set is shown here. Two long-necked grotesque figures, one with claws, the other with webbed feet, are intertwined and gaze at each other. Both figures have wings. What intriguing figures these are. I wondered if there was a name for these strange creatures. Looking through various sources I could not find anything like these strange creatures. However, I spent a few happy hours reading about the fantastical creatures of the medieval mind. Here are a few I came across.

The monoceros is a monster with a terrible bray; it has the body of a horse, the feet of an elephant and a tail like that of a stag. A horn of extraordinary splendour projects from the middle of its forehead, four feet in length, and so sharp that anything it strikes is easily pierced by the blow. It is never taken into the power of human beings while it lives; it can be killed but never captured alive.



The manticore is a beast that has a triple row of teeth, the face of a man, and grey eyes; it is blood-red in colour and has a lion's body, a pointed tail with a sting like that of a scorpion, with a hissing voice. It delights in eating human flesh. Its feet are very powerful and it can jump so well that neither the largest ditches nor the broadest of obstacles can keep it in.



Storks are called 'ciconie' in Latin because their cry is that of the cicadas, and they make it with their beaks rather than their voice, using the clashing of their beaks. They are the messengers of spring, gregarious, enemies of snakes. They fly across the sea in great flocks towards Asia. These birds are said to have no tongues. Crows fly in front of them as leaders, and they follow like an army. Their love for their young is extraordinary. For they keep the nests so warm that their feathers fall out with the continuous incubation. The same length of time that they spend bringing up their young is spent in return by their offspring in caring for the parents. The stork signifies prudent men, careful servants of God; just as storks pursue snakes and draw off their poisons, so they pursue evil spirits who make poisonous suggestions, and reduce them to nothing. Jeremiah says: 'Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgement of the Lord' (8:7).



Bestiary being an English version of the Bodleian Library, Oxford M.S. Bodley 764, published by The Folio Society 1992

+++++

Did you know...?

...that the traditional method of ascertaining that the pope was dead was for the Cardinal Camerlengo to tap the dead pope's forehead with a small ivory mallet, calling him three times by his baptismal name. Needless to say, this custom has now stopped and more scientific means are used.

Saints & Sinners, Eamon Duffy

+++++

The Worshipful Company of Girdlers

I was recently sent a photograph of a coat of arms taken some time ago 'somewhere in London'. As usual, the relevant details had not been noted on the back of the photo. Could I identify the arms for them? I have to confess I did not recollect ever seeing these arms before. The obvious place to start looking would be Papworth's Ordinary. But what are the charges on the shield? Surely they weren't scrubbing boards? It then occurred to me that the person making the enquiry used to have an interest in the Guilds of London. This interest was acquired following a talk Les Pierson gave on the Guilds of London to the group she belongs to. Looking through *'The Armorial Bearings of the Guilds of London'* I came across these arms which informed me they belonged to the Company of Girdlers.

Edward III, by letters patent dated 10th March 1326/7 '...confirmed certain

ordinances of the Girdlers of the City it is laid down that no girdle of silk, of wool, of leather, or of linen thread be garnished with inferior metal'.



The arms are blazoned as '*On a field of six pieces azure and or three gridirons or. Crest: In a cloud with the sun issuing therefrom the figure of St Lawrence, vested azure, and holding in his dexter hand a gridiron and in his sinister hand a book or, (presumably the bible).* Mantling: *Azure double ermine powdered with suns issuing from clouds.* Granted by John Smert, Garter, 15th October 1454.

Motto: *Give thanks to God*

The use of the gridiron now becomes apparent, since the gridiron is the symbol of the martyrdom of St. Lawrence. It is said that the gridiron provides a pun on the Company's name. The word "girdle" still survives in the north of England and in Scotland as a synonym for "griddle" or "gridiron", notably in "girdle-cake".

Tucked in the book I found three other photographs I had taken over the years.

The first one is that of **The Worshipful Company of Grocers.**

The arms are blazoned as follows:

Argent a chevron gules between nine cloves sable. Supporters: On either side a griffin per fesse gules and or, the underwing azure, beaked and clawed or.

