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A Message from the President

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to write to you for the first time as the new President of the Cambridge University Heraldic and Genealogical Society. My sincere thanks to David Pearce, who stepped down as President at the AGM last Thursday for all his work and fortitude during his presidency through what was a particularly difficult year. Congratulations to all the other new officers on committee this year.

This term (and year) we have yet another exciting selection of talks, from academics, officers of arms, ambassadors, princes and more. This year is particularly auspicious as CUHAGS will partially host and assist with the 35th International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences taking place at the University in August 2022.

As many of you will know, the society's usual home, Clare College, is under much scaffolding this year. The committee are arranging alternative venues for the lectures and dinners. More information will be available on the website (and email reminders) in the coming weeks.

Provided nothing changes regarding current social distancing customs, we intend for all our lectures to be in person this year, but we will also live-stream them (as best we can) for those unable to make it to Cambridge. If restrictions or lockdowns return in the UK, we will go back to Microsoft Teams lectures. If for any reason our overseas speakers cannot make it (perhaps owing to travel restrictions), the talk will either be pre-recorded and/or conducted on Microsoft Teams.

A brief reminder: We still have life memberships available for those who would like to purchase them. Please contact me or the Vice President, David Broomfield, if you are interested in acquiring one of these.

Yours in pean,

Edward Hilary Davis
President
CUHAGS

* * *

Saving the Master's Hatchment

Andrew Gray, MA PhD FHS

One winter's day in the early 1960s I was crossing Third Court, St John's College, on my way to the bath house. I noticed a Fellow parking his bike in a store on the river side of the Court, and towering over him the unmistakeable form of a funeral hatchment.

I had been a hatchment "nerd" since my schooldays, and it seemed improper that this memento of a past Master – for such it clearly was – should hang rotting in a bicycle shed. A rapid personal appeal in succession to my Tutor, the Dean and the Master convinced the College that the hatchment should be rescued, restored and appropriately displayed. But in the meantime, I could hang it in my rooms.

My sitting room had seemed spacious, but a full-sized hatchment six feet high from corner to corner filled one wall completely. It was "mine" for a term, and then the conservators came for it. That was my finals year, and when I revisited after post-graduate and post-doctoral wanderings, it was hanging proudly in our Antechapel – where it should have been all along [fig.1].



Fig.1: James Wood's hatchment, 1839; St John's College Antechapel.

It is a remarkable hatchment in several ways. Firstly, relatively few have survived in Cambridge. In the eighteenth to early twentieth centuries, it would be normal for the principal of a College to have an heraldic funeral, yet William Sander's survey for Hatchments in Britain found only four surviving¹. A hatchment is intended for one event, the funeral rites of the person represented by its heraldry; when mourning is over, it is

redundant. It is remarkable that several thousand survive in the British Isles, but this must be a small percentage of the total.

Secondly, its subject, the Very Reverend James Wood, was a remarkable man. His full story can be gleaned from the histories of the College² and the Alumni records³. A poor sizar from an artisan family in Lancashire, he studied by candlelight with his feet in straw in his garret in Second Court, which his ghost is said to haunt. He was a distinguished mathematician – First Wrangler, later the author of several standard texts – but also an ordained priest who rose to Dean of Ely in 1820. In the meantime, he had progressed to Master of St John's (1815-39). During his tenure, the neo-gothic confection of New Court was built, at near-ruinous expense, but his real legacy must be the College Chapel.



Fig.2: St John's College Old Chapel (Cooper, 1860)

THE CHAPEL ST JOHN'S COLLEGE.

The old sixteenth-century Chapel [fig.2] was too small for the growing College⁴, and Wood was keen to make it the focus of pious collegiate life. He left the bulk of his estate to St John's⁵, and £20,000 of this seeded the building of the present Chapel in the 1860s, to the design of Sir George Gilbert Scott². Wood's monument and statue were moved from the old to the new Antechapel [fig.3], but one may conjecture that his hatchment was sent elsewhere, perhaps to the very place where I found it a century later.



Fig.3: James Wood's monument (Cooper, 1860)

The hatchment itself is somewhat out of the ordinary. A plain shield is surrounded by a gothic tracery frieze, there are no accessories apart from a pious motto, and the arms themselves are an unusual example of a man with two offices. The arms used by the Master, Per chief Gules and Sable overall a lion rampant Argent, are those confirmed to Thomas Wood of Hackney, later Bishop of Lichfield, in 1634, whose family claimed to originate in Burnley, Lancashire^{6,7}; it is not known whether James Wood could show a connection to this family.

Wood's arms of office are (1) St John's College, which are of course Beaufort undifferenced, being those of the foundress, Lady Margaret, mother of Henry VIII; and (2) the Deanery of Ely, Gules three keys palewise in chief Or⁹. The latter derive from the arms of its predecessor, the Benedictine Priory which serviced Ely Cathedral, in which the field is given as Or and the keys Azure¹⁰. Of the hatchment's background, only the vertical strip behind Wood's arms is painted black, indicating that the College and the Deanery survive.

However, there is an issue with the marshalling. Arms of office are usually displayed as if the office holder were the "wife" of the office, i.e. the arms of office in the dexter impaling

the personal arms to the sinister¹¹. For a wife married twice, hatchments provide few examples; subsequent husbands may be shown on separate shields [fig.4a], or both on the same shield and marshalled to the dexter, arranged either per pale or per fess [fig.4b]. Logically, a man with dual offices should be treated in the same way. However, this artist has chosen to marshal the offices one to the dexter and one to the sinister – a treatment customarily used for a man with two wives. It is a neat solution, but arguably incorrect.

Wood's hatchment, whatever its peculiarities, is a fine piece of heraldic art. I am glad to have made its acquaintance that cold winter's day.



Fig.4: Hatchments of twice-married women
 Sarah Tournay Bargrave, Margate Kent 1832
 Violet Sophia Mary Baines, Sloley Norfolk 1972

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Captions:

- Fig.1: James Wood's hatchment, 1839; St John's College Antechapel.
Fig.2: St John's College Old Chapel (Cooper, 1860)
Fig.3: James Wood's monument (Cooper, 1860)
Fig.4: Hatchments of twice-married women
Sarah Tournay Bargrave, Margate Kent 1832
Violet Sophia Mary Baines, Sloley Norfolk 1972

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St. John Henry Newman and his Cambridgeshire ancestry, Part 11

Tim Cockerill

In a previous article in THE ESCUTCHEON I wrote briefly about the Cambridgeshire ancestry of Cardinal Newman, recently canonised by the Roman Catholic Church. Since then further research has been carried out based largely on checking out independently the sources referred to in the extensive notes under the heading CARDINAL NEWMAN AND HIS FOREBEARS which appeared in NOTES AND QUERIES for 3 November 1945 and 14 April 1951 written by J.H.Mozley of Haslemere, Surrey and 'A.K.' respectively, the pedigree reproduced with the second article and also the pedigree shown on page 386 of MISCELLANEA GENEALOGICA ET HERALDICA for 1880, volume 3.

Newman wrote a great deal about himself and his religious views and his extensive archives are split up mainly in this country and the USA, but he seems to have been very reticent about his paternal antecedents. At first I thought that this might have been because he thought that they were fenland peasants of low origins but, after further research, it seems more likely that he was either indifferent to such matters, although he spent a lot of time and energy analysing his immortal soul, or was ignorant of where his ancestors came.

In any event, Newman made at least one bad mistake about his father's family when he said that they came from the town of Swaffham in Norfolk, whereas in fact they lived for several generations in the small village of Swaffham Bulbeck, about five miles east of Cambridge.

The Newman family seem to have been rooted in the East Anglian soil from at least the 17th Century and not, as has been alleged, a family with Jewish or Dutch origins. Certainly the Jewish theory was invented purely because of his appearance and there seems no reason to think that his English name, which appears frequently in local records, had Dutch origins.

