

## NOTES ON THE RESTORATION OF ROYAL ARMS IN KENT.

BY V. J. B. TORR.

DURING the K.A.S. summer meeting of 1929, in Romney Marsh, I called the attention of our Society to the sadly-neglected subject of royal heraldry, in which, despite all the havoc of Victorian "restorations," the churches of Kent are still so rich. In the last century many examples of interest were suffered to perish, from lack of interest and knowledge, allied to the deplorable tendency to sacrifice everything which was not "Gothic". Thus in the following Kentish churches the royal arms were ejected and probably destroyed; the list is compiled from descriptive and pictorial sources and does not claim to be exhaustive :

Bishopsbourne, Chilham, Godmersham, Hartley, Hoo St. Werburgh,<sup>1</sup> Kemsing, Milton by Gravesend, Monkton, Newnham, Northfleet, Rodmersham, St. Pauls Cray, Smarden, Stone by Dartford, Tenterden, Ulcombe (on glass), Wouldham,<sup>1</sup> Wye and Westerham (one of its three coats lost). A coat dating 1801-37, now in private possession at Lyminge, probably came from that church.

Brighter days have happily now dawned, and it is pleasant to be able to record in the following notes the substantial measure of success which has attended my appeal

<sup>1</sup> Wouldham seems to have been of little artistic merit, but the disappearance of the Hoo arms has robbed the county of a really important example, of which a note has fortunately been preserved in *Gent. Mag.*, June, 1840, p. 582. Very unusually, there were two painted panels, both dated "16 IR 07" but displaying different heraldry. One had France and England quarterly, with the lion and dragon supporters of Elizabeth; the other showed the lion and unicorn of James I and VI, holding the former quarterly coat quartered with Scotland and Ireland, for Stuart after 1603. Each coat was simply crowned, as at Westerham and the domestic arms of James I in Sandwich. They were fixed on the W. wall of the nave, over the gallery which has since been removed. That all this should have been sacrificed is yet another count in the indictment against nineteenth century "restorers": *oculi eorum tenebantur, ne agnoscerent illum.*

during the past four years. Additionally to my large stock of personal notes, I am indebted to several of our members for help and further information, as well as to several of the parochial clergy who have kindly co-operated in the work of preservation.

I would offer my thanks publicly to Mr. N. E. Toke, of Folkestone, and to Mrs. E. V. Paterson, of Hollingbourne, for helpful information ; but more especially to Miss Anne Roper, of Littlestone, to whom our Society and posterity will owe a debt of real gratitude for her skill, patience and zeal in personally cleaning and restoring several of the royal arms in and near Romney Marsh.

So much has been accomplished in so comparatively short a time that it seems proper now to record progress, in the hope that more may follow, and that members throughout the county will kindly communicate with me if any cases of neglect in this respect should come to their notice.

The following royal arms have already received preservative treatment, apart from a few cases (*vide ad finem*) in which negotiations for such attention or for removal to better positions are in progress.

#### 1. WESTERHAM.

The arms of Edward VI, painted on boards, on N. wall of tower, which claim the first place in Kent for age and rarity, underwent expert restoration in 1931, as fully described in *Arch. Cant.*, XLIII, 285-294.

#### 2. OTFORD.

At the Society's visit to this church in September, 1931, I referred during my description of the building to a wholly obliterated picture, hanging in a dark place in the tower, as likely to be a royal arms. The vicar, the Rev. A. E. Elder, kindly consented to my request that this should be cleaned, and the work was carried out under Professor Tristram's superintendence, along with eight funeral hatchments since rehung on the west wall of the nave, while the now visible royal arms have been moved to its north wall, facing the south door.

