

HERALDRY IN PARISH CHURCHES

Part 1

Many of our Parish Churches throughout England are full of family tablets, monuments and stained glass windows, which are embellished with Heraldry.

This article is by way of an introduction to the subject, with particular reference to St. James's.

Sir Anthony Wagner, the present holder of the Office of Garter Kings of Arms has described, "True heraldry as the systematic use of hereditary devices centred on the shield. National and personal devices without the element of inheritance are, therefore, not heraldry, though they are frequently its fore-runners".

The earliest known decorated shield, which satisfies this definition, is that which Henry I of England gave his son-in-law, Geoffrey of Anjou, when he knighted him in 1127, upon his marriage to his daughter Maud.

An enamelled plate, formerly on Geoffrey's tomb in Le Mans Cathedral, depicts him with a blue shield bearing gold lions, and another lion on his conical blue cap.

The enamel was probably made either at Geoffrey's death in 1151 or in his lifetime.

The life sized effigy of Geoffrey's Grandson, William Longespee, on his tomb in Salisbury Cathedral bears on the shield the arms, 'Azure, six lions rampant or'. At Runnymede he was on King John's side, but deserted in June 1216. In 1220 he assisted at the laying of the foundations of Salisbury Cathedral and was buried there on his death in 1226. His widow survived until 1261.

These are two of the earliest examples of the use of heraldry in Churches and William Longespee's effigy can be seen to this day.

We will now skip three centuries to the time of the Reformation. The Royal Arms were first exhibited in Churches from the Tudor period, to display the newly acquired Royal Supremacy over the Church. As an old jingle has it, 'Henry VIII left the Pope in the lurch and made himself head of the Church!'

The same period also saw the rapid rise of many people in Tudor society from humble origins to fill the ranks of the gentry and the aristocracy. Many of these people assumed 'Armorial Bearings' to which they were not entitled.

Henry VIII in 1530 commissioned the first of many 'Heralds Visitations'. The Officer of Arms conducting a Visitation was empowered, 'To put down or otherwise deface at his discretion all unlawful arms, crests, cognisances and devices, in plate, jewels, paper, parchment, windows, gravestones and monuments or elsewhere wheresoever they be set or placed'.

A person summoned to appear before an officer of arms might satisfy him that the arms he bore were lawfully his, by grant to or ancient usage by an ancestor, or if he could not do this he might either have the arms rectified and recorded or he might disclaim all pretence and title thereto in the future.

These visitations were undertaken throughout the English counties at intervals of thirty years over a period of a century and a half, the last one was commissioned about 1686.

The records and family pedigrees compiled on these visitations are

preserved at the College of Arms, Queen Victoria Street, near St. Paul's, and a large proportion of hereditary armorial bearings is borne on their authority.

One such visitation was made by Thomas Hawley, Carlisle Herald, as Marshal and Deputy to Clarenceux King of Arms, of St. Paul's and twelve other churches in the City of London between the 28th July and the 3rd of September 1530.

The drastic purpose and method of such 'Visitations of Churches' is made clear at once. It was no less than to correct, deface, and take away all manner of arms wrongfully borne, or being false armory.

Carlisle began the proceedings at St. Paul's by showing the King's Commission to one Doctor Smythe, the Bishop's deputy, the Bishop himself being on the King's business beyond the seas.

Doctor Smythe received it right reverently and commanded a verger to wait on the herald and show him anything he desired to see. They began in the body of the church, where the herald defaced and took away divers escutcheons of arms unlawfully borne, and went on to the choir, where he treated divers others in like manner, among them one set up on the tomb of Doctor Stillington, Archdeacon of Norfolk, lately buried there.

'Correction', however, was not the herald's only concern, for he made more or less detailed notes of several ancient tombs and the heraldry displayed on them; for example, that on the left side of the choir lay John, Duke of Lancaster, and Dame Blanche his wife.

All these tombs disappeared, whether the Armory was lawful or otherwise, in the 1666 holocaust of the Fire of London which destroyed old St. Paul's.

The heraldic adornment on the tombs in Wren's Cathedral escaped a similar fate by the Luftwaffe raids during the 1939-45 war.

Part 2

There is only one monument in St. James's Church including an heraldic escutcheon and that is to 'Charles Wynn Isdell' 1838-1905, for some years churchwarden. It is a quartered shield, the first and fourth being blazoned, 'Sable, a thistle gold, between three pheons silver'. A pheon is the barbed head of an arrow, thrown from a crossbow.

