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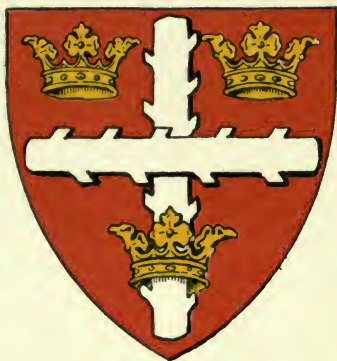




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*Fig. 1.*

ARMS OF  
THE BOROUGH OF COLCHESTER  
as recorded at the College of Arms, August 1558.



*Fig. 2.*

ANCIENT FORM OF COLCHESTER  
BOROUGH ARMS  
as emblazoned on Borough Charter,  
July 1413.



*Fig. 3.*

ARMS FOUNDED ON THE  
ANCIENT "RAVEN SEAL" OF COLCHESTER,  
USED AS THE ARMS OF THE PORTREEV  
AND OF THE BOROUGH AS A PORT AND  
HARBOUR AUTHORITY.



# ESSEX BOROUGH ARMS

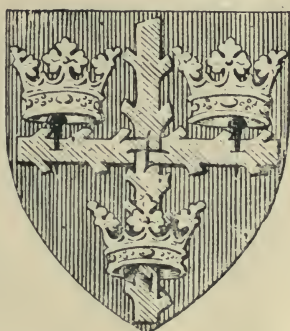
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## ARMS OF ESSEX

AND THE

ARMS OF CHELMSFORD DIOCESE.

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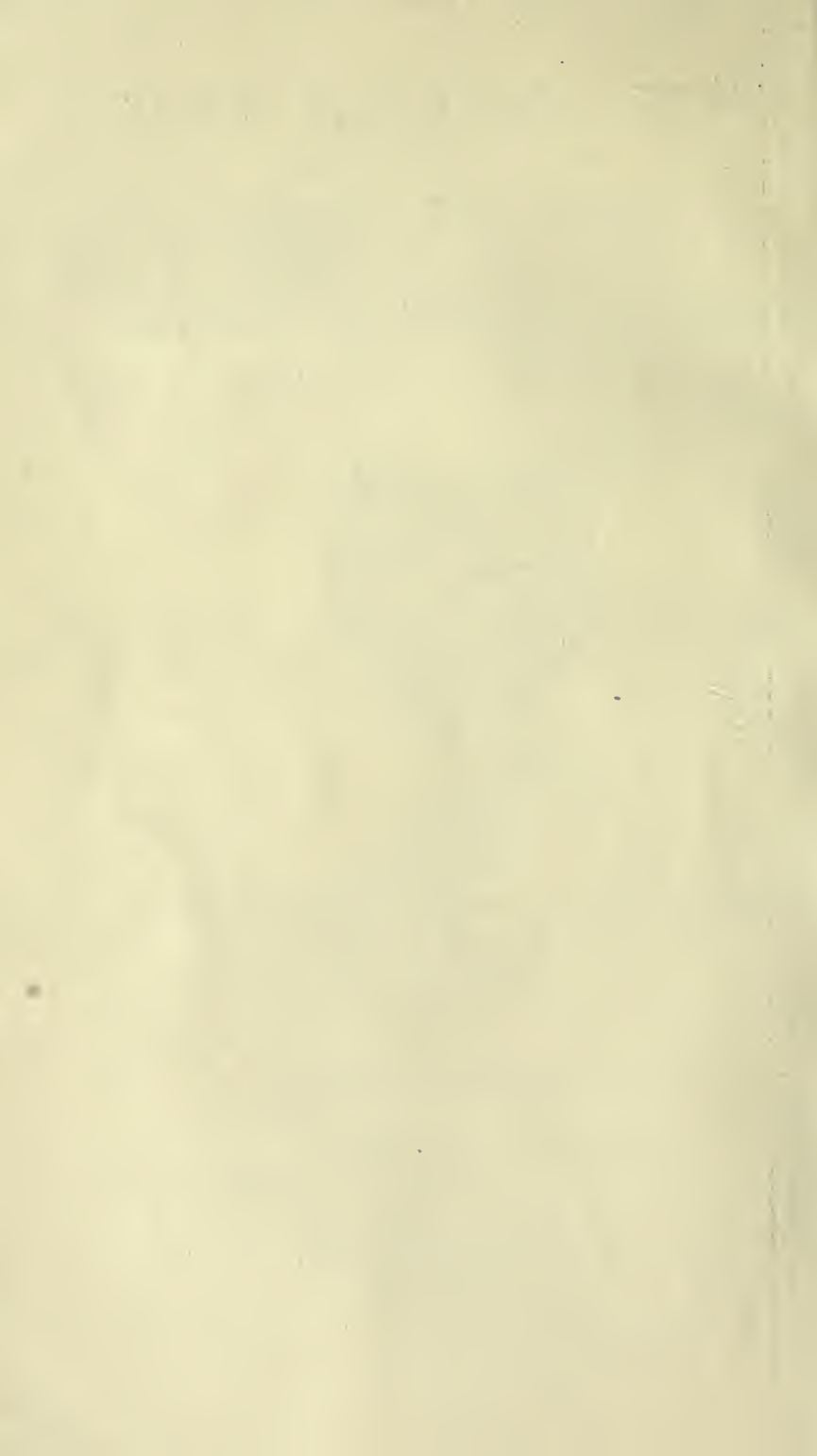


COLCHESTER BOROUGH ARMS.

NINE COLOURED PLATES AND FORTY OTHER  
ILLUSTRATIONS.

By W. GURNEY BENHAM.

BENHAM AND COMPANY, LIMITED  
HIGH STREET, COLCHESTER.  
1916.



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MAIN

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## INTRODUCTORY.

THE heraldic emblems of Cities and Boroughs contain much interesting history and legend, and are of recognised value and utility in association with local government. Unfortunately they often suffer mutilation and indignity from a want of knowledge as to their meaning and the correct manner of displaying them. This work is intended to give information on these points so far as the armorial bearings used by Essex Towns are concerned.

In regard to the article on the ancient arms of the Borough of Colchester, the following supplementary information will be of interest.

Following the advice of many eminent heralds and antiquaries, the Colchester Town Council unanimously decided on March 3, 1915, to assume and revert to the original arms of the town as shown on the Borough Charter in the year 1413, and as used at the same period—and ever since—in the common seal of the Corporation.

The official description of these arms is as follows :—

'Gules, between three crowns or, a cross raguly couped, vert, composed of four portions joined together in the centre of the cross in the manner shown in the coloured drawing on the Royal Letters Patent of July 7, 1413, the mortising being in the form of a fylfot; each of the two crowns in chief surmounting a nail, sable, point downwards, the point of each nail piercing the arm of the cross beneath it; the third crown enfiling the vertical staff of the cross in base and surmounting a third nail, also sable, piercing the cross in base diagonally, from dexter to sinister; the raguly projections of the arms of the cross all pointing to sinister.'

These armorial bearings are shown on the title-page, and also (in colour) in Plate I., fig. 2.

In regard to the so-called 'Essex' arms—the traditional arms of the ancient Saxon Kingdom of Essex—Mr. Wilson Marriage, of Alresford Grange, a member of the Essex County Council, brought forward a proposal, in 1914, that the County Council should consider the question of formally adopting these—or such variant of them as might be authoritatively decided upon as appropriate and correct—as the armorial device of the modern County of Essex. A special Committee was appointed to consider the matter, but the intervention of the European War led to the question being indefinitely postponed. It is to be hoped that it will, in due time, be reconsidered.

