



The Seaxe



Newsletter of the Middlesex Heraldry Society

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The de Veres' of Hedingham, Essex by Clive Alexander



In the middle ages 'the de Veres, Earls of Oxford' were the most illustrious line of nobles that England had seen, wrote Lord Macaulay. They held the Lordship of Hedingham in Essex. Aubrey de Vere III was ennobled by Emperess Matilda. He was given the choice of title between Cambridge, Oxford, Berkshire, Wiltshire or Dorset. A title that continued for twenty generations.

This illustration of Aubrey de Vere is taken from *Halstead's Succinct Genealogies (1685)* and shows the brilliance of the complete trappings of a medieval knight, the horse richly adorned with the arms of the de Veres and the famous blue boar crest on the helmet, and the coronet signifying that he was an Earl. The legend of the Mullet on the arms is attributed to Aubrey the second

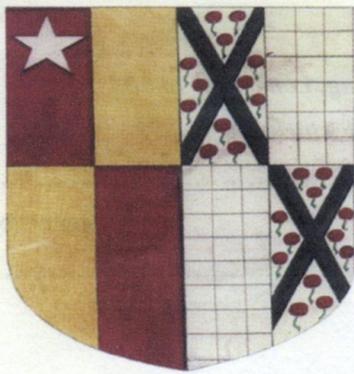
Earl, who in 1098 was engaged in a fierce battle in the Holy Land against the Sultan of Persia's army. As dusk fell confusion on the Battlefield was spreading, as the Saracens were becoming obscured by darkness, a brilliant five-pointed star appeared. The battlefield was illuminated bringing victory to the crusaders. The star was adopted by the de Veres as their emblem.

Of all of the medieval fighting Earls, John the 13th Earl (1443 –1513) was the greatest and richest of them all being rewarded handsomely for his bravery and leadership during the Wars of the Roses. The Museo Bargello in Florence has on display his tilting helmet and Crest. It is very interesting to see that the Chapeau or Cap of Maintenance associated with this exhibit has been displayed back to front. As the colour and ermine has been completely eroded away by time it takes you a moment or two to work out just what the pitted plaster lump upon the helm is. It becomes obvious when you reverse it in your minds eye. Clearly, the custodians of the gallery do not realise that it is a chapeau. Perhaps the Earl was giving himself the option to be at full tilt but retreat rather fast if necessary, or did he not know if he was coming or going? That would be hardly likely as John had every form of honour and riches bestowed upon him by Henry VII for his valiant leadership of the vanguard at the battle of Bosworth.



Hedingham Castle in North Essex is the ancestral home of the de Veres. The castle on its mound has a fine Norman keep built in 1140. The banqueting Hall is considered to be one of

the finest Norman domestic interiors in existence and this magnificent room is the most splendid in the keep, the timbered ceiling is supported by the largest Norman Arch in England, 28 feet wide and 20 feet high. The grounds have many charming woodland walks.