My researches to date go no further back than William Newman of Swaffham Bulbeck, a tailor, who married in 1660 Margaret Freaks and was buried there in 1718. On-line pedigrees suggest that he was baptised at Potton in Bedfordshire in 1639 and that his ancestors came from Colmworth in the same county, but I have seen nothing to connect the Newmans of Bedfordshire with the Cardinal's Cambridgeshire ancestors, although further research might establish this one way or the other.

The pedigree of Newman of Swaffham Bulbeck, based on the parish register and Wills, shows that the above-mentioned William Newman had five sons and one daughter, Thomas, baptised there in 1661, also a tailor, William baptised and died 1662/3, William (1664-1741/2), of Swaffham Bulbeck, yeoman, who married at nearby Swaffham Prior in 1689 Alice Farrow, Margaret bapt. 1666/7 who married in 1689 George Grain of Bottisham, Martin (1668-1703) and Francis Newman bapt. 1672 of Bottisham yeoman, whose Will dated 19 October 1724 appears to show that his son William farmed at least part of the land belonging to Anglesey Abbey at Bottisham, now owned by the National Trust, which at that time was in the ownership of the Parker family.

The next generation consisted of five sons and two daughters, the Cardinal deriving his descent from the third son Francis Newman (1698-1745). He was a Swaffham Bulbeck farmer who married in 1733 Elizabeth Rolph. Neither Francis nor his father William left wills.

Francis Newman's eldest son was John Newman the elder baptised in 1734, the Cardinal's grandfather, who decided to leave his native village and seek his fortune in London. His younger brothers and sisters, Elizabeth bapt. 1736, Francis bapt. 1738, William bapt. 1740, Rose bapt. 1741 and Rolph bapt. 1744 have not yet been followed up as my main line of research concentrated on the Cardinal's direct ancestry.

This John married at St Andrew's Church, Holborn, London in 1763 Elizabeth Good (1733?-1825), who lived to the then remarkable age of ninety-two. It seems that her early influence on her young grandson John Henry was profound and, with his favourite aunt Betsy, they taught him the Bible and catechism. The Cardinal, on learning of her death, described her as his earliest benefactor, adding, 'and how she loved me'.

John Newman, the Cardinal's grandfather, seems to have prospered in his new life in London, where he set himself up as a grocer and coffee man in Leadenhall Street. He was also a keen musician and became a member of the Worshipful Company of Musicians and, in 1764, a Freeman of the City of London. He died in London intestate in 1799.

John and Elizabeth had three children. Apart from two daughters, who remained unmarried, they had an only son, John the younger, (1767-1824), the Cardinal's father, a partner in the private London banking house of Harrison, Prickett and Newman, who prospered to such an extent that in 1804 he was able to buy a substantial country house called Grey Court House at Ham, near Richmond. In 1799, at Lambeth, he had married Jemima Fourdrinier, the daughter of a wealthy London paper maker of French Huguenot descent, who brought with her a dowry of £5,000 (now about £200,000). Thus the future Cardinal Newman, the couple's eldest son, who was born in 1801, was brought up in very affluent circumstances. However, this was not to last. Although his father went on in 1812 to become a partner in the more prestigious private bank of Ramsbottom, Newman and Ramsbottom in Lombard Street, where his partners were both Members of Parliament, the bank failed in 1816, when the future Cardinal was aged fifteen. Mr. Newman was ruined but managed to avoid formal bankruptcy proceeding by selling his estate and was obliged to find a job as a brewery manager at Alton in Hampshire, suffering a considerable loss of status into the bargain. He died in 1824 and his widow died in 1836.

They had three sons and three daughters, the eldest of whom was the future Cardinal and Saint John Henry Newman (1801-1890). Neither of his brothers, Charles Robert (1802-1884) or Francis William (1805-1897), left descendants although two of his sisters married and had children. These were Harriet Elizabeth Newman who married the Revd. Thomas Mozley, and Jemima Charlotte who married John Mozley. Thus the male line of the Cardinal's branch of the family became extinct in 1890, although there were probably distant Newman relations in and around Swaffham Bulbeck near Cambridge. Today the

name Newman remains a common one in Cambridgeshire, but I have yet to find out if any of them claim to be related to the Saint.

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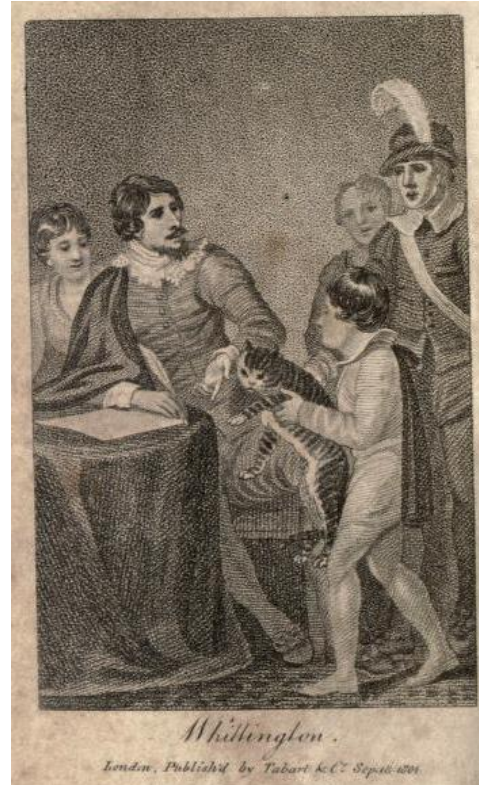
Sir Richard Whittington (1354-1423)

Terence Trelawny-Gower

This is a brief observation of the man who is remembered more for his fictitious relationship with a cat than his philanthropy, and his four times mayoralty of the city of London, and who had to wait until 1605 to become a folk hero.

Turn again, Whittington,
Once Lord Mayor of London!
Turn again, Whittington,
Twice Lord Mayor of London!
Turn again, Whittington,
Thrice Lord Mayor of London!

The folk tale is well known and has Richard ‘Dick’ Whittington featured as a poor boy arriving in London to seek his fortune, aided and abetted by a cat. The fiction, as a 17th century fantasy based on earlier tales, is well known. The facts may have some similarity, but in this case the facts from fiction are not so easily separated. The Richard Whittington of history is very different to the Whittington of popular legend which makes him out to be a poor orphan employed as a scullion to the wealthy merchant, Sir Hugh Fitzwaryn. The idea that Whittington was a



poor boy probably stems from the fact that the Pauntley estate to which he was born, was worth about £20 per annum* (£12,000), scarcely more than a knights fee, and that this amount would hardly support the three sons of William de Whittington. At his death In 1358 Richard’s father left the estate encumbered with an outlawry which he had incurred for failing to reply to a plea of debt. Why such a heavy sentence for a relatively minor infringement of the law is not clear,** but whatever the case, the estate would have had to pay a heavy fine for the inlawry again of the family. It is claimed that had it not been for Revd. Samuel Lyson in ‘The Model Merchant’ of 1860, Whittington may have languished in relative historical obscurity. Lyson is credited with ‘rescuing’ him from the realm of legend, giving him a respectable genealogy, a birthplace and a coat of arms.

The manor of Pauntley belonged, soon after the conquest, to a family of the same name, who held it of the honour of Clifford Castle, by one knight, Sir Walter de Pauntley, whose daughter and heir, Margery, was married to John de Solers. Their daughter and heir Maude de Solers, who married William de Whittington, descended from the ancient family De Vytointon alias Whittington, and from there descended Richard de Whittington. Richard married in 1402 Alice, the daughter of Sir Ivo Fitzwaryn and his wife Matilda or Maude

Dargentein. From this alliance Richard Whittington acquired an interest in estates in Somerset and Wiltshire.

*Other sources suggest that the estate was worth only 8 marks per annum (£2900.)