The restoration has revealed an interesting coat of William III, dated 1697 and painted on canvas in a black wooden frame about five feet square. This discovery has brought the number of William's arms in Kent to more than a dozen ; the bearings are correctly depicted (Stuart with the Nassau escutcheon of pretence), and no repainting has taken place, although even since the cleaning the whole composition is much faded. At the top appear the letters "W R," and at the bottom : "R·P 1697 H·S," the latter of course signifying the churchwardens of that year. Mr. Elder informs me that these were Robert Polhill and Henry Shiwbridge (error for Shewbridge ?). Our thanks are due to him for this restoration, a fitting accompaniment to the careful work expended at the same time on the fabric.

### 3. BRABOURNE.

In November, 1931, I was informed by Mrs. Paterson of the existence of a large royal arms (on canvas) hanging in the village school room. On inspection this proved to be of the reign of George II, and it is probably by the same hand as George II's arms in the tower basement at Mersham. No doubt could exist that these arms had been improperly cast out of Brabourne church at the so-called restoration, probably at the same time as the brasses were removed to the vicarage, since when they have fortunately been replaced. I appealed to the vicar, the Rev. C. R. L. McDowall, with the happy result that the arms have been restored to the church after many years' exile, and are now hung over the south door, after cleaning by Miss Roper, in November, 1932. The painting is of smaller merit than some examples, and initialled for George II, but undated; the two leopards of Brunswick are given in error as three.

### 4. SNAVE.

At the time of my lecture to K.A.S. in this church in July, 1929, the royal arms (on canvas), then hanging on N. wall of tower, were in so bad a state that nothing more certain could be said of them than that they were "Hanoverian," as described in *Arch. Cant.*, XLI, 221.

They have subsequently been restored at the expense of Major Teichman-Derville, mayor of New Romney and lord of the manor of Snaive, and are now seen to be those of George II and dated 1735 ; they have been rehung over the small arch from the nave into the vestry.

This restoration has been less successful than some, inasmuch as the whole composition was not only cleaned but also repainted, so brightly at first that some measure of *toning down* was necessary ; but at least further decay has been arrested, and the recovery of the date and monarch is fortunate.

#### 5. APPLIEDORE.

At the time of the excellent restoration of this church under the watchful eye of Dr. F. W. Cock, before 1929, the arms (on canvas) of George III, 1794, being in a decayed state received attention. Any repainting was confined to mere touchings-up of damaged places, and a coat of size was applied, followed by varnishing. These arms are hung at the W. end of N. aisle and bear the churchwardens' names, Wm. Paine and Wm. Boone. I have noted this feature in about half a dozen cases in Kent ; occasionally the donor's name or artist's signature may be found as variants.

#### 6. OLD ROMNEY.

In 1929 this church was restored and the eighteenth century panelling removed from the chancel walls and arch. At the same time the royal arms (George III, 1800), which give the wardens' names, George Buckhurst and John White, underwent treatment (either mere cleaning or repainting) which has brightened them considerably. They are on canvas, and have been replaced in the former position facing the nave over the chancel arch.

The following four coats of arms have all been restored during the last few years by Miss Roper, a work the more laudable as in one or two cases the treatment has had to be applied under difficulties and with the operator perilously perched. Miss Roper has given me particulars of her method, which it is hoped may be useful to anyone in other

parts of Kent disposed to copy her good example. This recipe was supplied originally by Dr. Cock, and may now be obtained, already mixed, from the British Drug House, Graham Street, City Road, N.1.

First the whole painting is carefully rubbed over with raw potato slices, followed by wiping with a soft duster, very effective in removing accumulated dust and dirt. Then with swabs, constantly renewed, the following preservative dressing is very lightly applied: equal parts of spirits of turpentine, finest linseed oil, and distilled or filtered rain water. The painting is then left to dry, which it does fairly quickly. This dressing should be repeated one year from the date, and again a year in advance of that, when the preservative result should be permanent.

#### 7. NEW ROMNEY.

Anne before the Union, 1704. Canvas, formerly over chancel arch in bad light, since moved with advantage to S. wall of S. chapel. Two further local arms of Anne are also dated 1704, in New Romney town hall, and in the S. chapel of the church of Rye, over the Sussex border; perhaps all set up in memory of the victories at Blenheim and Gibraltar in that year.