de Vere impaled with Sergeaux
Lavenham Church



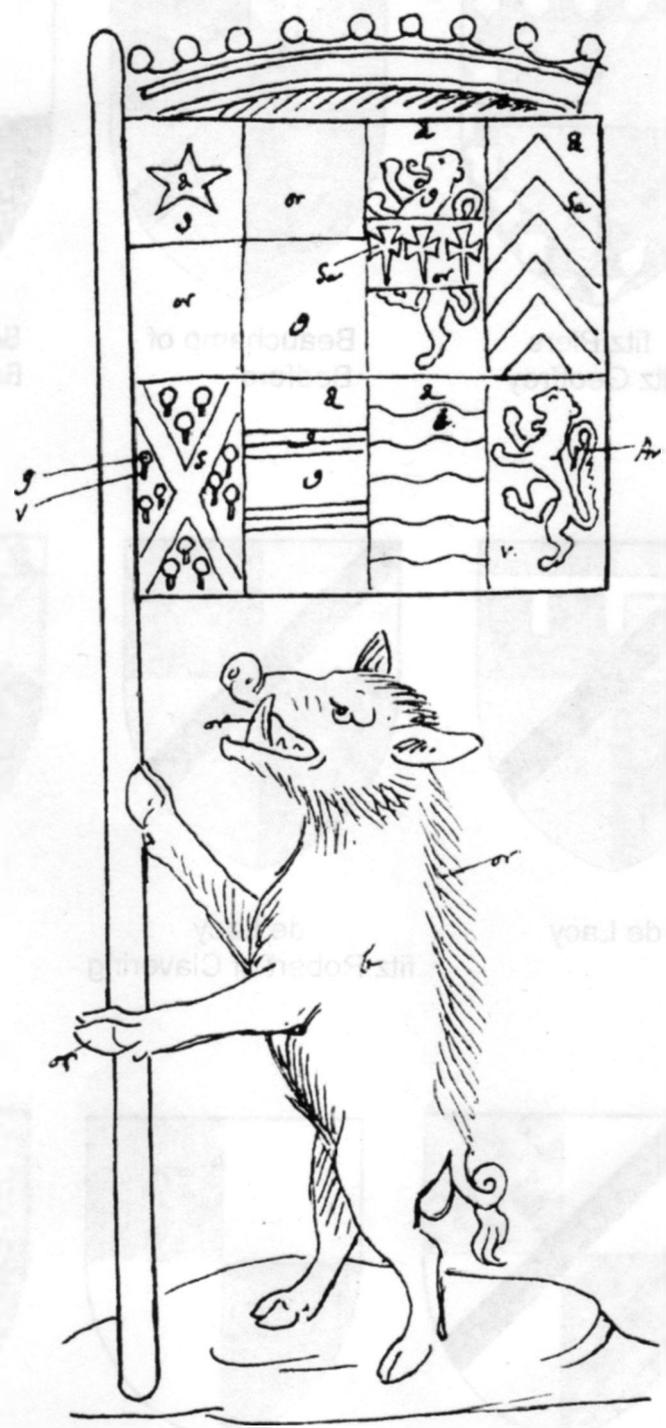
de Vere impaled with Howard
Lavenham Church



The keep at Hedingham Castle.

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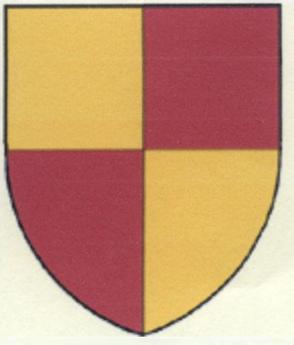
The Earl of Oxinford



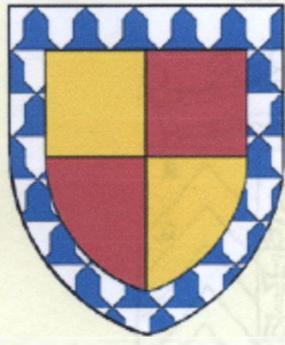
John, 15th Earl of Oxinford, K.G. 1527, died 6 March, 1540.
 Arms: quarterly of seven, (1) Vere, (2) Colbroke, (3) Clare, (4) Serjaulx, (5) Badlesmere, (6) Samford, (7) FitzHamon. The staff supported by "the blue boar" crined gold.

Banner of John, Earl of Oxford K.G. from Banners Standards and Badges from a Tudor Manuscript in the College of Arms. The De Walden Library 1904.

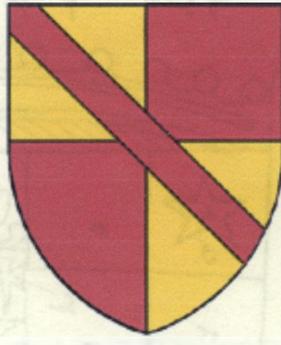
The Quarterly Coat of the Mandevilles and associated families.