** There is also the suggestion that Sir William may have been charged with re-marrying without the correct licence.

Two of Sir Richard's predecessors received the honour of knighthood, but that would not necessarily confirm that the dignity was conferred for any distinguished service. The Kings of England at that period (14th cent), made the fee consequent upon conferring of that honour, a source of profit, by almost compelling persons who had an estate of £20 per annum (£12,000) - it was later raised to £40 (£24,000) - to become knights. It therefore did not by any means prove that a knight was a man of character, or even of large fortune. Many paid the fee to escape the honour! The practice of extorting fines on this pretence was carried so far that the Commons petitioned that 'no person should be fined twice for refusing a knighthood,' but the Crown refused to comply.

The Legend

The 'legend' of Whittington is not known to have been narrated prior to 1605 when on the 8th of February 1605 a dramatic version entitled '*The History of Richard Whittington, of his low birth, his great fortune, as it was played by the princes servants,*' was licenced for the press (*Arber, Stationers' Registers*. iii. 282). On 16th July 1605 a licence was granted for the publication of a ballad called '*The virtuous Lyfe and memorable death of Sir Richard Whittington, Mercer, sometyne Lord Maiour*'. Neither play nor ballad is known to have survived. The earliest extant references to the 'legend' appear in Thomas Heywood's '*If you know not me, you know nobody*' published in 1600 and in Beaumont and Fletcher's '*Knight of the Burning Pestle*' (1611). Both references imply that serious liberties had been taken in the legend with the historical facts. The legend is not referred to by John Stowe in his *Chronicles* of 1598. Stowe, whose love for exposing fables would have assuredly prompted him to notice it if it had been well established at the time of writing. Attempts have been made to explain the story and Thomas Keightley (*Thomas Keightley's Tales and Popular Fictions* 1834) traced a very similar cat story in Persian, Danish and Italian folklore; however, there can be little doubt that 'rags to riches' tales have abounded since time immemorial.

In Tabart's *Popular Tales* published in 1804, the popular story book image of Whittington is portrayed:

'In the reign of the famous king Edward the third, there was a little boy called Dick Whittington, whose father and mother died when he was very young, so that he remembered nothing at all about them, and was left a dirty ragged little fellow running about a country village. As poor Dick was not old enough to work he was in a sorry plight, he got but little for his dinner, and sometimes nothing at all for his breakfast, for the people who lived in the

village were very poor themselves, and could spare him little more than the parings of potatoes and now and then a hard crust’.

Lyson in his ‘Model Merchant’ published in 1860, notes the following:

‘One fact that appears to have been overlooked by his historians who were not antiquarians, but tradition collectors and story tellers, is that Whittington bore a coat of arms – not one granted to him in his lifetime, but one to which he was entitled by birth. The coat is blazoned Gules, a fesse componé or and azure; crest, a lion’s head erased sable, langued gules. The crest was later changed by Whittington to a bee, or mayfly, the wings tipped with gold. It was a time of universal symbolism, a symbolism readily interpreted by the people, so that the crests, heraldic devices, coats of arms, the shape and colour of the banners, the trappings of horses and the fantastic figures in the pageant could not but impress the crowds. By the bee (if it was a bee), Whittington probably symbolised the slow and patient toil by which success is obtained. If, on the other hand, the crest was meant to be a mayfly, with wings gold tipped, perhaps the uncertainty and ephemeral nature of human happiness was indicated.’ On a visit in 1860 to the church of St. John the Evangelist at Pauntley, Lyson noted that in the north window of the chancel there still exists the remains of an ancient stained windows, on which are emblazoned the arms of Whittington with those of Linet, Staunton and Peresford, families with whom the Whittingtons’ had inter-married; while in the west window are found the arms of Whittington impaling Melbourne and Fitz-Warren.

Whittington became Warden of the Worshipful Company of Mercers in 1395. The Model Merchant (1860) makes the following observation:

‘The Mercers, as a metropolitan guild, may be traced back to 1172; it was not until the 15th century that they took their station among the merchants and from being *mere retailers* became the first city company. Toward the close of the 14th century, the mercers monopolised the silk trade; woollen stuffs having prior to that period, constituted their staple business, and up to which time they had been only partially incorporated. ‘Mercery’ says one writer on this subject, ‘was originally pedlary, or haberdashery; and it was not until the reign of Henry VI that they dealt largely in silks and velvets and turned over their previous trade to the Haberdashers. There was doubtless, plenty of hard work to undergo before Whittington was proficient in the trade. He had, like many others since, to begin at the lowest rung of the ladder of success, before he could reach the top; that he did eventually reach the that high and distinguished position, authentic history and the noble charities left by him, still extant, leave no room to doubt his success.’

‘Advance the virgin, lead the van,
Of all that are London’s free,
The Mercer is the foremost man,
That founded a society

Of all the trades that London grace,
We are the first in time and place'. (*1st verse of the Mercer Company Song*)

By 1397 Whittington had acquired a large fortune, much of which must have been generated by his period as a Mercer when his clients included Richard II (r1377-99), Robert De Vere (1362-1392) the only Englishman to accede to the titles of Marquis and Duke of Ireland, and John Beaufort, Earl of Somerset. The pair (Richard and Robert), spent thousands of pounds with Whittington on velvet and gold cloths. He sold to Richard II garments worth around £3500 (£1.5 million.)

We know from records that he supplied materials for the wedding dress of Princess Blanche, the elder daughter of Henry IV, when she married Prince Louis of Germany in 1402 (aged just 10), and that this dress was made of gold cloth costing £215 13s. 4d (£135,000). He also supplied her sister, Princess Phillipa, with a wedding gown of 'pearls and cloth of gold' at a cost of £248 10.6d. (£156,000) when she married King Eric of Pomerania (by proxy) in 1405. They were later officially married in Denmark when she was 12 years old. She had been proclaimed Queen of Denmark, Sweden and Norway at just 11 years of age.

Whittington was really a court mercer and imported and sold such things as cloths of gold, pearls and other jewels. He also imported gold embroideries of all kinds, silks and satins set with precious stones and of the finest quality. It was a time of great splendour in dress and the extravagance of Richard II set an example to the whole court (many of whom no doubt bankrupted themselves in order to maintain the fashion), and there can be no doubt that very large profits were to be made in trading with these nobles, who knew nothing of what things cost, nor had any idea of negotiating with a merchant. How much profit Whittington made on the two royal wedding gowns is not recorded; it was no doubt quite substantial.

Mayoralty

Richard Whittington's first position as mayor was achieved, not by election but by Royal mandate when Richard II in 1397 decreed that Whittington would succeed, for the remaining period of his mayoralty, Adam Bamme (obit 6th June 1397) Mayor and Kings Escheator* who had died in that year. Bamme's early origins are obscure with little known about him before 1369. A member of the Goldsmiths Company, his skill earned him a place as chief supplier to John of Gaunt (1340-1399). He was Sheriff for the City of London 1382-83 and an Alderman for successively: Aldersgate 1382-83, Cripplegate 1384-85 and 1387-88, Cheapward 1388-1393 and Limeward 1393-1397.

**Escheator: An official responsible for 'escheats' that is, broadly speaking, for upholding the king's right as a feudal lord. The position was considered inferior to that of Sheriff and has tended to be neglected by historians. Escheat is a common law doctrine that transfers the real property of a person who has died without heirs to the Crown or state. It serves to ensure that property is not left in 'limbo' without recognized ownership. It originally applied to a number of situations where a legal interest in land was destroyed by operation of law, so that the ownership of the land reverted to the immediately superior feudal lord.*

His second Mayoralty by election was when on Wednesday, October 13th 1406, The Feast of the Translation of St. Edward the King and Confessor, John Wodecok, the Mayor, deciding that he and all the Aldermen of London, and as many as possible of the wealthier and more substantial Commoners of the city, ought to meet at the Guildhall to elect a new Mayor for the ensuing year. To this end it was proposed that two able and proper persons should be nominated to be Mayor of London. One of the criteria for election was that the nominees to be proposed by the Commoners should have served in the office of Sheriff within the city. The Commoners (*'without any clamour or discussion'*) duly nominated Richard Whittington (Whytyngtone), Mercer, and Drew Barentyn, Goldsmith. The Mayor and Aldermen soon announced that by *divine inspiration* the lot had fallen to Richard Whittington.