W. G. B.

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ERRATUM.—On pages 7 and 9 for "Sir William Bysshe" read  
"Sir Edward Bysshe."





## ARMS OF THE ESSEX BOROUGHS.

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### I.—COLCHESTER.

THE earliest record of the armorial bearings of the borough of Colchester is to be found in a coloured representation of them on the Charter granted to the town by Henry V., in July 1413. It must be added though, that the arms also figure in the fine old Common Seal of the Borough of about the same period—probably a year or so later than the charter itself. Whether the arms were first granted at this period cannot be stated, for there is no record of the original grant in the College of Arms, nor amongst the archives of the Corporation of Colchester. Presumably the town had no borough arms when its first Common Seal was engraved, some time after the earliest of the charters of the town was granted in 1189. A representation of that early seal is given on page 3. It bears inscriptions:— (1) QUAM CRUX INSIGNIT HELENAM COLCESTRIA GIGNIT (Colchester gives birth to Helena whom the Cross makes famous); and (2) COLCESTRENSIS SUM BURGI COMMUNE SIGILLUM (I am the Common seal of the Colcestrian borough).

It will be seen that it has no armorial bearings upon it. Probably at that remote period very few boroughs or cities possessed any coats of arms.

The Colchester Charter of 1413 is elaborately and beautifully illuminated. A reproduction is given in Benham's "Guide to Colchester" (6d.). Under a representation of St. Helena, the arms are given as now reproduced, Plate I., Fig. 2. It will be seen that each of the three crowns surmounts a large nail and each nail pierces the cross, which is formed of two 'raguly' staves coloured green. Note that this is not a 'cross raguly.' If so, the ragged projections from the two arms of the cross would point right and left. In the design on the charter, these projections on the horizontal staff of the cross all point in the same direction, *viz.*, to the sinister side of the shield, which implies that this portion of the cross was of one piece. But there is another puzzling peculiarity about this early-drawing:

Carefully depicted in the centre of the cross are certain markings which seem to denote that each of the two staves has been cut into two pieces, and that the four portions have been joined together in the centre.

At first glance, heralds are apt to surmise that these markings are intended for that mysterious sign, known as the 'fylfot.' This may be so. On the other hand the markings may be merely



COMMON SEAL OF BOROUGH OF COLCHESTER  
(EARLY 15TH CENTURY).

meant to show the junction or morticing of the four limbs of a cross. The Rev. Henry L. Elliot, of Gosfield, well known as a high authority on matters heraldic, has kindly given me his opinion. He regards the markings as a fylfot, intended to emphasize the junctures of four pieces of a cross.\*

\*Mr. Elliot adds: 'This figure is sometimes called a Gammadion, from the Greek letter gamma ( $\Gamma$ ). This is the way it is carved on the doorway given on the cover of the *Essex Review*. I do not know whether the drawing of the 'swastica' on the charter is the more correct, or that on the door; or whether it was considered immaterial in which direction the flexure of the limbs of this fylfot cross was made.'

It should be added that the old Borough Seal of the same period shows these projections in the same way, and also shows



FIRST COMMON SEAL OF BOROUGH OF COLCHESTER  
(? 11TH OR 12TH CENTURY)—OBVERSE.



REVERSE OF SEAL.

the three nails. It does not show the markings in the centre of the cross, for (as may be seen in the illustration) the design is too small to allow these markings to be represented.



Before further considering the design of this old version of Colchester's arms, I will give the description of the Borough Arms as in use up to modern times, and as entered in what is known as the Visitation of 1552, though it will be seen that the entry is six years later :—

#### COLCHESTER.

##### THE ARMES OF THE TOWNE OF COLCHESTER.

Gules, two staves raguly and couped, one in pale surmounted by the other in fess, both argent, between two ducal coronets in chief or, the bottom part of the staff [in pale\*] enfiled with a ducal coronet of the last.

Taken in the tyme of John Best and John Maynard Baylyffes the xxvjth of August 1558.

It is not necessary to translate the heraldic terms, as this is the description of the arms shown in Fig. 1 of coloured Plate I.

Why were these arms different from the older form? Why had the three nails vanished, why had the two staves become argent (silver or white) instead of green, and why were they simply crossed instead of being conjoined?

There is every reason to suppose that the motive for these alterations, or at any rate for two of them, is to be found in the familiar cry of 'No Popery.' At the time of the Reformation, the College of Arms had instructions, presumably from high quarters, to purge armorial bearings, when opportunity occurred, of what had become regarded as Romish superstitions. Many cases are on record—notably, the arms of the Merchant Taylors' Company of London—of coats of arms which were 'reformed' in this way. The movement had begun in the reign of Henry VIII., and had no doubt continued with additional vigour during the time of Edward VI. It need not, therefore, be regarded as strange that the record of the altered arms happens to be dated in the last month but three of the reign of Queen Mary. The alteration was no doubt some years earlier, and the entry of 26th August 1558, only professes to be a record of arms existing and recognised at that date.

What then was the hidden meaning of the older Arms of the Borough? It is not at all difficult to elucidate, and it is

\*These words have been accidentally omitted.

worth elucidation, for those arms are really a beautiful, ingenious, and at the same time decorative specimen of heraldic symbolism.

Clearly they must be considered in conjunction with the representation of St. Helena which accompanies them both on the charter and on the borough seal. On the charter in a scroll round the figure of Helena is the inscription: 'Sancta Elena nata fuit in Colcestria. Mater Constantini fuit et Sanctam Crucem invenit Elena.' (St. Helen was born in Colchester. Helen was the mother of Constantine and she found the Holy Cross.) There is plenty of other evidence to show that Helena was regarded as the patron Saint of Colchester, and that the legend of her birth in the town (she was reputed to be the daughter of King Coel Godebog) was devoutly believed, and was regarded as the great glory of Colchester: The story of Helen and of her discovery of relics, held in extraordinary veneration throughout Europe, had greatly impressed the imagination of all Christendom. Her chief exploits were the finding of the Holy Cross and of the three Holy Nails, and last, but not least, her discovery of the bodies of the three Holy Kings, otherwise the Magi, whose reputed remains are still magnificently enshrined in Cologne Cathedral. The arms of Colchester seem to have been clearly intended to represent the Holy Cross, the three Holy Nails, and (by means of the crowns) the Three Holy Kings, who are similarly indicated by three crowns in the City Arms of Cologne.

No one has hitherto tried to explain the markings in the centre of the 'cross,' dividing it into four portions.

The legends about the Invention of the Cross were well known to clerics and laity in all Christian countries, and were doubtless specially well-known in Colchester in medieval times, for Colchester swarmed with ecclesiastics. The cult of St. Helen was an inherited tradition; there was an important Guild of St. Helen in the borough, and also a church specially dedicated to her.

There are many versions of the story of her discovery of the Cross, and it is not necessary here to labour the slight points of difference between them and to show how embellishments and corruptions varied the original story. As accepted in England in the fifteenth century the story was

that the cross when discovered, was in four pieces—(1) the upright portion, (2) the cross beam which supported the arms, (3) the socket in which the base of the cross was fixed, and (4) the tablet or inscription board. Thus the actual cross consisted of two beams. The well-known 'Cursor Mundi,' of which numerous manuscript copies were dispersed throughout England, says that the mystic tree from which the cross was originally made (a tree whose curious legendary history is too long to be narrated here) was still in the temple at Jerusalem when Helena miraculously found the True Cross. It 'gave out a sweet smell' which indicated its connection with the cross. A Jew informed Helena of this fact and she prayed for guidance, and especially as to what she should do with the cross. Then (according to the 'Cursor Mundi') an angel was sent to her by our Lord. The angel bade her divide the cross into four parts—one was to be left in the temple at Jerusalem, one to be sent to Rome, one to Alexandria, and the fourth portion she was to take herself to her son, the Emperor Constantine.\*

This legend of the division of the cross seems to explain sufficiently the partition of the cross in the Colchester Borough Arms into four portions. In fact the designer has contrived to indicate the two legendary details (1) that the cross itself consisted of two separate beams; (2) that it was divided by Helena into four pieces.