Mandeville
Say



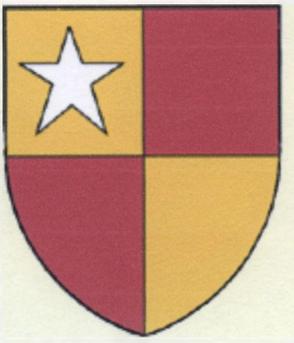
fitz Piers
fitz Geoffrey



Beauchamp of
Bedford



Beauchamp of
Bedford



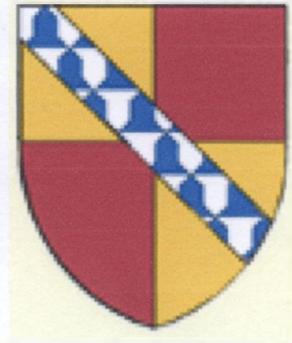
de Vere



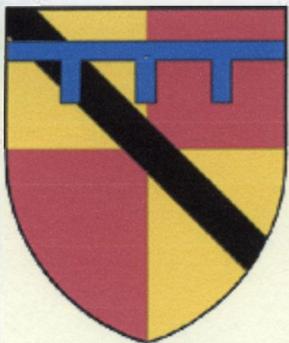
de Lacy



de Lacy
fitz Robert of Clavering



Sackville



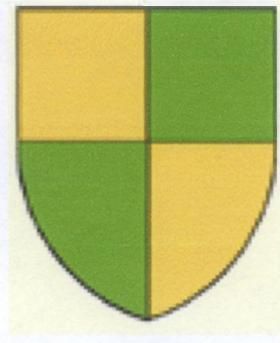
Fitz Roger



Despencer



Rochford



Berners

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There is a family tree of the Quarterly coat by Sir Anthony Wagner in Medieval England, Vol. 1 edited by A.L.Poole, 1958. Any member who would like a copy of this family tree apply to the editor.

Visit to the Worshipful Company of Armourers and Braziers Company – April 2007 by Clive Alexander



A wooden carving of St George, the patron saint of the Armourers' Company, wearing real armour. This was carried on their barge.

Our party was cordially received by the Company Clerk, Commodore Christopher Waite RN, who gave a short talk about the work of the company. The Armourers, he explained were instituted by ordinance in 1322, receiving their first Charter in 1453. After absorbing the Blacksmiths in 1515 and later the Helmet Makers and Armour Repairers, workers in brass and copper were incorporated in 1708. Progress in metallurgy is encouraged by research fellowships, scholarships at Oxford, and prizes to Sheffield cutlery apprentices and to the students of metallurgy and engineering at Sheffield College of Technology and the City and Guilds of the London Institute. The Hall stands on a site leased in 1346 and later purchased in 1428. The Hall survived the Great Fire and was rebuilt by William Cresswell in 1795. The present Hall was built by J H Good in 1840. Today the Hall contains an important collection of armour, plate and paintings all displayed in a sumptuous suite of rooms. The armour displayed is a testament to the skill of the metalworkers of the Tudor period.

There are some fine pieces of furniture representative of different periods, not least of which is a complete and very rare set of Regency interlocking banqueting tables.

The party could not fail to be impressed by the Great Hall where the wall panelling is covered with the armorials of past Wardens and Company worthies. On display also, was the Company's gold and silver ceremonial plate flanking a very detailed and beautifully executed bronze statue on St George and the Dragon. The visit, which was greatly appreciated by our party concluded with tea and biscuits in the lounge.

The Companies Arms were Granted 15 October 1556 to 'The Frateritye or Guylde of St George of the mystery of Armourers'. The company customarily adds a second shield (Accolle' with the first) supporters and a motto. A second crest is sometimes seen. These are of no authority. A very grand three dimensional model of the complete achievement stands in its own dedicated recess in the cornice at eaves level.

Arms: Dexter, the armourers: Argent on a chevron sable an "attōney"(tournament) gauntlet between two pairs of swords in saltire argent the swords porfled pommelled and hilted or, on a chief sable in a plate between two helmets argent garnished or a cross gules.

Sinister, the Brasiers: azure on a chevron between two ewers in chief and a three –legged pot with handles in base all or, three roses gules seeded or barbed vert.

Crest: On a wreath argent and sable a demi-man of war armed argent open-faced porfled or holding in his hand a mace of war.

Supporters: Two men in complete armour proper, the dexter argent garnished or, the sinister all or; on their heads plumes of feathers, and each holding in his exterior hand a sword proper.