These arms and the motto 'TUTANTUR - TELA - CORONAM', translated as 'Weapons protect the Crown', are recorded to the Irish family of TISDALL, of Kells Co, Meath, Ireland, in Burkes Landed Gentry of Ireland 1912 edition. Their pedigree starts about 1700 and it is probable Charles Wynn Isdell's forebears changed the spelling of the family surname on moving to England in the 18th century, but the family arms would not have changed. I cannot identify for certain the Arms in the second and third quarters, the blazon, 'Gules (red) two lions passant or (gold)'.

The Church has a window in memory of its first Vicar, the Reverend Fitzroy John Fitzwygram M.A., but no Armoriais are included. One could say that part of his Arms are present in the Church and used every Sunday, the 'Lectern Eagle'. The supporters on either side of the family shield are eagles, wings elevated, silver with red collars, and charged on the breast with a green shamrock.

Sir Robert Wigram, M.P. for Wexford 1806-7 was created a Baronet on 30th October 1805. His son, by his first wife, Robert the 2nd Bart, changed the

surname in 1832 to Fitzwygram. He had four sons, the eldest, Robert, was the 3rd Bart, the third, Frederick, the 4th Bart, and the youngest, John Fitzroy, born 16th April 1827 was our first Vicar from 1863 until his death on 13th August, 1881. The 4th Bart was succeeded by his only son, the 5th Bart Sir Frederick Fitzwygram who died in 1920 without issue. He was succeeded by his cousin, descended from the son, by the First Baronet's second wife, Sir Edgar Wigram as 6th Bart, so the name reverted to its original form. He was succeeded by his nephew, the Reverend Sir Clifford Wigram, 7th Bart, Chaplain of Ely Theological College from 1937.

I hope this article proves to be of interest, and has given people a glimpse into the subject of Heraldry in Churches.

A.E. Loyd.

THE HERO WHO DIED AT WAYSIDE

From time to time articles have appeared in this magazine about Colonel Boyle - 'a man with the heart of a Viking and the simple faith of a child' - to whose grave in our churchyard pilgrims from Canada and the U.S.A. come year by year. In 1971 Professor Rodney spent several months in London undertaking research for a biography of this remarkable man, and during that time was a frequent visitor to our parish. After his return to Canada he continued to write, asking us to check certain points and send more photographs. His book has now been published, and I have just received the following letter from him:

Department of History,
Royal Roads Military College
Victoria, B.C.

28 February 1975

Dear Mr. Brunt,

You may remember that some three years ago I wrote requesting photographs of Wayside and the unusual Roumanian Cross which serves as a headstone marking the grave of Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph Whiteside Boyle. My book, **Joe Boyle: King of the Klondike** (Toronto, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1974) was published at the end of November, and I am happy to report that the cross and Wayside are among the illustrations.

Boyle, described by a contemporary as a massive man with a "head like a lion, strange romantic Canadian with (the) hard-bitten look of a man who all his life had made his own way" died quietly at Wayside, the home of an old Yukon friend, Edward Bredenberg, on 14 April 1923. There are many apocryphal stories about Joe Boyle. They range from tales of his great strength, retrieval of the Roumanian Crown Jewels from the Kremlin's vaults, to being the last man with Tsar Nicholas II, and Queen Marie's paramour. In writing the book it was not my intention simply to demolish such stories, but rather to place the man in the context of his times, and to make his incredible exploits better known, particularly here in his native land where, until now, he has been all but forgotten.

Born in Toronto, Ontario, on 6 November 1867, his experiences ranged from hard years at sea as a runaway boy sailor, to that of confidant to the Roumanian Royal Family. The Klondike made him a wealthy man; the Bolshevik Revolution brought him a shower of medals from the British, French, Roumanian

and Russian governments; but he died intestate, a lonely man who dreamed on a grand scale, knowing no fear, and with loyalties now considered old-fashioned if not obsolete.

My warm thanks, Vicar, for your help and kindness and good wishes from the far west of Canada.

Yours sincerely,
William Rodney,
Professor and Dept. Head.

HOME MISSION

One of the Lent Study Groups on Christian unity is being held in our house. Fortunately we have been successful in setting up a truly ecumenical group: our leader is Mr. Frank Sharpe, a lay preacher of the Hampton Methodist Church, and we could welcome a Roman Catholic student. It is remarkable that we have so far not come across any differences in our understanding of the basic principles of Christian Faith as far as they concern our relationship with God and our neighbours.