These legends were at the time of the Reformation regarded as fantastic superstitions to be rooted out. So the reforming heralds omitted the nails. They chose to call the crowns 'ducal,' though these were of the form which had always been known as royal. They changed the tincture of the cross from green or 'proper' to argent (silver). One excuse for doing this was that it is not correct heraldically for colour to be placed upon colour. The original intention of the green colouring (as of the ragged projections) was presumably to indicate wood. By converting this tincture into metal (argent) the symbolism of the 'True Cross' was partially destroyed. To further destroy

\*Other versions state that it was the sacred tree in the temple—and not the cross itself—which Helena by divine guidance cut into four pieces and sent to the four quarters of the world. This seems to be the genuine legend, but that which appears in the 'Cursor Mundi' was prevalent in England and was no doubt generally accepted there. On the other hand it may be an open question whether the cross' in the arms was intended not for the 'True Cross' but for the 'Holy Tree.' It is more likely, having regard to the inscription on the old Borough seal and the inscription (already mentioned) on the Charter, that the cross was intended.



the resemblance the 'cross' was not described as such, but was made into two staves one placed over the other. By this time the heralds no doubt felt that they had purged the design of all the Romish allusiveness. They were not far wrong. For over three centuries the arms have been used in this mutilated condition, and though it was vaguely surmised by Morant and others that the crossed staves were in allusion to Helena, the rest of the symbolism has remained unsuspected and forgotten. Perhaps the time has now come when the ancient design might be safely restored to use.



ARMS OF NOTTINGHAM.

Identical with those authorised for Colchester in 1558 except that the staves forming the cross are 'vert' (green), instead of 'argent' (white or silver).

As to the resemblance between the arms of Nottingham and Colchester, it is only necessary to state that there are two ancient traditions which connect Nottingham with Coel and Helena. One of these alleges that Nottingham was the burial-place of Coilus, the British king. The other affirms that Lucius founded Nottingham and that he was son of Helena.

Finally it may be added that the proper way of representing the excrescences branching out from the horizontal staff in the arms is as shown in coloured Plate I. (Fig. 1), namely, pointing to the sinister side of the shield. The College of Arms has insisted on sending drawings to Colchester in which these projections are made pointing to the dexter. This error is founded on a drawing in Sir William Bysse's 'Visitation of Essex,' 1664—1668 (see p. 9), which contains other inaccuracies of drawing (referred to under the account of the

Maldon arms and seal). It is clear that the staff should be laid across the field of the shield in the same way as a sword or other charge of similar kind, pointing from the dexter side to the sinister. Moreover, this direction is correctly observed in drawing the horizontal staff of the cross in the arms on the Colchester Borough Charter of 1413.

### THE 'RAVEN' OF COLCHESTER.

In his 'History of Colchester' (1823), Thomas Cromwell remarks that 'the arms of the town, as a port, are a raven.'



This was not strictly correct. The real fact is that the most ancient of all the known seals of Colchester bears an excellent representation of a raven, depicted in somewhat heraldic fashion. The legend on the seal is: 'SIGILL. CUSTOD. PORT. COLECESTR.' ('Seal of the custodian of the Port of Colchester'—*i.e.* of the Portreeve). This seal (shown in the illustration) is appended to a deed of the year 1341. Apparently the seal was of a very much earlier date (11th or 12th century), and was in use in the time when the royal demesne of Colchester had no chartered rights, but was 'farmed' for the king, the chief officer being known as 'Custos Portus' or 'Portreeve.' That the seal remained in use long after the Charter of Richard I. was granted in 1189 is shown by its being appended to the deed of 1341, and also by an interesting Latin entry (probably earlier than 1413), in the Red Parch-



ment Book (or 'Oath Book') of Colchester. This entry, still extant, is as follows:—

Memorandum quod scriptura in sigillo de le Rayene sic continetur in bordare sigilli predicti :

Sigill. custod. port. Colecestr.

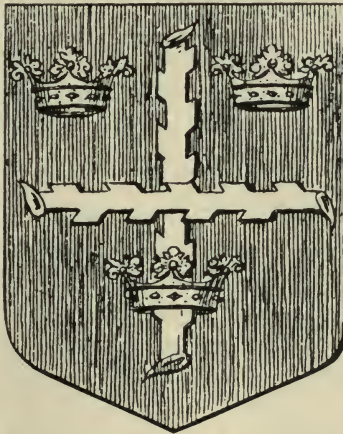
Et in alio sigillo communi sic continetur in bordar' :

Colecestrensis sum Burgi comune sigillum—super le Castelside.

*Translation* : Memorandum that the writing upon the seal of the Raven is thus contained in the border of the aforesaid seal : 'Seal of the Custodian of the Port of Colchester'. And on *the other common seal* is thus contained in the border : 'I am the common seal of the Borough of Colchester'—upon the Castle side of the seal.

At various times Colchester was under the government of the Danes, and the Raven is supposed to be an emblem of their rule.

At any rate, the Raven, placed upon a gold field, has now been used for many years as the flag of the Port of Colchester, and as the armorial badge of its modern Portreeve. The Raven is represented, as on the seal, facing to the sinister side. (See Fig. 3 on coloured plate.)



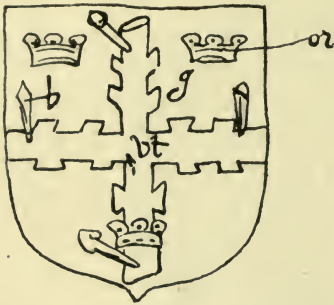
**Colchester.**

COLCHESTER BOROUGH ARMS.

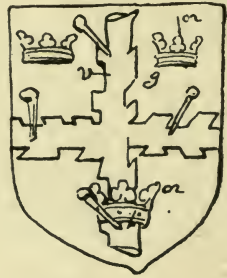
As drawn in Sir William Bysshe's 'Visitation of Essex,' in 1664, in the Mayoralty of William Moore. The horizontal staff is here made pointing to the dexter side of the shield, instead of to the sinister side in the ordinary (and correct) manner.

## POSTSCRIPT.

On folio 13 of 'Add. MS. 7098' (British Museum) is the drawing of the Colchester arms here reproduced. Mr. Metcalfe in his Preface to his *Visitations of Essex* (Harleian Society, 1878) states that this MS. and *Harl. MS. 1137* were the sources from whence he took his record of the Visitations 1552-1558. Yet he has no mention whatever of this remarkable drawing, and merely gives the 'official' coat of arms, which, it appears, the College preferred to record as the correct arms of Colchester.



FROM ADD. MS. 7098.



FROM HARL. MS. 1484,  
fo. 55. VISITATION OF  
ESSEX, 1558.