Mantling: Gules doubled argent.

Mottoes: Make all sure. We are one.



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It seems that the Armourers previously used: 'Sable a battle-axe and a tilting spear both or head argent in saltire debruised by a cross couped gules all between three helms argent'. These arms are recorded in a manuscript c.1530, (Vincent, "Two Ears of Wheat), in the College of Arms. However, there seemed to be some uncertainty "under what sorte and maner their predecessors bare" them. To rectify the situation, as mentioned above, the Company were granted the following arms dated 15th October 1556 by Thomas Hawley, Clarenceux King of Arms: "Silver on a chevron sable a attorney gawntelet betwene Fower Swordes in Sawltre porfled pomeled and hilted gold on a chief sable in a plate betwene two hellmettes silver garnysed golde a playne crosse geules. Upon the healme on a Torse silver and sable a demy Man of Armes armed silver open faced porfled golde holdyng in his hande a mace of warre manteled geules dobled silver". Ed.

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Did you know...?



The current Great Seal

... that HM The Queen has had two Great Seals struck in her reign. The first was designed by Gilbert Ledward and came into service in 1953. Through long usage and the heat involved in the sealing process, the matrix lost definition. In 2001 a new Great Seal, designed by sculptor James Butler and produced by the Royal Mint, came in use.

There are three different coloured sealing waxes, dark green, blue and scarlet red. The colour used depends on the nature of the document being sealed. Dark green is used for letters patent for the peerage, blue is for documents for close members of the royal family and scarlet red is used for letters patent for nominating bishops and most other patents

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Arms in the Middlesex Guildhall by Rupert Barnes

In June 2007 I visited Middlesex Guildhall at the invitation of the Ministry of Justice. I was to look over the Guildhall before the builders moved in for a two and a half year task of conversion, for Middlesex Guildhall is to become the seat of the new Supreme Court of the United Kingdom and of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

The Middlesex Guildhall is a secular gothic masterpiece. It stands on Parliament Square, looking out at two grand triumphs mediæval and revival gothic architecture; Westminster Abbey and the Palace of Westminster. The Guildhall itself follows the theme with gusto, and the main Council Chamber imitates a mediæval great hall. Nevertheless, it is a twentieth century building; built in 1913 for Middlesex County Council and the Quarter Sessions.

A riot of late Gothic Revival in harmonious collision with the Arts and Crafts Movement, the Middlesex Guildhall is a jewel conceived by the architect, James Gibson. Its exterior stonework runs with sculpture from the wild imagination of the sculptor, H C Fehr. Inside it breaks out into colour and texture. The Guildhall is not a decorated building but a hall built as art; the intensity of ornament and ostentation is all integral to the structure as a single conception. The ornament is symbolic; one of my challenges has been to read it. A major element of the symbolism is heraldic.



Sir William Prescott CBE DL

As I approached the Guildhall I could look up at a large Middlesex County Council shield carved in stone over the main door. (In the conversion it is to be covered over with the royal arms.) Below the shield are Fehr's grand historical friezes; King John grants Magna Carta, King Henry III grants a

charter to Westminster Abbey, and Lady Jane Grey receives the Crown of England. Beneath each scene are bosses with the arms or attributed arms of the personages portrayed. Above, a tower rises high. Around its parapet runs a jaunty selection of lions, unicorns, yales, Tudor roses, thistles and shields.



The Middlesex Arms

Some county councils have decorated their palaces with representations of the boroughs within their area, but here there is none of that; only Middlesex itself is celebrated. The arms of Middlesex (or rather of the former County Council) appear throughout the Guildhall: Gules, three seaxes fesswise points to the sinister proper, pomels and hilts and in the centre chief point a Saxon crown or. The arms were granted in 1910 and the councillors must have been proud of them. They appear in the curlicues of the wrought iron Grand Stairs, on fireplaces, on lampshades and elsewhere. The finest representation is in a stained glass window in the Council Chamber, and there in place of a motto, three ribbons to the sides and bottom of the shield read "Colne - Thames - Lea"; the three rivers which mark the bounds to west, south and east of the historic county. From three cornucopias behind the shield, water gushes down to join in one stream beneath.