#### 8. LYDD.

George II, 1732. Canvas. Moved from W. side of arch from S. aisle to S. chapel to S. wall of nave. Until Miss Roper's treatment the whole painting was very dim and the date invisible.

#### 9. BREZZETT.

George III, 1780. Canvas. Moved from S. wall of vestry to above S. door of nave.

#### 10. ST. MARY-IN-THE-MARSH.

George III, 1775. Canvas. Over S. door. The most recent restoration, on Sept. 6th, 1933. The neighbouring church of Ivychurch possesses another 1775 coat of George III, in the nave, high over the tower arch, possibly by the same hand.

## 11. 19 UPPER STRAND STREET, SANDWICH.

This highly interesting domestic example of the arms of James I (early in his reign), of painted plaster, was protected with glass some ten years since by the late Mr. Raggett of that town. I am indebted to Messrs. Flashman & Co., of Dover, for this information, and to Messrs. Solley & Co., of Sandwich, for the further good news that our member, Lady Pearson, of Sandwich, has secured these arms, to prevent ill-disposed persons from attempting to deprive Sandwich of so notable a treasure, along with the two fine contemporary plaster ceilings in this house. A description of this coat appears elsewhere in this volume.

In addition to the foregoing *faits accomplis*, I have been in negotiation for the restoration of the Charles II arms, on canvas, at

1. SUNDRIDGE, S. wall of tower ;  
and for the removal to a more conspicuous place at

2. ASHFORD,  
of the very fine carved and painted wooden achievement, of Charles II, dated 1660, at present very invisibly skied over the N. arch of central tower looking into N. transept.

Also for the cleaning, at

3. HINXHILL,  
of the much faded undated arms (on canvas) of George III (before 1801), high over the tower arch. Perhaps the chief interest of this example is its being one of the few with the artist's signature, in this case one J. Marten of Tenterden. This is one of four royal arms by Marten, the other three being at Ebony (1768), Udimore in Sussex, near Rye (1772), and Tenterden town hall (1792).

## 4. ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL CHAPEL, SANDWICH.

Application made for the cleaning of the arms of Charles II (1660), elsewhere described.

## 5. ST. MARY'S, SANDWICH.

The vicar, the Rev. M. M. Vischer, has kindly consented to have the arms of Charles II (1660) (described, with the

following, elsewhere in these pages) cleaned and moved to a more visible position.

#### 6. ST. PETER'S, SANDWICH.

The rector, the Rev. H. N. Nowell, has been equally obliging as to the cleaning of these arms, also of Charles II (*circa* 1660).

Three other derelict examples of royal arms may be cited, a small carved wooden coat of Victoria, up among the lumber in the belfry of St. George's in Canterbury; and a good but greatly weathered stone achievement in the same city, set on the W. face of the pentise wall between Chillenden's Chambers and Court Gate, within the Precincts of Christ Church. This may possibly be the arms of Anne, post 1707, but is more likely Hanoverian (the crucial fourth quarter is almost undecipherable); its structural nature, however, would make restoration almost impossible. The third example is in the belfry at Lenham, probably on canvas, of Anne and dated 1705. I am indebted to our member, Mr. K. Peters, late of Lenham, for information and a sketch of these arms, which I have not yet personally seen.

It is greatly to be hoped that, following the Brabourne precedent, the arms at Lenham and St. George's, Canterbury, may be restored to their proper place in open church; as also a coat of Charles II at Hythe, now exiled in the parvise chamber over the great S. entrance of that fine church. Woodchurch has a much faded coat of George III (1773), high over the tower arch, which is in need of cleaning.

Brief as are the foregoing notes, it will be seen that already much has been accomplished by private effort to preserve the fine heritage of our Kentish royal arms, running the course of our later history as they do. May we hope that with so good a start having been made, the archdeacons and rural deans of the dioceses of Canterbury and Rochester will in future keep a more watchful eye on these interesting items of old church furniture?