Granted by Thomas Benolt, Clarenceux, 1532.

Crest: *On a wreath argent and gules a camel statant or, bridled sable, on his back two bags of pepper argent [powdered with the cloves and corded sable. Mantling: Azure double argent.*

Granted by William Hervey, Clarenceux, 14th October 1562.

Motto: *God grant grace.*

The griffins are the symbol for treasure, the cloves and the pepper bags allude to the fraternities of Spicers and Pepperers whose union in 1429 constituted the "Mystery of Grocers". The camel symbolizes the East from where the products come from.



The **Worshipful Company of Plaisterers** was incorporated by charter 10th March 1500/1. The charter established the Company as the 'Master and Wardens of the Guild or Fraternity of the Blessed Mary of Pargettors in the City of London'. Their arms are: *Azure on a chevron engrailed argent a rose gules budded or, stalked and leaved vert, between two fleur-de-lys azure; in chief a trowel fessewise between two plasterer's hammers palewise all argent*

handled or, in base a plasterer's brush of four knots tied argent handle or.



Crest: *On a wreath argent and azure an arm vested bendy of four gules and or, holding in the hand proper a plasterer's hammer as in the arms.*

Mantling: *Gules doubled argent.*

Supporters: *On either side an opinicus vert winged, membered and eyed gules, the throat and belled purpled or.*

Granted by Thomas Hawley, Clarenceux, 20th January 1545/6.

The Worshipful Company of Haberdashers were the result of the union of the hatters, cappers, and hurers in 1502. By a charter dated 6th July 1502, the fraternity of St. Katherine of Merchant Haberdashers came into being. Before the amalgamation the Haberdashers' trade comprised several fraternities, amongst which was the Hurers, *alias* Cappers. The Hurers seem to have been makers of rough wool or hair caps. The Haberdasher's arms are: *Barry wavy of six argent and azure on a bend gules a lion passant guardant or.*

Crest: *On a wreath argent and azure issuing from clouds two naked arms embowed holding a laurel wreath all proper.*

Mantling: *Azure doubled argent.* Supporters: *On either side a goat of India argent flecked gules membered or.* Motto: *Serve and obey.* Confirmation of arms and grant of crest and supporters by Robert Cooke, Clarenceux, 8th November 1570.

The wavy field of their arms was intended to represent their ocean-wide commerce, with the lion passant guardant of England symbolizing royal patronage. The significance of the crest is obscure, but follows a pattern favoured by **Cooke** as can be seen in the crests of the Bakers, Curriers, and Pewterers. The supporters allude to the source and origin of the raw material of some of the haberdashers' wares.

The arms on the left, *Argent a lion rampant gules*, appear to be for one William Jones who, in 1613 bequested the enormous sum of £6,000 for charitable purposes and a further £3,000 in his will which also included for a school. The shield on the right, *Azure three chevrons or overall a fess gules*, are the town of Monmouth's arms. These three shields are to be seen above the gate at the Haberdasher's school for girls in Monmouth.

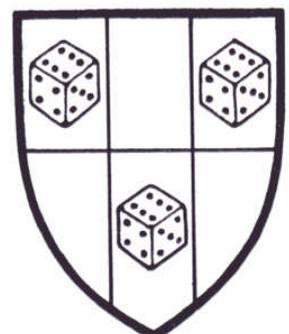


The Armorial Bearings of the Guilds of London, J. Bromley & H.Child, 1960.

+++++

The arms of Saint Matthias, Apostle and Martyr, are blazoned: *Six pieces gules and gold with three dice in their proper colours in the gules.*

The shield is intended to symbolize by its charges him



who was chosen by lot into the number of the Apostles, and by its colours his martyrdom and renown. A precedent for introducing dice into a shield is to be found in the arms of the English family of Mathias who bore Gules three dice silver, as well as in medieval shields in Winchester Cathedral and elsewhere in which they are pictured among the instruments of our Lord's Passion.

Heraldry of the Church, Rev. E.E.Dorling, 1911

+++++

The Seaxe.