We were given an opportunity to learn more about each other when Mr. Sharpe invited us to join him for the Annual Circuit Meeting of his Church on Home Mission. It was held in Sunbury on February 26, and I found it most interesting to learn about the organisational differences that do indeed exist between the Anglican and the Methodist Churches. But the reason why I am writing this is precisely that these differences seemed very unimportant compared with the message that came across in the powerful address given by Mr. Lockwood, from Molesey Methodist Church. He spoke of the duty of every Christian to be a missionary in his own circle of influence. And it really does not make any difference of what denomination that Christian may be. Here we are all worrying about the financial state of our Church - he said - and what we should really be concerned about is how to bring the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to other people.

We must not leave it to any official bodies that might exist for this purpose but have to recognise our own responsibility. Don't be afraid you cannot do it - he said - let God fill you with His love and power, and it will overflow to reach others.

H.B.

MOTHERING SUNDAY

The traditional observation of Mothering Sunday begun in medieval times was carried on for another year by the large number of parents and children who took part in a special service. Three dramatic sequences in which a child frightened by the dark and another hesitant about joining the cubs were reassured by their mothers, and children returning home after a party rushed to tell Mum all about it, reminded us of how much we owe to our mothers. Then all the children collected cards which they gave to their mothers, and it was clear that they understood and wanted to thank them.

Almost everyone stayed to enjoy the tea prepared by the Mothers' Union (but shouldn't the fathers have done this ?!) and the South Aisle of the church was very full indeed.

B.P.K.

WAYSIDE

Four weekends and a few evenings of intense activity with glasspaper filler and brushes: many hours cleaning out furniture and accumulated bric-a-brac: a thorough clean of the carpets and curtains. The result - complete redecoration of the two front rooms. Many thanks to all who devoted time and energy to this achievement.

THE PARISH HALL

I am sure that the appeal in the March issue of the magazine for help in spring-cleaning the hall has been noted.

It is hoped that enough volunteers will turn up on Saturday, May 10 to avoid the necessity of continuing the work on the following day.

WHAT ARE WE TO DO?

In a section of his book 'The Shape of the Church to Come' dealing with this question, Karl Rahner, one of the greatest theologians of our time, writes: 'The Church then must remain the Church of mystery and of the evangelical joy of redeemed freedom. She may not be reduced to a humanitarian welfare association, if only because in the long run man cannot endure himself unless he is redeemed into the open freedom of God. Only when man knows that he is infinitely more than is immediately palpable - namely the man of the infinite God of unlimited freedom and bliss - can he really endure himself in the long run. Otherwise he slowly stifles in his own finiteness and all lofty talk about man's dignity and duty comes to sound increasingly hollow. The Church therefore is concerned from first to last with God'.

The truth of what Rahner is saying was brought home to me most powerfully in watching the recent T.V. series 'Six Scenes from a Marriage'. We saw the pathetic couple - and their circle of friends - with all the advantages of the best that civilised living can offer in affluent Sweden - becoming increasingly unable to endure themselves or other people because they had not been - and refused to be - redeemed into the open freedom of God. We saw them slowly stifling in their own finitude, losing their humanity, vainly trying to make life bearable by constant experiments into new kinds of sensation and sexual experience with one partner after another. And it could all have been so different if only they had come to know the true God and offered their puny lives to him!

A little later Rahner continues; 'We talk too little about God in the Church or we talk about him in a dry, pedantic fashion, without any real vitality. We have learned too little of the incomprehensibly noble art of a true initiation into the mystery of the experience of God, and therefore also apply it far too little. That is why, in face of a world-wide atheism, we have the feeling of being merely on the defensive'. It does indeed seem that many are starving spiritually today and failing to grow to that maturity which God intends for them, because we in the Church have been unable or unwilling to help them to come to this experience of God and fellowship with him for which they were made. But the hopeful thing is that the Church is becoming alive to its failure, and beginning to do something about it. In our own parish there are groups - and there could be more - in which people minister to one another the deep things of God, and experience of him grows. People are beginning to spend much more time in regular prayer and contemplation in their own homes. We know that liturgical prayer is far from enough, and needs to be grounded in deep personal prayer,

and to find its way back into such prayer.

But because we are realising afresh the value of personal prayer and communal prayer in small groups, this does not mean that we should write off liturgical prayer, or be content to leave it as it is. It is capable of great enrichment. To help us to see the possibilities here, a Worship Day - following on the very successful Pray Day held a year ago - is being arranged for Saturday, April 26 at Ashford Methodist Church (fee £1, inclusive of a very good lunch - if you want to go, please send word to the Vicarage not later than April 13). Poets, musicians traditional and pop, experts in liturgical dance and drama and many others will be there to give us the benefit of their knowledge and experience.