The most prominent heraldry is in stained glass. The windows are a library of the worthies of Middlesex.

The Council Chamber is the main showpiece. Its broad hammer-beam roof, spans the room with dark timbers between life-sized shield-bearing angels. The fat bosses are of roses, portcullises and other such badges. The windows on both sides of the Chamber bear the arms of Middlesex and of the Lord-Lieutenants of Middlesex from the eighteenth century; in order, the Duke of Northumberland, the Duke of Portland, the Marquess of Salisbury, the Duke of Wellington, the Earl of Strafford and the Duke of Bedford. This grand room will become the principal courtroom for the Supreme Court.

The same Lord Lieutenants' arms appear in the windows of the Chamber's ante room and of the Grand Staircase, where they are joined by those of the Duke of Newcastle. Newcastle's arms are a bit of a puzzle; I have not found a reliable representation elsewhere that matches that in the window. Here they are quarterly by six, with the 1st and 6th quarters quartering 3 pelicans in their piety (for Pelham) with ermine, two piles in point (for Holles). King Philippe's buckles are in the 2nd quarter on their own, not quartered with Pelham as usual. The Duke possibly changed his arms in his lifetime though as he adopted the Holles legacy and other inheritances he received (and squandered).

The original Quarter Sessions court rooms have heraldic windows too. In Court 1 are arms of sheriffs to 1913. The Middlesex shrievalty was restored only in 1889; before then two sheriffs a year were had been appointed by the Corporation of London. Eight sheriffs' arms appear in Court 1 and three others, with three more earlier sheriffs on the Grand Stairs.

The windows in Court 2 are later, and bear the arms of four sheriffs after 1913. (How they chose the sheriffs to immortalize in this way I do not know; perhaps a subscription was taken up for the popular ones!)

I identified the Lord Lieutenants swiftly enough. The sheriffs' arms were more of a challenge. Encouraged and assisted by Stephen Kibbey I began my research. The later sheriffs in Court 2 were no challenge; they each have a name and date beneath. In Court 1, in the absence of an official record, I had to pour over books to identify each. I found that three are not sheriffs but supernumerary worthies; one Chairman of Quarter Sessions, the remarkable Sir Montagu Sharpe, one Vice-Chairman, MP and government minister, the inimitable Sir Herbert Nield, and one I have still not identified, the frustrating Mr Incognito.

The arms displayed in the Middlesex Guildhall are a library in themselves, and a colourful display of arms both ancient and new-minted.

The conversion work in the Guildhall will be dramatic. In one place, three rooms have been knocked into one, not in the usual way but vertically; the floor I walked on in Court 1 is now thin air and the room become the upper gallery of a library. The sheriffs will remain but high above the floor. At the same time, the cluttered light-wells will be cleared of modern encumbrances and restored as once they were, so the windows will shine brightly once more.

All the stonework and woodwork is undergoing restoration. The grime of a century is coming off. The windows have decayed, crazed and faded, but an expert firm of restorers has been brought in.



Arms of Sir John Gibbons, 5th Baronet. He was Sheriff of Middlesex in 1891.

The Council Chamber has undergone a change which has caused outrage amongst the conservators or heritage (and a doomed judicial review by "Save Britain's Heritage"). The hammer-beam roof, the angels and the stained glass windows will remain. Below, though everywhere was gorgeous carved wood furniture, from the Chairman's throne and throughout the oaken seats for the councillors, all carved with loving care in the Gothic idiom filling the space as an artistic whole. This noble room has been stripped bare. Some of Fehr's individually carved bench-ends and pew-ends will stay (with carved lions, dogs and beasts whose identities have been lost to the rubbing of decades of anxious hands). The room will echo in emptiness still.

For all the changes of form and function, the Middlesex connection will not be all lost. Middlesex is crafted into every aspect of the fabric of the Guildhall. It will remain a monument to Middlesex. I was encouraged by one continued Middlesex tradition. Middlesex Day, 16

May, remembers the day the county regiment stood fast and died hard at Albuhera in 1811. The day is still marked by the raising of the Middlesex flag from the flagstaff atop the Guildhall's tower.