*Each of these drawings has a note stating that it represents 'The armes of the Towne of Colchester taken in the tyme of John Best and John Maynard, Baylyffes, the 26 August, 1558.'*

This 'trick' of the arms is of great interest. It shows a cross raguly vert (green) on a field gules (red) with two crowns or (gold) in chief and one in base encircling the lower portion of the cross. In each of the four extremities of the cross is a nail, marked 'b,' which means blue or azure. We should have expected the nails to be sable. No attempt is made to show any mortising of the cross in the centre. The drawing is corroborated by a 'trick' of the arms in *Harleian MS. 1484*, folio 55, also here reproduced. It is not an exact copy of the other picture, but is evidently from the same source. The tincture of the cross is again given as vert, and the drawing indicates a 'cross raguly' more obviously than the other trick, the projections on the cross beam being shown pointing left and right, whereas in the other MS. these projections seem to be pointing all to the sinister, as in the drawing on the 1413 Charter of Colchester (see Frontispiece

*E.R.* xxiii., 89). The Essex portion of this latter MS. (No. 1484) begins with a new numbering and is headed :

The vereitacion (*sic*) of William Harvy esqre als Clarencieux King of Armes begone at Sr Peter Meautys howse \*the tenth day of August an<sup>o</sup> 1558 in 5 & 6 yeere of the reignes of King Phillipe and Queene Mary.

The question of four nails as against three was a matter of ancient controversy. The early and authentic arms of Colchester on the Royal Charter of 1413 (as well as on the contemporary 15th century seal) show three nails, one under each of the three crowns. On the seal St. Helena is shown holding three nails with her right hand. Why four nails are shown in these drawings is a difficult question to answer.

The subject of the number of the Holy Nails is fully dealt with in *Legends of the Holy Rood*, edited by Richard Morris, LL.D., for the Early English Text Society (1871). Some of the old legends have illustrations, and two examples are given, one with four nails and the other with three. The version with four nails is older than that with three, and it may be that some Colchester ecclesiastic had been a stickler for the number of four. There is a considerable list of authorities on each side, but it must be confessed that the older authorities (and the more numerous) are in favour of four. In his *Lives of the Saints* the Rev. S. Baring Gould quotes Moses Khorene, the Armenian chronicler (between A.D. 450 and 477), as stating that Helena found the cross 'and five nails.'

In these old drawings of the Colchester Arms the fourth nail added at the top of the cross may be intended for the nail which held the inscription tablet, which also was one of the chief relics found by St. Helena.

'F.C.H.,' in '*Notes and Queries* (Series 3, vol. iii., p. 392), says it appears that before the 13th century four nails were shown on crucifixes and in representations of the crucifixion, but 'in consequence of some anterior discussions the feet from this period were placed over each other and attached by a single nail, it having been settled that three nails only were used.' Cimabue is said to have been the first painter to adopt this arrangement.

\*Sir Peter Meautys or Mewtis of West Ham, knighted by Henry VIII. He died Sept 8, 1562. His grandson, Sir Thos. Meautys, was secretary to Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam, and his widow, Lady Meautys, became the second wife of Sir Harbottle Grimston, Bt., M.P. or Colchester, Speaker of the House of Commons (1660) and Master of the Rolls (1650 to 1685).

The chief interest of these drawings is that they show that in August 1558 (the last year of Philip and Mary) the nails were regarded as part of the arms of Colchester. It would appear in fact that there is no pre-Elizabethan authority for the arms without the nails. It seems probable that the arms of Colchester were not definitely settled on 26th August 1558, when William Hervey visited Colchester. Possibly they were not recorded officially for some months later. On 17th November 1558, Queen Mary was succeeded by Queen Elizabeth, a fact which may have had something to do with the change in the arms of Colchester, and the omission of the 'Romish' emblems.

## II.—MALDON.

WHILST there is no doubt about the present rightful arms of the Borough of Maldon, quite a number of specious pretenders have made their appearance from time to time, all backed with a certain semblance of authority. The only official records at the College of Arms seem to be clear and consistent. The correct arms, which are shown in the coloured illustration, have been recognised in that form at any rate for three centuries. They are founded on the ancient heraldic seal of Maldon, which is known to have been in use in the fourteenth century. All the charges in that seal have been carefully embodied in the arms. The armorial bearings of Maldon may thus be regarded as being from 500 to 600 years old—perhaps even older. They proclaim the fact that Maldon was a royal borough, and remind us of its ancient glory as a port and of its immemorial duty to provide a ship, when called upon, for the service of King and country. Altogether the arms of Maldon have a distinguished pedigree, and the borough should take a pride in preserving them in their integrity.

By the courtesy of Mr. Charles H. Athill, Richmond Herald, I have been enabled to inspect the official records at the College of Arms, relating to Maldon. The entries are two in number, and I give them in full.

ARMS OF MALDON RECORDED BY JOHN RAVEN, RICHMOND  
HERALD, APRIL 9, 1614.

In the original folio volume of the Visitation of Essex, in 1614, preserved at the College of Arms there is given a careful drawing



of the arms 'in trick' (*i.e.*, in pen-and-ink outline), the tinctures or colours being indicated in the usual way in writing upon the drawing. There is no other written description, but the arms are, in every particular, as shown in the coloured plate accompanying this article. As it may be convenient to supply a description of the drawing in heraldic terms, I append one as follows :

Party per pale azure and argent, on the dexter side three lions passant gardant in pale or, and on the sinister on waves of the sea in base proper, a ship of one mast sable, the mast surmounted by a fleur de lis or, and from the masthead a pennon flotant to the sinister gules, the sail furled argent and from a turret at the stern a flagstaff erect, surmounted by a fleur de lis gold, and therefrom a banner to the sinister, charged 'azure three lions passant gardant in pale or.'

Beneath the drawing of the arms in the Visitation is this official record :

These Armes was allowed accordinge to the Blason there of in the tyme of the visitation of Essex taken a<sup>o</sup> dom. 1569 by Robt. Cooke Esquire, als Clarenciux Kinge of Armes. In witnes where of he hath sett to his hand & seale the 9th of Marche 1569.

Veed and sene by me John Raven, als Richmond Martiall to Clarenciux Kinge of Armes this 9th daye of Aprill, 1614.

EDWARD HASTLER AND CHRISTOPHER LYUNGE being Baliffes of the Towne of Malden.

Received for the towne fee of the sayde Bayliffs, 40s.  
More for the clarke, 5s.

#### VISITATION OF ESSEX BY SIR EDWARD BYSSHE, CLARENCEUX, 1664.

The other official record is in the volume containing the account of the Visitation of Essex in 1664. On this occasion it seems that the 'seals' of Maldon were inspected, and there is reason to believe that a drawing of them was made. Apparently it was intended to insert such drawing in the record, for a space is left blank for that purpose. The drawing, however, is omitted, and the entry begins :

The Com̄on Seales of the Towne & Borough of Maldon Incorporated by the name of Baylyffs, Aldermen, Head Burgesses and Comunalty Burgesses of the said Towne of Maldon and att this present Visitation made by Sr Edward Bysshe, Knt., Clarenceux King of Armes, was James Starling and Francis Gournay (Gent.) Bayliffs, Francis Bramston, Esqr., Barrester att Law, Recorder of the sayd Towne, Reuben Robinson & John Hart, Esqrs., Justices of the Peace wth in the said Borough, George Gifford, Richard Foulger, Abell Hawkes, Robert Jennings, jun., Phillip Ralling, Abell Hawkes, sen., Samuell Pond, Moses Whitaker, Christopher Jaggard, Thomas Hutt, John Barnes, John Liffin, John Cockrell, Jo. Browne,

Thomas Field, William Allein, Christopher Haith, Thomas Huggett, Eighteen in number, being called by the name of Eighteen head Burgesses, together with Samuell Plume, Henry Symonds, John Jennings & Thomas Horsenaile, Aldermen, and John Coe, Towne Clerke.