Soon after this election Whittington had, with other Aldermen, to deal with the case of Sir William Langford, Chaplin, who was charged with being in an adulterous relationship with Margaret, the wife of Richard Dod, tailor, in the Ward of Bishops-gate Without. It was alleged that the same Richard Dod, husband of the aforementioned Margaret, was the go-between to the Chaplin and his wife, and had received 40 pence (£210.) from the Chaplin for his good offices therein. The judgement of Whittington and the Aldermen was that Richard Dod should undergo the punishment of the pillory on the Wednesday following for a period of three hours. It is not indicated if the Chaplin received any censure.

Richard Whittington made his fortune in trade and property development and he would go on to play a very important role, not only in the civic life of London where he gained considerable influence in the city but also in national affairs too. One of Whittington's many sources of income was from the custom gathered via the licences he held in the country's ports, these licences enabled him to export wool free of duty. He was Collector of the Wool Custom 1395-96, 1401-1405 and 1407-1420. There can be little doubt that this was a highly lucrative position.

However, it was from his business as a money-lender that allowed him to make a large fortune as apparently he was the only man in the city who would lend Richard II money in large amounts. Repayments of these loans were made in cash rather than through the Exchequer and enabled him to lend money to other individuals, such as John Beaufort, Earl of Somerset to whom he lent 1,000 marks (£408,000) to finance his military operations. At this time, money lenders like Whittington were important men, without their money the English campaign against the French might not have gone ahead.

Money for these wars was raised via loans, like the aforementioned loan to Beaufort, rather than taxes. In the May of 1415 for instance, Henry V sent out letters appealing for money, not only from the wealthy, but to the people of English towns where the amount of the loan was agreed and each member of the population accessed as to what their contribution would be. In cases of large sums of money being lent to the king, jewels, gold and silver plate was deposited as security. Before the establishment of banks, all rich men were bankers, and

they advanced money on security, lent on mortgage, received the money of others, and out of money, as well as buying and selling, could not fail to make more money.

Examples of Royal jewels offered as security for the loan of £2000 (£1.25 million) to Richard II on the 6th of September 1380. John Bacoun, Clerk, keeper of certain jewels, plate of gold, and silver belonging to the King, delivered to the Mayor of the City of London the following:

One coronet of five large and five small flowets, set with balasses,* emeralds, sapphires, diamonds and large pearls, weighing by goldsmiths weight £4.13s.4d (£2500.), one sword for Parliament, set with gold and diamonds, balasses, balesets, small sapphires, pearls and twenty four nouches** of various kinds, set with divers stones, of which there is one great nouch and three smaller nouches, each with a griffin in the middle. Five nouches in the form of white dogs, studded with rubies on the shoulders; one great nouch with four wild boars azure; four nouches in the form of eagles; three nouches in the form of white harts, studded with rubies; six nouches in the form of keys. Of the coronet, sword and nouches, the particulars were contained in a roll sealed with the Privy Seal and full details were delivered in a *coffyn* of wood and two cases of leather sealed with the signets of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Chancellor, Thomas, Bishop of Exeter, the Treasurer of England, and with the seal of Sir John Fordham, Keeper of the King's Privy Seal. The value of the items is not recorded however £2000 has the equivalence of over £1.3 million in 2021, so quite valuable!

In 1415, Henry V came to a similar accommodation with the Mayor and Commonality for the loan of 10,000 marks*** (£666,000), although in this case there was but a single item. This was great collar of gold, exquisitely fabricated with crowns and beasts called antelopes, enamelled with white esses and the beasts surcharged with green garnets, the charge being of two pearls and each beast having one pearl about the neck. Each of the crowns is set with one large balass and nine large pearls, and in the principal, which is in front, there are set, in addition to the balasses and the pearls, two large *diamandes* in the summit. The collar weighed 56 ounces and was enclosed in a case of leather. The King pledged to redeem the collar on the Day of Circumcision (1st January 1416). The mark was valued at 13s 4d and the equivalent value of the loan today is approximately £4.5 million. Working holidays in France were an expensive business! Waging war was very, very expensive!

*Balasses: A lapidary's term for varieties of the spinel ruby of fine rose red colour inclining to orange.

** Nouches: Gold, into which precious stones were set.

***There was no coin of a Mark issued, the Mark was simply used for accounting purposes.

Henry the Fifth's ready access to loans allowed him to continue the war against France, and compared to the financial difficulties of his predecessor, Henry's success in obtaining money, men and ships was '*little less than miraculous*'.* That the French war was popular seems evident from the readiness with which Parliament voted supplies, although until 1417, little advantage had been gained beyond the prestige resulting from the victory at

Agincourt and the capture of Harfleur, the retention of which proved a drain on the treasury. From 5th December 1415 to March 2nd 1417 Harfleur cost Henry £15, 507, 10s 1½d (£15.2 Million) **

Early in March 1417, the King again began to borrow money to meet immediate war expenses, granting the Londoners half the wool subsidy in return for half a loan of £10,000 (£9.8 million)**. The total sum borrowed during the period, 11th April to 29th September 1417, was £34, 146. 17s. 7d, (£33 million), of which more than two thirds was from a few individuals.

From 1418, the real financial burden of the war shifted to Normandy. Nevertheless, at Henry's death, the English exchequer was confronted with a deficit of some £30,000 (£29 million) accumulated during the period 1416-1422, while the outstanding debts for the same period amounted to £25, 434 (£24.5 million) not to mention the great number of 'unpaid bills' for the Agincourt year.

*Stubbs Constitutional History of England, 5th Edition iii 9)

** All pound equivalents are approximate.

The Grand Feast

In 1419 Whittington, seemingly not averse to the grand gesture, held a feast at the Guildhall that was described as 'high and pompous.' The feast, held in the presence of King Henry V and his Queen, was also enjoyed by the Sheriffs, Aldermen and 'all men of fashion.' (No doubt dressed by Whittington). The food was described as plentiful and free, as was the generous entertainment. The quality and variety of the dishes was described as '*not elsewhere to be found throughout Europe*'. The King and Queen were entertained in the Presence Chamber where Whittington had arranged for a special fire to be made which burned 'sweet and odoriferous wood, far exceeding the smell of juniper, for it was mixed with mace, cinnamon and other rare and costly spices.' The King remarked 'My good Lord Mayor, though your fare be choice, costly and abundant, yet above all things I have observed in your noble entertainment is this fire which you have provided for me that gives me much content'.

Whittington's response to this was rather surprising, expansive, and soon to be demonstrated, very expensive. He addressed the King, saying, 'I have here a faggot of purpose left for the fire, which I hope will smell much more sweetly than the first in your nostrils.' He then proceeded to throw documents into the fire, saying, 'here is first your Highness's security for ten thousand marks, lent to you for the maintenance of your royal wars in France by the Right Worshipful Company of the Mercers, which I here cancel and cast into the fire, fifteen hundred lent by the City to your majesty, two thousand marks borrowed of the Grocers Company, three thousand of the Merchant Taylors, one thousand of the Drapers, one thousand of the Skinners, one thousand of the Ironmongers, one thousand of the Merchant Staplers, three thousand of the Goldsmiths, three thousand of the

Haberdashers and of the Vintners, Brewers and Brown Bakers, three thousand marks'. (It must be assumed that he had the agreement of all concerned! All debts were cancelled by the burning of these documents.