At the end of my tour I was led down from the dock into the cells (for the only time in my life, I hope). There an exhibition is to be installed, on the history of the building and by extension of Middlesex. The Historic Counties Trust as a guardian of county heritage has been asked to help provide material for the exhibition. The heraldry displayed in the Guildhall itself will be an important key to unlocking the history of the building and of the county.

Can you help?

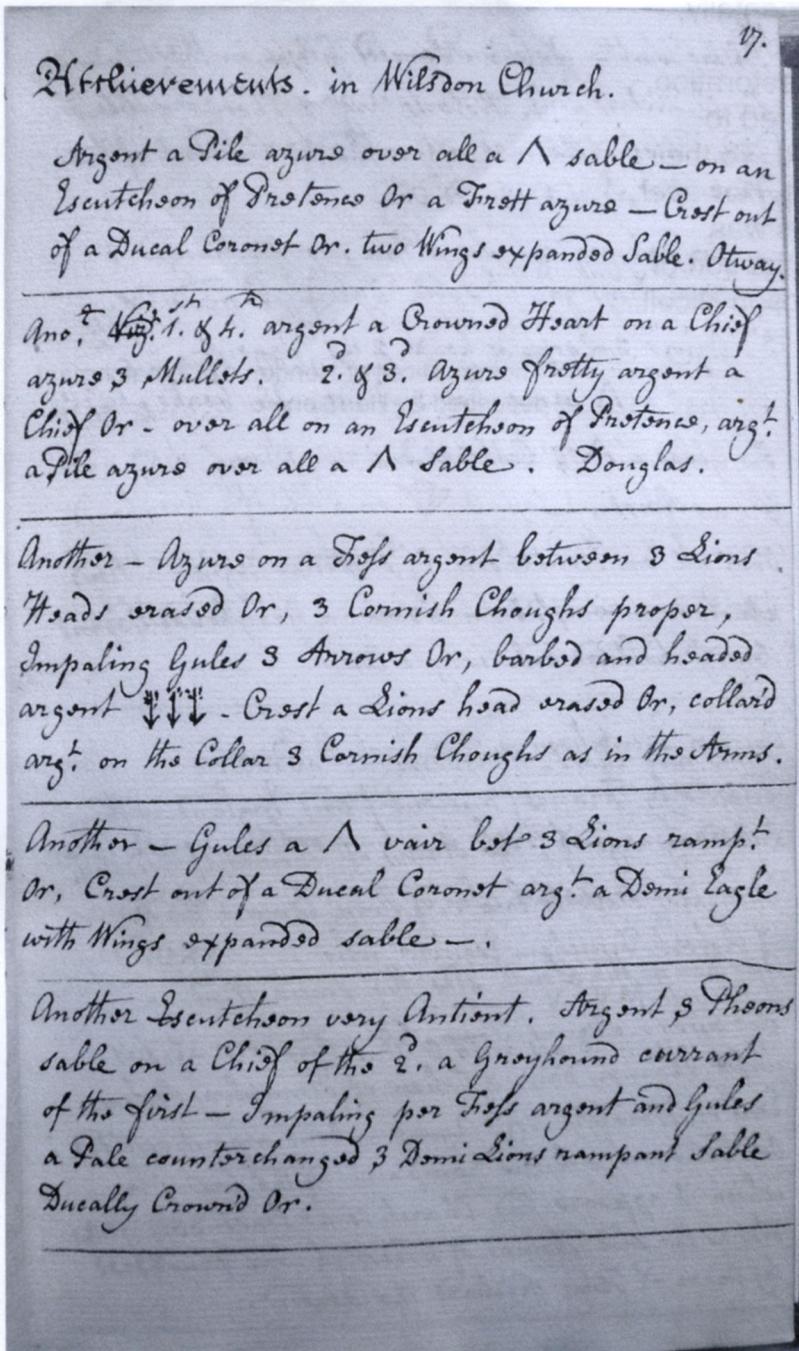


This is the last shield to be identified. Despite many searches it is proving elusive. Can you identify it? If so please let the editor know. It would be nice if Mr Barnes can have a complete inventory of the arms before they are removed and possibly dispersed.