JAMES STARLINGE	REUBEN ROBINSON	} Justices
Bayliff	JOHN HART	

SAMUEL PLUME, Alderman

JOHN COE, Towne Clerk\*

On the other side of the same page is a drawing of the Arms of Maldon, in trick, without written description. The tinctures are again indicated by written notes on the drawing, and the arms are precisely the same, in every detail, as in the drawing in the Visitation of 1614, just alluded to. Beneath is written :

The Armes of the Towne of Malden granted by Sr Gilbert Dethick, Knt., Garter Principall King of Armes, and afterwards confirmed by Robert Cooke, Esq., Clarenceux King of Armes, under their hands and Seales & now entred in the Visitation made by Sr Edward Bysse Knt, Clarenceux King of Armes, 1664.

I was informed that there is no further record at the College of Arms respecting Sir Gilbert Dethick's original grant of Maldon's arms, or as to its date. Sir Gilbert Dethick became Garter King of Arms in 1550. He was knighted in 1551, and he remained Garter till his death in 1584. As will be seen later, there is evidence that in 1558 there were no settled arms of the borough, whilst (as will be explained) Sir Gilbert Dethick is said to have 'confirmed' certain arms of Maldon on 30th April 1562.

Before referring to other ancient records and to other versions of the Maldon Arms, it will be as well to consider the ancient seal of the borough illustrated on the next page.

The description of the seal is as follows :

OBVERSE. A ship with one mast on the waves of the sea in base. The ship has a high embattled turret or castle at each end, of early Gothic style. On that at the stern is a flagstaff with banner floating to sinister, charged with three lions passant gardant in pale. At the top of the mast, projecting into the border is a pennon floating to the dexter. The mast appears to be surmounted with a small fleur de lis, passing into the border of the seal. Legend: SIGILLVM COMMVNITATIS DE MALDON.

REVERSE. On a shield of early shape suspended by its guige three lions passant gardant in pale. Legend: SIGILLVM COMMVNITATIS DE MALDONE.

By good fortune I discovered the impression of the seal from which the two photographs were made, amongst some

\* These five names are all autographs signed in the book.



*Reverse.*



*Obverse.*

14TH CENTURY SEAL OF BOROUGH OF MALDON (ACTUAL SIZE.)



miscellaneous documents preserved in the archives of the Colchester Town Council. The seal is appended to a deed dated Saturday, 8th Sept. 42 Queen Elizabeth (*i.e.* 1600). The deed is a Power of Attorney given by the Bailiffs and Commonalty of Maldon in favour of Thomas Grittenour (?)\* in connection with certain legal transactions, of no special interest, between the two boroughs. The photographs were kindly made for me by Mr. Arthur G. Wright, curator of the Colchester Museum. As far as I know this is the only perfect impression of the old seal in existence. The only impression at Maldon is attached to a transcript of the Maldon Borough Charter of 10th Jan. 1378, and this impression is now very imperfect, all the legend having gone, and only the lions and part of the ship being visible. What is left is sufficient to prove with absolute certainty that the impression is from the seal which was used on 8th Sept. 1600.

The transcript of the 1378 charter is in contemporary handwriting, and is followed by a Latin inscription stating that it was given by the Burgesses (*i.e.* the Commonalty) of Maldon, under their common seal, 'to our beloved and faithful co-burgess John Pere,' with a request, on his behalf, that no person should offer him any injury or annoyance (*vexacionem*) or molestation (*perturbacionem*) contrary to the liberties of the charter. There is no date to this inscription, but on searching the Maldon Borough records I found, in the oldest record of all now preserved, that at a meeting of the Maldon commonalty on Friday after the Epiphany in 7 Richard II. (*i.e.* Jan. 1384) the Constables (*constabularii*) of Maldon were John Page and John Pere.

A cast of this imperfect impression of the seal is in the Colchester Museum, and the British Museum appears to have a somewhat similar impression, with the legend missing. The remains of the seal at Maldon enable us to say that the seal, of which photographs are given, appended to the deed of 8th Sept. 1600, was in use about the year 1378. The design and style of lettering corroborate this evidence, and would indeed justify us in assigning the seal to a somewhat earlier date.

From 1189 to 1340 the royal arms of England were simply the three lions passant gardant, as shown on the seal. After 1340 they were quartered with the lilies (*semée de fleurs de lis*) of

\*This name was filled in with a different ink which has faded so much as to make it difficult to decipher with certainty.

France. A careful inspection of the original impression of the seal reveals a small fleur de lis at the top of the mast of the ship. It may be, therefore, that the seal is subsequent to 1340, when Edward III. claimed to be king of France as well as of England. It is not possible to be sure whether or not there is a fleur de lis on the top of the flagstaff of the ship. The original of the seal is not in existence.

It will be seen that the correct arms of Maldon are formed by 'impaling' in one shield the two designs on the reverse and obverse of the seal. The three lions in the royal arms were gold on a red field. Naturally the heralds would demur to the use of the royal arms, impaled or otherwise, without any differentiation. Therefore the field was made blue (azure) instead of red (gules), and this variation is repeated on the banner of the ship. The two gold fleurs de lis, introduced in the ship, on the mast and the flagstaff may be surmised to indicate France.\* The pennon, which on the seal floats in an opposite direction from the banner, was made to float in the same direction.

As already mentioned, Maldon no doubt owed the honour of displaying the royal arms on its seal to the fact that it was a royal town. It may be wondered that even then the borough should have been allowed a seal of which one side might almost be taken for the King's own seal. The distinction, however, was not exceptional. The three lions of England, as in the Maldon seal, are found also on the old seals of Appleby, New Romney, Blandford, Faversham, Hereford (with a bordure), Stockbridge, Stamford, and possibly other towns.

As to the royal associations of Maldon, Mr. Horace Round, LL.D., in his account of the Domesday Survey in the *Victoria History of Essex* (vol. i, p. 386), says that 'the urban portion of Maldon seems to have been wholly the King's.' Like Colchester, Maldon had a mint and paid rent to the king for the privilege.

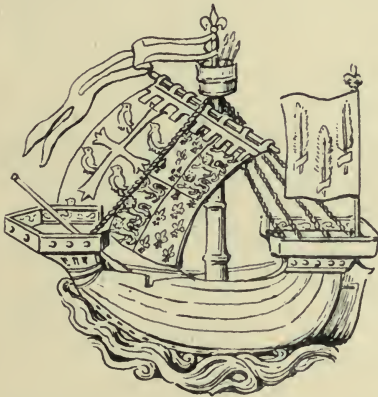
Mr. Round further comments on the fact that Suain, who held an estate in Maldon, and paid to the King 'four shillings of customary due,' also 'shared with the other burgesses in finding a horse for the host, and towards making a ship.' This ancient

\*In his 'History of Essex' (1740) Nathanael Salmon states that 'in the N. window of All Saints Church, Maldon, are some remains of Arms of King Edmond and Edward the Confessor and of Norman Princes and Nobles, with some descriptions in old French for whom they were. Among the rest was St. Lovys, Roy de France, with Semé de Lis, their ancient bearing. The meaning of these seems to have been a direction for some chantry priest to mention these particularly in his offices, according to the intention of a founder or benefactor.'

duty of providing a ship is mentioned in the Charter granted to Maldon by Henry II. (c. 1171)—the earliest charter granted to any Essex borough—the burgesses being bound to provide one ship either for the personal use of the king, or for service in the fleet (in exercitu) for forty days, at their own cost, when they were specially summoned by the king's letters to provide it.