Included in this ceremonial burning were bonds that had been in the possession of his father in law Alderman Fitzwaryn, the monies having been used to finance the payment of soldiers in France. He also cast into the fire, bonds held by other persons who owed him money, saying, 'Others there likewise due to me of no small sums by divers of your nobility here present, all which with the former I have sacrificed to the love and honour of my sovereign, amounting to the sum of three score thousand pounds sterling (£36 million), and can your Majesty desire to sit by a fire of more sweet scent and savour'? It has been suggested that Henry knighted Whittington at this feast, however, there is no evidence to support this claim and it is likely that Whittington, as no doubt did many others who had reached degrees of 'importance,' assumed his perceived entitlement to a knighthood. Later writers on this incident have suggested that the claim relating to the burning of the documents may be as apocryphal as his knighthood and his cat. It is simply what is believed.

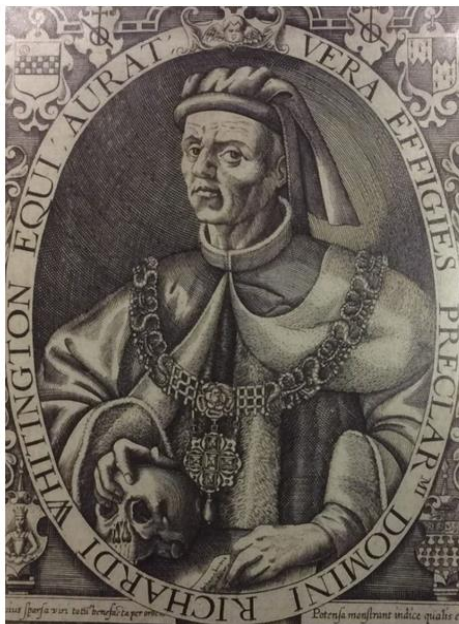


Fig.2 Whittington with Skull (16th Cent)



Fig.3 Whittington with Cat (17th Cent)

Figs: 2 & 3. The original Whittington portrait by Robert Elstracke (1570-1625)* c1590 showing his hand resting on a skull was adjusted in the 17th century (c1605) at the request of the print-seller Peter Stent to show a cat. The engraving does not predate the earliest literary adaptations as claimed by some 18th century authors; the change being made to conform to the story already extant and no doubt to increase sales of the 'Dick' Whittington myth. The name of the engraver remained on the modified version. The arms and marks shown on the engraving are; Whittington, FitzAlwyn, Worshipful Company of Mercers and Merchant Adventurers Company of London; top dexter and sinister is his merchant mark.

*Elstracke, Renold (1570-1625). An Engraver from Lukeland, now part of Belgium. He was probably a pupil of Crispin van der Passe the Elder of Cologne (1564-1637) who was an Engraver, Painter and Printer who began his career in Antwerp and had by 1589 fled via Aachen to Cologne, and then in 1611 to Utrecht, where he produced numerous portraits of European nobility as well as religious, mythological and allegorical prints.



Fig.4 Richard Whittington's Merchant Mark



Fig. 5 Whittington's Seal

In his contribution to the *Dictionary of National Biography* 1885-1900, James Tait makes a reference to these portraits. 'In the first impressions of the engraving, Whittington's right hand rested upon a skull but popular taste compelled Elstracke to substitute a cat in the revised portrait. The engraving in its altered printing is reproduced in Lysons '*Model Merchant*'. There was apparently a smaller portrait at Mercers' Hall, which has since disappeared, in which he appeared as a man of about sixty 'in a fur livery gown and a black cap such as the yeoman of the guard now wear,' and with a black and white cat on the left-hand side. The inscription, 'R. Whittington, 1536,' suggested the possibility of its being an adaptation of a portrait of Robert Whittington, the grammarian (1480-1553). A prolific writer, perhaps best remembered for his part in the Grammarian's War (1519-1521). A literary conflict caused by opposing views as to the teaching of Latin to children through the use of 'Vulgaria'; Latin primers so named because they contained 'vulgar' (In the 16th century sense i.e. every-day = vulgar.)

Whittington's Progress

1384 to 1393 Common Councilman for Coleman Street Ward

1393 to 1397 Alderman of Broad Street

1393 Sheriff of London

1395 Warden of the Mercers Company

1397 Lord Mayor of London from June–October. Richard Whittington's first tenure as mayor was achieved, not by election but by Royal mandate when Richard II in 1397 decreed that Whittington would succeed Adam Bammes, Mayor and Kings Escheator who had died in that year.

1398 Lord Mayor of London (via election)

1399 to 1400 Member of Henry IV's first council

1401 to 1402 Warden of the Mercers Company

1405 to 1423 Mayor of the Staple* of Westminster

* **The Company of Merchants of the Staple** is one of the oldest mercantile corporations in England. It is rare, possibly unique, in being 'of England' and not bounded by any city or municipality. It may trace its ancestry back as far as 1282 or even further. The Merchants were in Bruges in 1282, Dordrecht in 1285, Antwerp in 1296 and St Omer in 1313 with Charters from the Dukes of Burgundy and the Counts of Flanders. The Company controlled the export of wool to the continent from 1314 and its charter from King Edward III in 1347 gave it control of the export trade in staple commodities.

1406 to 1413 Mayor of the staple of Calais

1406 Lord Mayor of London (via election)

1408 to 1409 Warden of the Mercers Company

1416 to 1417 MP for the city

1419 Lord Mayor of London (via election)

1421 Judge in Ursury Trials, London



Fig.6 Whittington with Cat (Coloured plate)

In 1397, new regulations were issued governing the election of Aldermen of the City. 'In order to avoid damages, dissensions and perils which have often heretofore happened in divers Wards of the City, by reason of the headstrong, partial, and imprudent elections of the Aldermen thereof, it was agreed and ordered by the Mayor, Aldermen and Commonality of the City, that in future at every such election of the Aldermen, at least two reputable and discreet men, either of whom in manners and worldly goods is fit to be a judge and an Alderman of the City, shall by the men of the Ward which is so destitute of an Alderman be peaceably and quietly chosen, and presented to the Mayor and Aldermen of the City, to the end that one of those men of whom the Mayor and Aldermen shall deign to make choice, may be admitted and sworn the said duties of the Aldermany well and faithfully to perform.'**

**Notes and Queries November 2 1861

Not all historians have been in such awe of Whittington and a correspondent to the magazine *Notes and Queries* of November 1861, under the pseudonym of 'Clarry', made the following observations:

‘At the recent election of the Lord Mayor (1860, Cubitt), the City orators have been eloquently lavish in their quotation of the legend: *Turn again Whittington, Thrice Lord Mayor of London*’. But the case of the present highly esteemed Chief Magistrate and that of Richard Whittington are entirely different. The latter was not immediately re-elected as proof of the estimation in which he was held by his fellow citizens.

On reference to the Roll of Lord Mayors, it will be found that Sir Richard Whittington was elected for the first time in 1397 (in error, for he was appointed by Richard II and correctly, his first election was for 1398), and he was not re-elected until 1406, a period of nine years having elapsed; and for the third time not until 1419, or after a period of twenty two years from his first election. So long a time having passed between the first and third elections, a doubt might arise – that as the average is about nine years from the time of the election of a citizen to the office of Alderman, and his appointment as Lord Mayor.’

‘On closer inspection of the Roll, this it will be seen is not so; but that in Whittington’s era, an Alderman being called upon to serve the office of Lord Mayor more than once was a frequent occurrence; indeed it can be shown as a matter of course. For instance, after Whittington had served in 1406, he was succeeded by Sir William Stondon who had served in 1392. Stondon was succeeded in 1408 by Sir Drew Barentine, who had succeeded Whittington in 1398. Barentine was succeeded by Sir Richard Marlow in 1409, and Marlow again served in 1417. He was succeeded in 1410 by Sir Thomas Knowles who had previously taken office after Sir Drew Barentine in 1399. (‘Clarry’ goes on to list the various Aldermen who had succeeded to the Mayoralty in essentially shorter time spans than Whittington). He concludes by observing; ‘At the risk of being thought unromantic, and wishing to destroy a charming fiction, I am compelled to come to the conclusion that the fame of Whittington, as marked by his re-election, is as apocryphal as that of his cat; and that his frequent occupancy of the civic chair, arose from the same causes as those which conferred an equal honour on so many of his brother Aldermen. I am led to believe that all on the rota having passed the chair, it became the turn of the senior members to serve again. Even if this were not the practice, it must be admitted that Whittington achieved no more distinction than most of his contemporaries, of whom nothing is now heard. The cases of Sir Nicolas Bembar, who served three successive years from 1383 to 1385, and he had previously been Mayor in 1377; and Sir Michael Exton, who served the office in 1386 and 1387, might appear to upset my theory, but then again, it shows a precedent for an alderman being elected two years in succession. Had Whittington been so popular with his fellow citizens, why did they wait for such long periods as nine and twenty two years before they [re] discovered his virtues and testified their admiration for him’.