We thank Mr Rupert Barnes for the above article concerning the Middlesex Guildhall and look forward to seeing the exhibition when it is open. We would also like to thank Feilden + Mawson Architects who kindly gave permission to publish the photographs of the armorial stained glass. Ed

A Herald's Notebook by Dr Andrew Gray.

In the Barnet Archives at Mill Hill there is a very interesting little notebook, dated 1783, about the size of a modern paperback.



Only twenty-four pages are used, but they contain a detailed account of monumental inscriptions, inside and outside the churches of St Mary Wilsden and St Mary Hendon, with descriptions of the heraldry on them. Its provenance is clear: A stamp inside shows that in 1849 it was the property of the antiquarian and bibliophile Sir Thomas Phillipps, of Middle Hill, Worcestershire, and that subsequently it passed to the Hendon Library. Equally clear, though less explicit, is its authorship. A note inside the cover announces: "G:H: Heralds Office London 1783". This can only be George Harrison, who was then Windsor Herald. In May 1784 he was elevated to Norroy King of Arms, whereupon his responsibilities would turn to the North of England and Wales, hence the abandonment of his church recording.

Pages 1-6 and 21-23 are devoted to Hendon (a church which this Society has not yet surveyed), with the remainder covering Wilsden. Of particular interest is page 17 "Achievements in Wilsdon Church". It is clear that he means Hatchments. There are hatchments in Wilsden church today, but they are nineteenth century; none of those described by Harrison have survived. Although he does not attempt precise identification, we can. Number five, for instance, corresponds to a memorial which he

describes elsewhere, and still exists, for Edmond Roberts of Neasden who died 1585. But the impalement is for his first wife, Frances Welles, who died before 1563. If it was indeed her hatchment, it would have been one of the earliest on record.

The surviving hatchments at Wilsden are for members of the Nicoll family, who were members of the Company of Moneyers at the Royal Mint, i.e. professional coin-makers. One of them is for John Nicoll, who married Elizabeth Courtney from East Yorkshire, and died in 1819. The third hatchment described by Harrison was for his grandfather, Thomas Nicoll of Hendon, who died in 1772. Thomas married Susanna Haley, also from Hendon, daughter of another Moneyers' family, on whose vault at Hendon the three arrows could be seen in Harrison's day.

The arms of Nicoll are a study in themselves. Many Nicoll/Nicholl/Niccol/Nichols families have "Sable three pheons argent" or something similar; indeed several such Middlesex families do. However the Nicolls of Hendon were granted the arms on these hatchments during the Commonwealth. The birds, incidentally, are not Choughs, but another species of crow, Magpies; very apt for a Moneyer. At the Restoration, Cromwell's Garter King of Arms was demoted to Clarenceux and all his grants declared void. To their credit, the Nicolls took absolutely no notice. However, a rather fussy version of the "magpie" arms was granted a quarter of a millennium later, to the son of another branch, Charles Rice Parker Hodgson Nicoll.