Having regard to the royal arms on the banner and the fleur de lis on the mast, this ship is presumably intended to be indicated on the seal. It may be remarked, however, that similar one-masted vessels appear on a great many other ancient seals of port towns, in some cases even where there seems to have been no express obligation to find a ship for the King's use. With regard to these ships on town seals it is noteworthy that in every case there is some

differentiation, so that the ships are never precisely alike. In no other town seal that I am aware of is the fleur de lis used to surmount a mast or flagstaff. The Rev. Henry L. Elliot has drawn my attention to the seal of Edward Plantagenet, Earl of Rutland, Lord High Admiral (son of Edmund of Langley, Duke of York and grandson of Edward III.). Here there is a ship somewhat similar to the Maldon ship, ensigned both on mast and



PART OF SEAL OF EDWARD, EARL OF  
RUTLAND, LORD HIGH ADMIRAL  
(Circa 1400).

flagstaff with a fleur de lis. The seal dates from about 1400.

This is a favourable opportunity for mentioning the fine old Admiralty Seal of Maldon, shown in the frontispiece.\* This seal is about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter. The original seal has disappeared, and the photograph is taken from a solitary impression preserved with great care—as it deserves to be—by the Maldon corporation. Maldon has a right to be proud of it. It is one

\*I am indebted to the Mayor of Maldon (Alderman H. A. Krohn, D.L., J.P.) for facilities in inspecting the records of Maldon, and for allowing me to photograph this seal.

of the very finest seals of its kind, and its size and elaborate and costly design show that Maldon must have been regarded as of great consequence as a centre of admiralty jurisdiction.

The legend is: SIGILLVM OFFICII ADMIRALLITATIS ANGLIE INFRA PRECI[NC]TV[M] VIL[L]E DE MALDON. The arms on the mainsail (Modern France and England quarterly) show that the seal must be later than 1405. The workmanship and lettering appear to be of the 15th or 16th century. Upon the pennon on the main mast is the cross of St. George, the national emblem of England. On the mizzen mast pennon is a fleur de lis; on the foremost pennon possibly a rose or six-foil. At the prow and at the stern is shown a demi-lion rampant holding in each case a banner. That in the prow seems to be charged with the three lions passant gardant of England. On the shield under the mainsail, occupying the side of the war-ship, the three lions are again displayed. The four small escutcheons on the bulwarks bear: (1) cross of St. George, (2) a fleur de lis, (3) cross of St. George, (4) a six-foil (? intended for a rose).

#### CORRUPT VERSIONS OF MALDON ARMS.

Before considering the modern seal of Maldon it is necessary to refer to the various shields which have been represented as the borough arms.

*Additional MS.* 7098 at the British Museum is a folio volume which has this title, in 16th century writing:

' Visitation of Essex from fol. 1 to fol. 34; Surry from fol. 34 to fol. 80; Southton [i.e. Hampshire] from fol. 80 to thend.

All have some of other Counties intermixed

Clarenciux .

Hawley 6 Ed. 6.'

This is the MS. from which (as we are told in the Preface) the so-called ' Visitation of Essex, 1552,' published by the Harleian Society in 1878 under the editorship of Walter C. Metcalfe, F.S.A., was compiled. With regard to the arms of Maldon, that publication is grievously slipshod and misleading. The following is the statement as there printed:

MALDON. THE ARMES PRETENSTED OF THE BOROWE TOWNE OF MALDON.

ARMS (2 shields) 1. Three lions passant regardant.

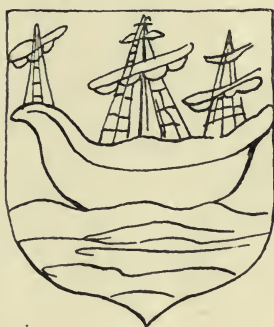
2. Same as in visitation of 1612.

Taken in the tyme of Rychd Bret and Edward Coker Bayliffes the xxvij of August in A<sup>o</sup>. 1558 and respyted till Crystemas for the verification of the same.



The entry as it really appears in the manuscript (on fo : 14) is :

THE ARMES PRETENSED OF THE BOROWE TOWNE OF MALDON.



Taken in the tyme of Rychd Bret & Edward Coker Bayliffs the xxvij of August in A°. 1558 and respyted tyll Crystmas for the verifacoon of the same.

It may be observed that the word 'pretensed' (wrongly printed 'pretensted' in the Harleian Society's version) is a perfectly good old English form of 'pretended,' and simply means 'advanced,' 'put forward,' or 'intended.'

The manuscript in which these 'armes pretensed' appears is clearly about contemporary with 1558 and is probably a copy\*—or else the original—of the notes taken by William Hervey, Clarenceux, and his assistants, on their visit to Maldon on 27th August 1558 (the day after they had visited Colchester). It would seem that Maldon had no borough arms at that time—except its heraldic seal—and that the heralds made a note of two shields with a view to incorporating the obverse and reverse of the seal, of which no doubt they would take a careful impression away. Obviously the first thing that would occur to a herald, under such circumstances, would be that the royal arms of England must be varied in some way or other before being allowed to form part of the borough shield. There are plenty of ways of doing this. William Hervey, or one of his assistants, seems to have thought that a simple plan would be to make the lions regardant instead of gardant. This idea is therefore jotted down in the first shield as a suggestion. In the other shield was drawn a three-masted ship, which is not so easy to

\*The British Museum catalogue describes it as a 'contemporary copy.'

explain or excuse. Perhaps it was thought enough to draw any sort of ship in the second shield as a suggestion for the arms. The roughness of the drawing implies that it was not thought necessary to portray the ship with exactitude, or to attempt a detailed copy of the ship on the seal. We may be sure that the old Admiralty seal of Maldon, where the ship has three masts, was in evidence. Anyhow it is quite clear that the arms were not to be settled that day, but were to be 'respyted' (adjourned) for settlement at Christmas. William Hervey could not foresee that between 27th Aug. 1558 and the following 25th Dec. two rather tremendous events would occur—the death of Queen Mary and the accession of Queen Elizabeth. Those events took place on Nov. 17. They must have made the heralds uncommonly busy, and it may be surmised that the final settlement of the Maldon arms did not take place so soon as was intended. William Hervey died in 1567, and in March 1569-70, Robert Cook, who succeeded him as Clarenceux, seems to have visited Maldon. The arms, however, appear to have been 'confirmed' by Sir Gilbert Dethick, Garter, on 30th April 1562, but in a strange and unacceptable form. In fact there is some mystery as to what Sir Gilbert Dethick really did settle. It is a rather confusing story.

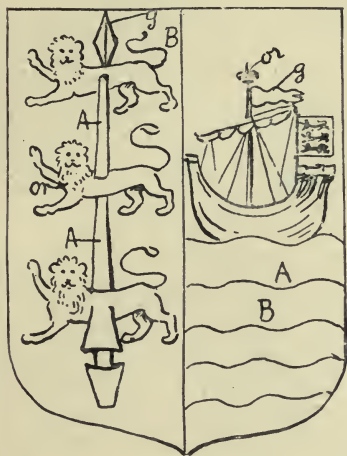
In '*Additional MS. 16940*,' in the British Museum, is a volume described in the catalogue as a 16th century MS. On folio 80 is this strange entry, without any drawing :

The Armes of the Towne of Maldon berith (b) 3 Lyons passant gardant (or) all thrust thorowe with a spere the staff (ar) the hed upwards (g) the second in pale with the Lyons berith wave (ar and b) a ship sable with a squar baner at the end of the ship with the Armes of England with a flag on the tope (g) the sayles tied up in the tope of all a flower de lice (or).

One would have been inclined to pass by this incredible coat as the nightmare of some eccentric and irresponsible herald, but for certain unexpected corroboration. Folios 48 to 81 of *Harl. MS. 2198* (already quoted) claim to contain arms noted at 'The Visitation of Essex, 1634.' Here under the heading 'ye Armes of ye Towne of Malden,' and without any further comment, is this staggering drawing.