Whittington’s periods in the office of Mayor pale somewhat when compared to that of Henry Fitz Alwyn who held the position consecutively from 1189 to 1212 when he was succeeded by Roger Fitz Alwyn (no relation?) There were many instances of multiple

succession during the 13th to 14th centuries; Serle Mercer 1217 to 1222, Roger Duke, 1227 to 1231, Andrew Buckerell 1232 to 1237 Richard Hardell 1254 to 1258, Gregory Rokeslie 1275 to 1280, Raul Sandwich 1288 to 1293, John Blount 1301 to 1307. After 1307 the process appeared to become more egalitarian although there were a few exceptions, Hamond Chyckwell appears a number of times, he was Mayor in 1319 and appears again 1321 to 1322 and again 1324 to 1325. Nicholas Faryngdone filled in during 1320 and 1323. In the late 17th and 18th centuries there were a number of instances of joint mayoralty such as that of Sir John Chapman and Sir Thomas Pilkington being the first of this arrangement in 1689. Pilkington was subsequently Mayor 1690 – 91.

However, ‘Clarry’ was not to escape censure for his criticism of our hero, and on November 23rd 1816, an unidentified correspondent to ‘Notes and Queries’ wrote ; ‘On the subject of the elections of Lord Mayors, ‘Clarry’ seems to question the re-election of Sir Richard Whittington as any proof of the estimation in which he was held by his fellow citizens. ‘What that estimation was, let the following quotation from Grafton’s *Chronicle* (1563) testify’

‘That yere a wothie citizen of London, named Richard Whittyngton, Mercer and Alderman, was elected Maior of the said city, and bare that office three tymes. This worshipfull man so bestowed his goodes and substaunce to the honor of god, to the relief of the poore, and to the benefit of the common weale, that hath right well deserved to be registered in the boke of fame. Looke upon this ye Aldermen, for yt is a glorious glasse’. First he erected one house or church in London to be a house of prayer, and he named the same after his owne name, Whittyngtons College, and so it remayneth to thjis day. And in the same church, beside certaine Priests and Clerkes, he placed a number of poore aged men and women, and buylded for them houses and lodgynges. And allowed them wood, cole, cloth and weekly money to their greayt relief and comfort. This man also at his awne costs, in 1422 bilded the Gate of London called Newgate, which before was a most ugly and loathsome prison. The writer goes on to describe Whittington’s benefactions, such as half of St. Bartholomewes Hospital, the Library in Grey Friars, now called Christ’s Hospital and the chapel adjoining the Guildhall. ‘Anon’ concludes by saying, ‘I have no interest whatever in the aldermanic body of our metropolis, having no acquaintance with the Lord Mayor or a single individual among the Aldermen; but I do take an interest in rescuing from oblivion, and maintaining the credibility of the history and character of one and my own country’s and county’s greatest ornaments’.

Another correspondent identified only as R.S.Q., added that ‘The readers of N & Q have reason to thank ‘Clarry’ for the curious investigation of the facts connected with the history of this renowned Lord Mayor. I find that the dates assigned by your correspondent to the three several Mayoraltyes of the illustrious ‘Dick’ agree with the roll given in Haydn’s *Book of Dignities* (1851), and it is thus assumed that the fact of Whittington being ‘thrice Lord Mayor of London’ is beyond dispute. However, when our present Lord Mayor (Sir William Cubitt, 1860-61) made his appearance on the 9th of November instant, according to custom, in the Court of Exchequer, the Lord Chief Baron is reported to have said:

‘I beg to state now that your Lordship’s second election has not been exceeded by any person – not even by that chief Magistrate (alluding to Whittington), and he goes on ‘it is now understood, since learned antiquaries have investigated the matter, that the Chief Magistrate was not elected thrice to the office, but that he only received the same honour as your Lordship. That this statement of the learned Chief Baron is too general is not to be denied, but putting aside all other instances of re-election and confining ourselves to the individual case of Whittington, we now turn to another authority. In Arnold’s *Chronicle* (folio edition, Antwerp 1502), ‘I find that Whittington was Mayor in the 21st year of Richard II and again in the eighth of Henry IV; but in the seventh of Henry V., which corresponds with Mr. Hadyn’s third date, the name of the Mayor is given as Whittingham. It happens remarkably enough that one of the Sheriffs of that year (1419) is Robert Whittingham, and it is therefore not impossible that by some accidental diversion of the compositors eye, the distinction between Whittington the Mayor, and Whittingham the Sheriff may have been overlooked. As the matter is represented, the Chief Baron and Mr Haydn are at variance. Arnold appears to give countenance to the former’.

Whittington could be described as the last of the great mediaeval mayors, for the outbreak of the Wars of the Roses ushered in a period far less favourable to municipal magnates, although he would hardly have been remembered had not his benefactions – mostly posthumous – associated him with some of the most prominent buildings, and one of the few mediaeval foundations in the city which survived the Reformation. Whittington’s name was a household word with Londoners of the 17th century as a result of the popular folk-tale, when many of the scanty facts of his life had been forgotten.



WHITTINGTON ON HIS DEATH BED.
Copied from the Ordinances of his College.

Not only three times elected Mayor, but also buried three times; first by his executors in the church of St. Michael Paternoster in the Vintry; then in the reign of Edward VI, the parson of that church, thinking that some great riches had been buried with him, caused his monument to be opened, his body removed from the lead sheet, and finding nothing, he was again buried. In the reign of Queen Mary, the Parishioners were forced to take him up, to wrap him in lead and bury him for a third time, replacing the monument that had been damaged by the said parson.

Unfortunately, the Great Fire of London was to destroy his final resting place. He was regarded, even in his own lifetime as a *flos mercatorum*, the flower of London Merchants. In this illustration he is surrounded by his executors; John Carpenter, Clerk, John Coventre, Alderman, John White, Clerk and William Grove.

Appendix 1

When were Mayors of London established?

In the time of William I (r.1066-87), Mayors were called Justiciar and it was probably not until the time of Henry III (r.1216-72) that the Chief Officer of London became officially styled as Mayor, as given in the Liber Custumarum. (Henry II had apparently used the term but perhaps not officially and the style was not in common use). It is written... *'by this our charter present I have confirmed unto the Barons¹ of our city of London that they may elect from among themselves their Mayor each year, who must be one trusty as towards us, discreet and fit for the governance of the city etc'*. The Mayor at that time was also Chamberlain of the City.