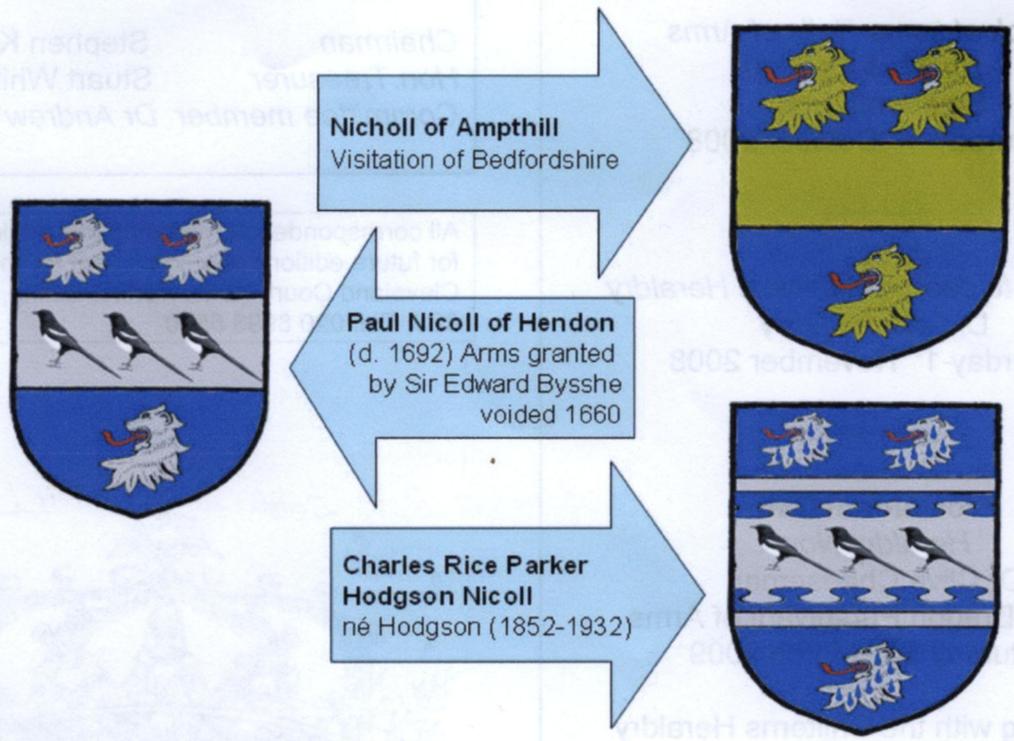


Thomas Nicoll of Hendon 1772; hatchment described by Harrison



John Nicoll of Neasden House, Moneyer, married Elizabeth Courtney; died 1819.

Note: Any information regarding the Company of Moneyers would be gratefully received. Ed.



Versions of Nicoll of Hendon and Neasden

SOCIETY NEWS

Rouge Dragon Talk.

It was unfortunate that earlier this year the proposed talk by Rouge Dragon Pursuivant at the combined meeting with the Chilterns Heraldry Group had to be cancelled. Fortunately Father Mark Turnham Elvins stepped in at very late notice and gave a talk based on his book 'Cardinals & Heraldry'. Rouge Dragon has agreed to give his talk next year with a provisional date of 14th March 2009 booked. Pencil this date in your diary. This is a rare opportunity to hear one of Her Majesty's heralds speak in such an intimate environment and to meet him after the talk for the usual tea and cakes.

We thank John Allen of The Chilterns group for arranging with Rouge Dragon and for doing all the chasing to pin him down for a date.

Our Web Site. www.middlesex-heraldry.org.uk

When was the last time you looked at the Society's Web site? If you've not looked at it recently then I recommend you do so now. It has the latest information concerning the Society and includes the programme of meetings not only of our Society but also of our sister organisation The Chilterns Heraldry Group. There are back issues of The Seaxe and Church notes. It also has a first class 'Links' section which takes you to organisations with complimentary interests to ours. If you're looking for a local History Group here is a good place to start. It is proving to be a popular site as we have had over 2000 hits since October 2006. This has brought in enquiries from afar afield as Sydney, Australia. Our thanks go to Dr Andrew Gray who takes the credit for creating, maintaining and updating one of the best sites around.

Next Meetings

A look at some Rolls of Arms
- British & Foreign
Stephen Kibbey
Saturday 4th October 2008

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How not to design Municipal Heraldry
Dr Andrew Gray
Saturday 1st November 2008

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Provisional Date
Heraldry Now
Dr Clive Cheeseman
Rouge Dragon Pursuivant of Arms
Saturday 14th March 2009

Joint Meeting with the Chilterns Heraldry
Group.

Further details will be given in the February
2009 edition of The Seaxe.

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Tiaras, Hats and Pikes
Stephen Kibbey
Saturday 4th April 2009

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Meetings are 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

Officers and Committee

Chairman Stephen Kibbey
Hon. Treasurer Stuart Whitefoot
Committee member Dr Andrew Gray

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Shield of Death from the 'Armorial universel
contenant les armes des principales
Maisons Estatz et Dignitez des plus
considerables Royaumes de l'Europe',
1660.