The drawing is, of course, a representation of the strange coat described in *MS. 16940*. That the royal lions of England should be skewered through in this unpleasant fashion is an

unaccountable heraldic freak. Possibly no offence was intended, but if the arms had



occurred ten or twenty years later, one might have hazarded a guess that some stern Parliamentarian was venting republican contumely on the royal beasts.

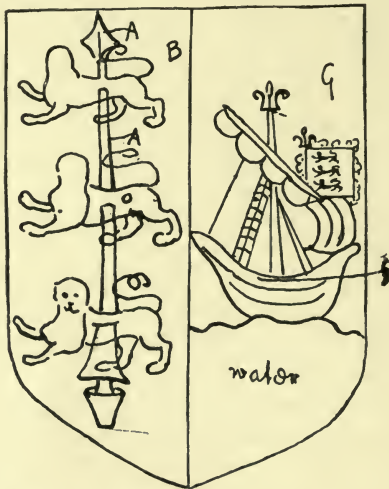
But, strange to say, there is good reason to believe that the Arms of Maldon were really authorised in this curious form by Sir Gilbert Dethick, Garter, on 30th April 1562. It is true that at the College of Arms there is (as I was informed) no record of such a coat, but it is significant that there is also no definite record of what Sir Gilbert Dethick granted, or of

when he granted it, except Sir E. Bysshe's suspiciously vague declaration in 1664. At any rate several other manuscripts at the British Museum declare positively that Sir Gilbert Dethick 'confirmed' these extraordinary armorial bearings. In each case a picture in trick is given, obviously copied from the same source. *Harl. MS.* 5847 is a longish list of 'Sr. Gilbert Dethicks Grants, etc.' I give a facsimile of the trick drawing (on folio 55 of this MS.) and of the accompanying statement, which is in the writing of the early part of the 17th Century:—'Malden Corporation. These Armes were Conf: to ye towne and Corporation of Malden in Essex ye 30th of Aprill 1562.' A corroborating manuscript is *Aad. MS.* 12454, which has on its title page 'Deithickes Guiftes' and a note stating that the volume (56 folios) 'contains the Grants and Confirmations of Sir Gilbert Dethick, Knight, Garter Principal King of Arms, from 1549 to 1584.' Here again (on folio 9) is a drawing of the arms of 'Malden Corporation,' with the lions thrust through with a spear. The arms depicted are:

Azure, three lions passant guardant in pale or, all thrust through with a spear argent, impaling gules, on water proper a ship of one mast sable, sail furred, the mast surmounted with a fleur de lis or, on a banner erect

at the stern end rising over a canopied cabin, a square banner floating to sinister bearing azure three lions passant gardant in pale or, the flag-staff surmounted by a fleur de lis (presumably or) and a fleur de lis issuant from each corner of the sinister side of the banner, also a fleur de lis from the centre of sinister side of the banner and another from centre of lower edge.

At the side is a note stating that 'these arms were Confirmed unto ye towne and Corporation of Malden in Essex, Aprill ye 30th in ye 4th year of Queene Elizabeth (1562) by Sr. Gilbert Dethicke.' There are over 200 coats of arms in this MS.



Malden Corporation  
 These arms were Conf: to y<sup>e</sup> towne  
 Corporation of Malden in Essex  
 y<sup>e</sup> 30<sup>th</sup> of Aprill 1562

FROM HARL. MS. 5847, FO. 55.

In *Egerton MS.* 1073 (fo. 11 d) the same arms, with the lions thrust through, again appear. The tinctures of the impaled portion of the shield are different, the field being argent and a pennon gules appearing on the mast. Moreover the banner on the ship bears the arms of France (modern)



quartered with England (no tinctures mentioned). This MS. is evidently of the 17th century.

*Stowe MS.* 703. is a 16th Century collection of Arms, chiefly granted by Sir Gilbert Dethick. On folio 15 is a drawing of the Arms almost exactly as in *Harl. MS.* 5847. The inscription accompanying the drawing reads :

These Armes were confirmed by Sir G. D. kt. als Garter Kinge of Armes to the Towne and corporation of Malden in Essex the xxxth day of Aprill A<sup>o</sup> 4<sup>o</sup> Eliza Anno Dni. 1562.

Thus in six different manuscripts, dating from about 1570 to after 1634, there is the persistent record of these arms, and in three they are attributed, with circumstantial evidence of date, to Sir Gilbert Dethick, head of the College of Arms. In the face of all this testimony I can only suppose that he really did grant this coat and that he thought this treatment of the lions of England was a dignified way of 'differentiating.' It would seem by the indubitable official record of 1614 that the College of Arms then (if not before) superseded the coat by the arms recorded and tricked by John Raven, who further declared that Robert Cook, Clarenceux, had already 'allowed' the arms on 9th March 1569. Possibly the College had cancelled all previous records.

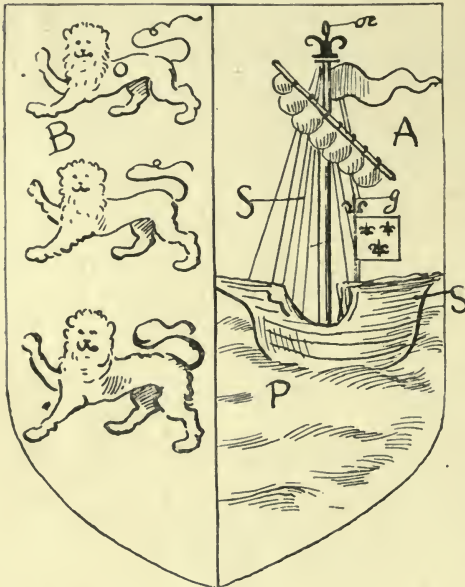
To add to the confusion, there is one other record which tells a different story. *Harl. MS.* 1116 (fo. 88) which has a collection of arms mostly granted by Sir Gilbert Dethick, and which also has 'August 1631' at the beginning, contains this entry :

*Corporacon of Malden in Essex*—The Armes to the use of the towne and Corporacon of Malden, Essex, that is to say per pale b [blue] and ar [argent], on the fyrst iij. Lyons passant regardant or armed and langed g [gules] and on the second, the point water, a Croye wt. mastes takelynge and caben the proper color, on the Cabben a banner of the armes of the fyrst half, as more playnly apereth depicted in the margent.  
per garter Dethyke.

The shield in the margin is, however, left blank. 'Garter Dethyke' may possibly mean Sir William Dethick (son of Sir Gilbert), Garter 1586 to 1605.

A curious version of the arms appears in *Harleian MS.* 2198, of which folios 12 to 46 contain a copy, apparently contemporary, of the Visitation of Essex, in 1612, by John Raven.

On folio 18 (d.) appears the drawing here shown. Below is written :



FROM HARL. MS. 2198 FO. 18 (DORSO).

These armes was allowed in the Visitation of Essex taken in a<sup>o</sup> 1569 by Robert Cook als Claren. Kinge of armes in Wittness whereof he hath set to his hand and Seale the 9th of March 1569. vewed and seenne by John Raven esqr. als. Richmond Martiall to Will Camden Clarenceux King of armes, the 9 of aprill a<sup>o</sup> 1614 Edward Hasler & Cristopher Lyvinge beinge Bayliffes of the towne of Maulden.

Here the lions are duly shown passant gardant or on a field azure, and the ship is practically in conformity with the ship tricked in the official record of John Raven's

visit to Maldon, with the exception that the tincture of the pennon (gules) and the tincture of the furled sail (argent) are omitted, whilst one fleur de lis (on the flagstaff) is made gules, and, most notable of all, three fleurs de lis (the arms of France) are placed on the banner of the ship instead of the three lions (the arms of England). The drawing is probably a blundering copy.