During the Saxon period the Kings had called their representatives in London 'Portgrave', taken from the Saxon language, as the word 'port' in Saxon and Teutonic languages has the same meaning as the Latin 'civitas' (City), 'grave' in those languages has the meaning of 'comes'² in Latin, hence the name Portgrave was formed signifying the same as 'associate of the city'. (The exact word in the charter is Portirefa – chief officer of a fortified place). There are differing opinions regarding the derivation of this title, with the suggestion that Grave is derived from the Saxon Grau, indicating a 'grey-head or elder (deemed to have experience and wisdom). The term became rather generalized to indicate a Judge, Governor, Magistrate Warden, Keeper etc. Whatever the origins, the title was swept away after the Norman Conquest and replaced with the title of Mayor, from the French Meire. The first mention of Mayor in respect of the City of London is around 1185, the latter end of the reign of Henry II, as four years before that the city was still governed by a Portgrave. Ever since England was an established kingdom, the honour due to an Earl both in the King's presence and elsewhere has belonged to the Chief Officer who is styled as Lord Mayor so long as he continues to be so. It has become custom for the sword to be borne before the Mayor, as before an Earl, and not behind him³. The Mayor (outside London) ranks as an earl without having any peerage connection, (unless the incumbent is a peer in his or her own right) and it is an implied courtesy held for the period of the mayoralty with privileges attached. When or on what occasion a sword was first carried before the Chief Magistrate (Mayor) is not clear, however it is probable that this did not happen before the reign of Henry VIII, as in 1513 Pope Leo 10th had presented Henry with a consecrated sword and a cap of maintenance, the former being an *'offensive weapon to destroy the enemies of the church, and the latter armour to defend the head.'* This was considered the first indication of the use of a Cap of Maintenance in England and was regarded by Henry as the *'greatest favour that Leo could confer upon him'*. The king, as an honour to the Metropolis of his kingdom, granted the Citizens the privilege to use the Sword and Cap of Maintenance,

Citizens in this case being the Mayor, Aldermen, and other officers of the governing body of the City of London.

The title, Right Honourable, was at some point in history conferred on the Chief Magistrate of the City, although no specific date for this has been confirmed, it has generally been accepted that the title was bestowed by Edward III in 1354; the specific reason not being recorded.

¹. The Aldermen of London were styled Baron.

². 'Comes' an associate, i.e. of the King, hence it became to imply the dignity of an Earl or Count.

³. It may well be that it was at this time that the Mayors also styled themselves Lord Mayor as they were probably addressed in that manner.

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Richard Arnold (Haberdasher) Citizen of London (Obit 1521). 1519

Not really a Chronicle as apparently the only claim to that title rests in its opening section, which gives, with occasional historical references, a list of names of the Bailiffs, Mayors and Sheriffs of London between 1189 and 1502.

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**John Carpenter, (1370 -1445), Common Clerk to the City. His title of Secretary to the City seems to have been peculiar to himself and held by no other civic dignitaries either before his time or since (at 1861). He was one of the four executors to Richard Whittington's will*

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***John Strype (1634-1737) was a Huguenot clergyman, biographer and historian whose family had fled to England to escape religious persecution in Brabant and had established themselves as textile merchants in Petticoat Lane. He was educated at St. Paul's School and Jesus College, Cambridge. He published numerous historical works, many relating to the Protestant Reformation. His most significant contribution is his 1720 re-publication of John Stowe's Survey of the cities of London and Westminster, first published in 1603.*

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Grafton's Abridgement of the Chronicles of England, 1563. This was compiled whilst he was in prison, having been incarcerated by Mary I for printing a proclamation of the accession of Lady Jane Grey, in which he signed himself 'Printer to the Queen'. This ended his career as a royal printer! In 1568-9 he published 'A Chronicle at Large'. Neither of these tomes is considered by historians to be significant as they lack original material. John Stow rightly accused Grafton of copying his work. In his 'Chronicle at Large' he is the earliest writer known to refer to Edward of Woodstock (Prince of Wales, Duke of Cornwall, The Prince of Aquitaine) as the 'Black Prince'. Grafton was unable to explain the reason for this and claimed that he had seen the reference in some other MS. He was a member of the Grocers' Company.

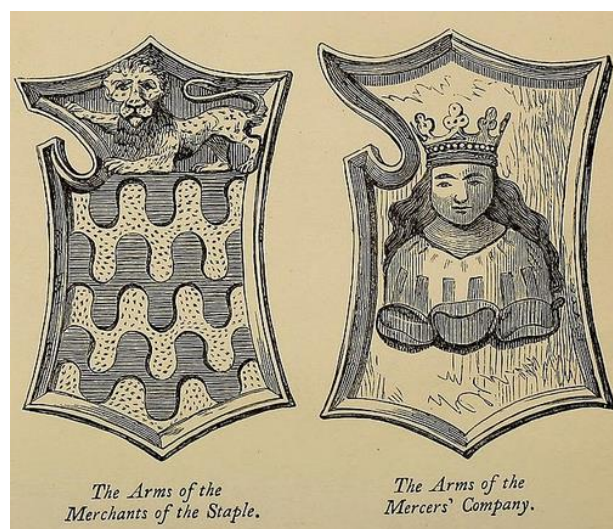


Fig.5 Arms of the Merchants of the Staple & The Mercers' Company.



Fig.6 Tale end.

Footnote:

The Lord Mayor and the City.

The constitution of the City of London is unique in its independence of outside government. Within his domain the Mayor is supreme ruler, owing allegiance to the Sovereign but nothing more. Outside the City he has the rank of an Earl. In feudal times the City was a barony, or rather a collection of baronies represented by the different wards; and the barons were self-governing and independent of the king except for loose homage. In 1191 London shook off its feudal fetters, and substituted for the Norman Portreeve a constitution of Mayor and Commune based on a French design, in which the Commune consisted of free citizens under a ruler of their own choice. But in some way the City succeeded in retaining the independence which went with its Baronies, and has never, in theory, lost it. To this day when the sovereign wishes to visit the city she makes a formal application to the Mayor for permission. Her procession is met at the gate nearest Westminster (it is possible that this was the reason why Temple Bar was preserved when all the other gates had disappeared), and is stopped by the Mayor, accompanied by his Sheriffs and retinue, and bearing his state sword of office. On a request of entry being made, the Mayor with dutiful obeisance, hands his sword to the Sovereign who returns it, the keys are also handed over, and the entry is made. The ceremony of course is a mere formality, but it is not without significance as illustrating the City's claim to autonomous rule.

(*The Guilds of the City of London*. Sir Ernest Pooley, 1944)

* * *

“Equality” – isn’t a dirty word, Blackadder!

With apologies to General Melchett (Blackadder Goes Forth, Episode 5)

Paul D Jagger, for, and on behalf of the Equality of Arms campaign team.

Equality of Arms aims to promote change positively in the Laws of Arms, heraldic convention and practice to achieve sex equality, by encouraging and supporting self-directed reform within the heraldic authorities in the UK, focussing initially on the College of Arms.

It has been more than a century since women won the right to vote, to enter the professions and stand for election to parliament. Women have served as Prime Minister, Speaker and President of the Supreme Court; women have risen to the rank of Admiral, General and Air Marshal; women may become Barristers or Bishops, CEOs or Commanders-in-Chief. There is no office of the Crown, Church or State to which a woman may not ascend. So why has our ancient and noble tradition of heraldry not kept up with these advances?

Why in the 21st century is a woman not permitted to transmit arms that have been granted to her in her own right onward to her legitimate children without first contracting a marriage with an armigerous man? Why is a woman not entitled to a crest, even if she has fought for Queen and Country? Why does heraldic convention still suggest an unmarried woman display her marital status in the guise of a lozenge or cartouche?

The issue of equality in the law of arms is one that has gathered increasing attention in recent years. Heraldic law is mostly underpinned by convention, sometimes underscored by rulings and decrees by the Kings of Arms. There are plenty of examples to illustrate the Kings of Arms authority to interpret and even change those conventions. Examples include the crests granted to the first female Governor Generals of Canada (1985) and New Zealand (1990). Some may say these are exceptions that do not create a precedent, yet a break with heraldic convention was evident in these cases.

Exceptions to established convention are not a recent invention; in 1556 Joan Kirkeby was granted arms to her and her issue. At the time of the grant Joan was the wife of Sir William Laxton, Lord Mayor of London 1544-45. Joan came to the marriage some time before 1539 with three children from a past marriage, her late husband having died in 1531. Sir William had no children and he took on Joan’s children as his own. Joan’s grant shows that a woman can transmit her arms to her children in her own right.