Then, on a wider scale, and back mainly to the inner personal level and the development of the individual's own direct relationship to God, we are invited in June - as a sequel to the 'That's the Spirit' series of two years ago - to sample some of the wares of a Congress on Spirituality called 'Exploring the Ways of the Spirit' to be held in various centres in London (including Westminster Abbey, Farm Street Church, St. James's Piccadilly, Kensington and Notting Hill). The congress will explore widely the search for meaning through the dimensions of the Spirit, and will cover various approaches to meditation - Christian, Sufi, Hindu, Zen and Yoga; what mystical traditions mean today; prayer of the Orthodox East; charismatic prayer; exploration into the spirituality of people who have made an impact upon British life, at the places associated with them and so on. A very rich diet from which to make our choice! Programmes giving full details will be available shortly. About twenty of us from this parish took part in 'That's the Spirit' - perhaps twice as many can participate in this follow-up.

In the meantime, to come back home, we are busily engaged on a reappraisal of our own role as a parish Church aiming at being a more fully local Christian community. Where do we stand? What are we to do? What are we in fact doing, why are we doing it, and what should we be doing? To help us to find the answers - we hope in the end God's answers - come and join our Parish Conference on May 3 and 4. The accommodation we think will cope happily with up to 50 people, which is on the large side for plenary sessions, but as most of the work will be done in groups of no more than ten, everyone will be able to contribute. If you are not on the P.C.C. but would like to have an invitation because you feel that this is for you, please get in touch with Mrs. Dawn Harris, 60 St. James's Avenue. 979 3163.

FAREWELL AND THANK YOU TO BROTHER JIM

Jim and his family expect to be returning to Australia in June, but he officially ends his three-year stint amongst us in our eleven parishes on April 1. One Sunday afternoon, April 13, we are all invited to a gathering in Feltham Methodist Church, when he will formally hand over his work to a team who hope to continue to co-ordinate and develop what he has so ably begun, and we shall have the opportunity to express our gratitude and appreciation to him. Gifts towards the presentation to be made to him should be sent immediately to the Vicar or Janet Robinson, 1 Jillian Close.

SOME DATES TO NOTE

- April 12 10.30 - 12.45 Annual Stewardship Conference (Mary Sumner House)
- 13 14.00 - 16.30 Farewell to Jim Cranswick, Feltham Methodist Church)
- 14 10.30 Editorial Board (75 St. James's Avenue);
20.00 Properties Committee (7 Blandford Road)
- 15 20.00 Tuesday Club; Mrs. Largfier - 'The Cruse Club' (W)
- 16 07.30 Holy Communion; 20.00 Stewardship Committee
(106 Park Road)
- 17 20.00 Prayer Meeting (69 St. James's Avenue)
- 20 15.00 Twickenham District Scout Council: St. Georgetide Parade Service (St. Mary's College Chapel, Waldegrave Rd.)
- 21 20.00 Liturgical Committee (63 Park Road)
- 23 20.00 Organ Recital by David Bell (Programmes 30p)
- 24 19.45 NEWCOMERS' PARTY (by invitation; if you have recently come to the area and have not received one by April 16, please contact the Vicar or Mrs. Brooks, 81 Park Road, 979 1983).
- 25 SAINT MARK'S DAY: 07.30 Holy Communion
- 26 10.00 - 17.00 WORSHIP DAY (Ashford Methodist Church)
- 29 20.00 Tuesday Club: Mr. Gubbins - 'Bee-keeping' (W)
- 30 19.30 ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING (Hall)
- May 1 SS. PHILIP & JAMES: 07.30 Holy Communion; 20.00 Prayer Meeting (69 St. James's Avenue)
- 2 19.30 Scout Group A.G.M. (Hall)
- 3 10.00 - 16.30 PARISH CONFERENCE (Isleworth Church Hall)
- 4 14.00 - 16.45 Continuation of PARISH CONFERENCE
- 7 14.30 Mothers' Union Branch Meeting (W)
- 8 ASCENSION DAY: 08.50 Holy Communion (St. Annes's Chapel LEHS); 19.45 Parish Communion; 20.30 Parochial Church Council (W)
- 10 09.30 onwards: SPRING-CLEANING of Parish Hall
- 11 18.45 UNITED SERVICE in St. James's Church, followed by refreshments. Preacher from Christian Aid.

BAPTISMS

February

- 23 Alexander John Dominic Gerard, 28 Windmill Road
Benjamin John Nicklen, 21 Wordsworth Road
Justin Lee Seymour 6 Holly Road

March

- 16 Duncan William Halford Robinson, 184 Buckingham Road
(at the Parish Communion)