It was September 2003 when the last **Seaxe** was produced. Since then Don Kirby, one of the co-editors of *The Seaxe*, has been ill and has not felt well enough to produce another. As with a lot of things in life it's not until we lose something that we realise how much pleasure and enjoyment we got from that which we have lost. *The Seaxe* certainly comes in that category.

Looking back through past editions I was astonished to see that Don has been co-editor for at least 49 issues over the last 17 years. In the editorial for the March 1987 issue, Kay Holmes wrote, "*This, our eighth edition of *The Seaxe*, has been produced by a new process, by a new member, Don Kirby, on his word processor*".

At a time when most people over the age of 25 break in to a sweat over the thought of using a computer for even the most simplest of tasks, Don has thrown himself in with great enthusiasm and not only bought himself a computer but also delved in to the realms of desk top publishing. What a marvellous job he did too.

With Don, and Marjorie's, guidance *The Seaxe* has been the mouth piece of *The Middlesex Heraldry Society*. An essential organ for dispersing information about the Society. To this end it has been felt necessary to produce this edition without the benefit of our editors' experience. It is hoped that this situation will not last too long.

The Noble Science

"Heraldry is so noble, useful, and entertaining a Science, that scarce any of those Studies which are considered as polite and ornamental, can lay a juster claim to the attention of NOBLEMEN and GENTLEMEN".



The Elements of Heraldry – M.A. Porney, 1771

+++++

The Middlesex Armory Project.

At the September 2003 Committee meeting a proposal was put forward for the Society to undertake a project or projects which all the members could participate in. Two suggestions were put forward. The first one was 'Heraldry in Middlesex'. The proposal was to produce a publication on the heraldic history of Middlesex. The second project was 'The Middlesex Armory'. The object being is to compile an armory of the heraldry in/or connected with the County of Middlesex.

After discussions the 'Heraldry in Middlesex' idea was dropped leaving 'The Middlesex Armory' as sole candidate. Preliminary notes were drawn up as was an armory of the arms in St Mary's Church, Ruislip. Members can view these notes at the April and May meetings.

Before the finer details of how the project should tackled it was decided to consult the members for their views. A small questionnaire has been attached to this newsletter for you to complete and let us have your views. Please take time to fill this in and return it.

+++++

Next Meetings

Slater's Latest Travels
By Stephen Slater, HonFHS
on Saturday 8th May 2004

+++++

Visit to St John's Gatehouse, Clerkenwell
on Tuesday, 22nd June 2004
Meet in the entrance of St John's Gate
at 2.15pm

+++++

Meetings will be held at the Guide Hut in Bury Street, Ruislip – part of the Manor Farm, Library, Great Barn group of buildings and are usually on the first Saturday of each month. Meetings will be followed by tea and biscuits.

Visitors are most welcome

The Chiltern Heraldry Group

24th April - Ralph Brocklebank, HonFHS
Arms of Family and Friends
at St. John Ambulance Brigade Hall
Amersham on the Hill

+++++

17th July AGM and Tea
Details to follow

+++++

Meetings begin at 2.30pm and are followed by a light tea provided by members

Officers and Committee

At the AGM on Thursday, 18th September 2003 Kay Holmes resigned from the position of Chairman. Stephen Kibbey was elected as the new Chairman. There being no other nominations your officers and committee agreed to carry on for another year.

<i>Chairman</i>	Stephen Kibbey
<i>Vice-Chairman</i>	Marjorie Kirby
<i>Hon. Treasurer</i>	Stuart Whitefoot
<i>Minutes Secretary</i>	Margaret Young

Committee

Ron Brown Don Kirby
Nan Taylor

+++++

Subscriptions

for 2003/04 are now due and are unchanged at:-

£6.00 for full membership
£4.00 for country membership

Please give or send your cheque or cash to the Hon. Treasurer or to any member of the committee.

+++++

All correspondence regarding this edition and articles for future editions should be, for the time being, sent to The Chairman, 3 Cleveland Court, Kent Avenue, Ealing, London W13 8BJ.