The 1997 Decree by the Kings of Arms that set out the various ways in which a woman should display her arms to indicate her marital status; single; married; divorced or widowed, is not widely applied but it has yet to be repealed, and until it is, the law of arms applies to women a set of conventions that apply to no man. Equality of Arms argues that it is time these distinctions were removed; they serve no useful purpose in the 21st century, and we must speak of equality of arms openly, as both a necessary and desirable aim within the noble tradition of heraldry.

There are logical, legal and historical arguments for reform of the law of arms, but most importantly it is the right thing to do. That said, the heraldic authorities are constrained by convention. We in the heraldic community can do our bit to support the heraldic authorities in a positive way to bring heraldic convention into alignment with equality legislation.

If you would like to know more about the Equality of Arms campaign get in touch by email at equalityofarms@virginmedia.com

* * *

Obituary

Bill Kay

February 1928 - October 5th 2021

Bill was a long-time member of our society who attended CUHAGS talks and dinners regularly, and who had a keen interest in the Society. Bill's niece Jenny Hastings has kindly penned this obituary:

Bill was born in Mill Hill (suburbs of London). He always displayed a wonderful imagination and loved telling stories from an early age! He went to Dartmouth Training College where he received his education, as well as training to enter the Royal Navy. He went on to join the Navy for a few years (a highlight being on board the HMS Vanguard taking the Royal family to South Africa in 1947).

He had a varied career:

1951 attended Cirencester Agricultural College

1954-1968 worked for Ministry of Agriculture in Cornwall and Yorkshire

1968-1980 lived and worked in France, teaching, studying and writing including a MA on Taizé in French. [*The Taizé Community is an ecumenical Christian monastic fraternity in Taizé, Saône-et-Loire, Burgundy, Ed.*]

1980 returned to England, went to Cambridge where he studied for an MPhil in International Relations. He was part of Corpus Christi, where he enjoyed reunion dinners etc. He also joined CUHAGS and other university societies.

In 1990 he bought a cottage in Landbeach where he remained until nearly the end of his life. He took up painting, joined the Jungian Circle, and continued writing and studying. He was always interested in so many topics, including European politics, national characteristics, women's intuition, dream interpretation and more!

Bill was a lovely man who will be much missed.

Jenny Hastings (niece)

The Mercers' Maiden or the honouring of a Queen (?)

Among several antique items found on the banks of the Thames during the excavations for the new Hungerford Market (1830), were a pair of linked cloak buttons. Shown in the attached illustration, they are of silver and identical. Beside the link and shanks, they each consist of two pieces, soldered together and bevelled at the edge. The upper side, which displays an embossed female bust, crowned, is so convex that it almost forms a globe. The head is large, and the forehead high, and the hair which is dishevelled, falls in large masses around the shoulders. The diadem exhibits five acutely-pointed rays, or leaves rising from a bandeau of roses. The robe is fastened at the front by a rose brooch, and on each side of the head a rose appears to be blooming. As there is some wear to the button, it cannot be determined that the necklace is of roses, the detail not being sharp. Fig.1

ANCIENT CLOAK BUTTONS.



Fig. 1

A contemporary writer on the subject of the buttons concluded that '*Considering these buttons to represent some known personage of popular veneration or respect, and seeing that the rose is their distinctive ornament, we may conclude that that they were originally made and worn in honour of Elizabeth of York (1466-1503), whose union with Henry VII (1485) terminated the disastrous civil wars which had for so long desolated the kingdom under the rival banners of the red and white roses*'. This may be the case; however, I would offer a different opinion, in that the image (although slightly embellished) bears a marked resemblance to the charge and crest of the Worshipful Company of Mercers.

Fig.2 20th century Mercers arms



The ‘Mercer’s Maiden’ is apparently of unknown origin but contemporaneous with fashionable portrait styles of the middle 15th century, and certainly visible in portraits of Elizabeth of York.



Fig. 3 Portrait style 15th century. Elizabeth of York.

The Mercer’s had no early grant of arms but the 1425 charter granted a common seal, and in 1568 the College of Heralds registered the seal as the Company arms. It was not until 1911 that the College of Arms confirmed the arms and granted the company a crest.

The blazon being; Gules, issuing from a bank of clouds a figure of the virgin couped at the shoulders proper vested in a crimson robe adorned with gold to neck encircled by a jewelled necklace crined or and wreathed about the temples with a chaplet of roses alternately argent and of the first and crowned with a celestial crown the whole within a bordure of clouds also proper.

It could of course be that these buttons were later used in commemoration of Elizabeth whilst bearing a similarity to those adopted by the Mercers as a seal. The Mercers used this image in 1425, some twenty years before Elizabeth was born. She married Henry VII in 1485 soon after his victory at Bosworth (22nd August 1485). She was Queen consort from 1485 to 1503 and they had seven children. According to folklore, the ‘Queen in the parlour’ in the nursery rhyme ‘Sing a song of Sixpence’, is Elizabeth, and the king in the counting house is Henry, known for his miserliness.



Fig. 4 Early Mercer’s Seal



Fig.5 Modern rendering of Mercer arms

Sources: The Graphic Illustrator 18. Medievalists.net. Wikipedia. The Guilds of London, Armitage, Frederick. 1918

(When submitting articles/letters etc., to the Journal, please, where possible, present them in Word. Ed.)



THE HERALDRY SOCIETY

THE HERALDRY ARCHIVE



HERALDRY SOURCES IN DIGITAL MEDIA



The Heraldry Archive seeks to make accessible in digital media the essential tools of heraldic scholarship, such as learned journals, essential reference works, heraldic surveys, and conference proceedings.

A full list of the titles published so far can be found in the shop on the Heraldry Society's website, at <https://www.theheraldrysociety.com/shop/category/archive/>, where they can also be purchased.

Jointly with CUHAGS and its sister societies in Norfolk and Suffolk the Heraldry Archive has digitised:

- Journals of East Anglian Heraldry Societies
 - Escutcheon from 1995 to present
 - Norfolk Standard from 1976 to present
 - Blazon from 1977 to present

This DVD can be purchased through CUHAGS

The collections are generally presented in HTML (web) format, with the actual documents in searchable PDF format. Usually there are tables of contents and often a search facility.

All are offered for sale in UK at £20 each (elsewhere £25) including postage and packaging.

Enquiries and suggestions to the project editor: Andrew Gray (archive@theheraldrysociety.com)

For Her Good Estate

The life of Elizabeth de Burgh, Lady of Clare

by Frances A. Underhill

New edition with additional material available from September 2020

For detailed information see the book website

The extraordinary life of Elizabeth de Burgh (1295-1360), known to many of us as the Lady Clare, was described in a 1999 biography by the late Frances A. Underhill, Professor Emerita at the University of Richmond. Only a few documents survive in which we hear Elizabeth's voice directly – her 1326 testimony against tyranny and injustice, her 1355 will, and her 1359 statutes for Clare College. However, the administration of her estates required detailed book-keeping, and a remarkable number of these records survive. Studying these in combination with official and legal archives, Professor Underhill pieced together a remarkable portrait of our resilient and determined benefactor.

A new edition, lavishly illustrated, provides additional context on the dramatic political events of 1326 – and on Elizabeth's role in the network of key patrons, at a time of innovative architecture, extraordinarily beautiful books, intellectual stimulation, university expansion, and fine craftsmanship. In the wake of the Black Death, Elizabeth set out an educational vision for the future which continues to inspire us today.

Music was a key part of Elizabeth's vision for college life, set out in the 1359 statutes. She would surely have been very proud of the musical excellence in recent decades. Looking to the future, the new book has been sponsored by Claire Barnes (Clare, 1976), and all proceeds of sale will go to the Friends of Clare Music.

The deluxe hardback has been published in a limited edition, RRP £40 but available initially by mail order.

Price including packing and delivery:

£45 - UK, Royal Mail 2nd Class

£50 - Rest of Europe, Royal Mail International Standard

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Enquiries from bookshops are welcome. For any delivery queries or requests, please get in touch with the Development Office. Donations to Friends of Clare Music.