One other ancient variant of the arms deserves mention, because it was accepted by Nathanael Salmon in his *History of Essex* (1740), and again by Morant in 1760. Morant seems to have merely copied Salmon,\* and Salmon seems to have copied a record which is found in a 17th century Harleian MS. No. 887, folio 10 d., professedly a copy of the Visitation of 1612.

MALDON TOWNE. Azure 3 Lyons passant gardant or armed and langued Gules Empaled with Argent a ship in Ruffe under Saile and flags wth tacklings Sable. Confirmed by Robert Cooke, Clar. Roy D'Armes 9 Martij 1569.

\* The arms of this Borough are Azure three lyons passant gardant Or, armed and langued Gules, with Argent, a Ship under sail and Flags with the Tacklings Sable.—N. SALMON, 'Hist. Essex' 1740.

'In ruffe' is a heraldic term for 'in full course,' and is used of a ship in full sail. 'Armed and langued gules' means of course that the lions have claws and tongues depicted in red colouring. This is an embellishment in which heraldic artists have often considered themselves licensed to indulge without any special direction. There is a vagueness about the description of the ship, and it is curious that Salmon and Morant should have accepted it. Apparently flags sails and all are black (sable), and there is no sea, so that this mysterious pirate ship is sailing, 'in full course,' through the argent field. The blazon may be dismissed as possessing no possible validity.

We come now to quite a modern variant, which has caused a good deal of mystification. It is described and figured in the late Mr. E. A. Fitch's excellent work, *Maldon and the River Blackwater* (pages 17 and 18). Mr. Fitch there gives (and pictures) the arms as described in the Harleian Society's *Visitations of Essex* (edited by Walter C. Metcalfe, F.S.A., 1878). He quotes verbatim Mr. Metcalfe's description :

'Gules, 3 lions rampant or, impaling argent a ship sable, with a square banner in the end of the ship, with the Arms of England, with a flag on the top gules, the sails tied up and on the top of all a fleur de lis or.'

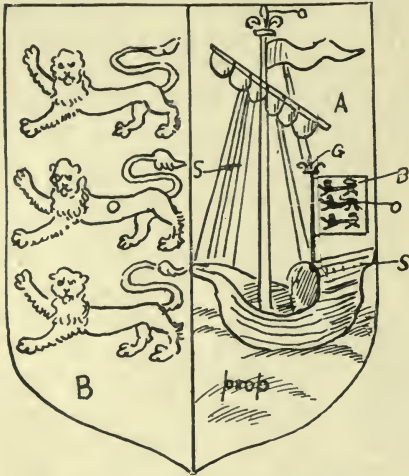


ARMS AS ERRONEOUSLY DESCRIBED IN HARLEIAN SOCIETY'S "VISITATION OF ESSEX, 1612" (1878).

careless and inexcusable. Mr. Metcalfe distinctly states that he took the arms which he gives under the Visitation of Essex 1612, from *Harleian MS. 6065*, and adds: 'The whole of this

Mr. Fitch calls this 'the older form of the Arms.' As a matter of fact it is the very latest form of the arms on record. It is in fact the invention of Mr. Metcalfe himself. I have already referred to one blundering and misleading record by Mr. Metcalfe in his incorrect version of the 'Arms pretended' of 27th August 1558. His transcript of the record of the Visitation of 1612, as far as the Maldon arms are concerned, is even more

MS. is given.' On inspecting the MS. I find that on folio 39



TRICK OF MALDON ARMS  
FROM HARL. MS. 6065  
(VISITATION OF ESSEX, 1612.)

there is a trick of the Maldon arms as here shown. It will be seen that there are no lions rampant on a field gules. It will also be seen that Mr. Metcalfe's description of the impaled ship is wrong in many particulars. He omits to mention the waves 'proper'; he omits to mention the fleur de lis (here given as 'gules') on top of the flagstaff; and he describes the arms on the banner as the 'arms of England,' whereas they are plainly marked as three lions passant guardant in pale or, on an azure field. In Mr. Metcalfe's professed transcript of the written matter accompanying the trick there are half a dozen blunders. There is no other reference to the Maldon arms in this MS., and in no other MS. is there any allusion to three lions rampant forming part of the Maldon Arms. It is very much to be regretted that such gross errors should have appeared in an authoritative publication issued by the Harleian Society. It is time that these 'ghost' arms of Maldon should be finally laid. They never had any genuine existence.

### THE MODERN SEAL OF MALDON.

There is yet another pseudo-coat of Maldon, and it is so connected with the modern seal of the borough that the two may be considered together. The modern seal dates from 1682, when it was given to the borough by William Vernon, of Beeleigh Abbey, who, according to Mr. Fitch, was the last of the Vernons of Beeleigh. On the side of the seal is the inscription:

*Esse sui hoc voluit monumentum et pignus amoris.  
Quo corroborante immunitates firmissime maneant. W.V. 1682.*





ARMS OF THE BOROUGH OF MALDON  
as recorded at the College of Arms, 1614 and 1664



ADMIRALTY SEAL OF MALDON  
(15th or 16th Century).







OBVERSE. On waves of the sea a ship of one mast with sail furl'd. The mast is surmounted by a fleur de lis which projects into the border. At the stern is an embattled castle or turret on which is a flagstaff also surmounted with a fleur de lis; from the flagstaff to the sinister a banner charged with three lions passant gardant in pale. (No pennon on mast.) Legend: SIGILLVM COMMVNE CORP[ORATIONIS] VILLE DE MALDON.



REVERSE. On a shield (without guige) three lions passant regardant in pale. Legend as on obverse.

MODERN SEAL OF MALDON (1682) (ACTUAL SIZE).

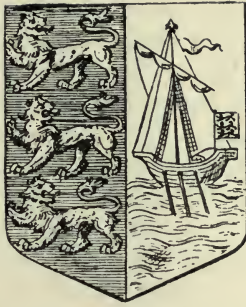
*Translation* : W.V. desired this to be a memorial of himself and a token of affection, by which seal confirming them may the privileges [of the borough] remain ever secure. (The first line in the Latin is a hexameter.)

Compared with the old seal, the design and workmanship are poor. The most noticeable variation is that the lions on the reverse are made passant regardant instead of passant gardant. It has already been mentioned that in a MS. professing to be a record of the 1558 visit to Maldon by William Hervey, Clarenceux, a shield bearing three lions passant regardant was 'pretensed,' that is, put forward tentatively as a suggestion for the arms of Maldon. Nothing more is heard of this suggestion (excepting in one MS. of about 1631 already quoted, viz. *Harl. MS.* 1116), till Sir Edward Bysshe's Visitation in 1664. Even then there is nothing at all in the official record of his Visitation, where the lions are drawn passant gardant. But it appears that in what professes to be a 'copy' of that Visitation, by John Warburton, Somerset Herald from 1720 to 1759, there were drawings of both the seal and of the arms of Maldon with lions in each case drawn as regardant instead of gardant. In 1888 Mr. J. J. Howard, LL.D., published a copy of this Warburton manuscript. In it an exact transcript is given of the entry which appears in the official 1664 record as already printed on pages 56-7. There is scarcely any variation even in spelling. Instead of the drawing (in trick) which appears in the official entry, there is this verbal description of the arms, which I assume, judging by the modern spelling, is by the editor, Dr. J. J. Howard :

ARMS : Azure, three lions passant-guardant in pale or ; impaling, Argent, on waves of the sea an ancient galley sable, pennon gules, and on a flag at the stern azure, three lions passant-guardant in pale or.

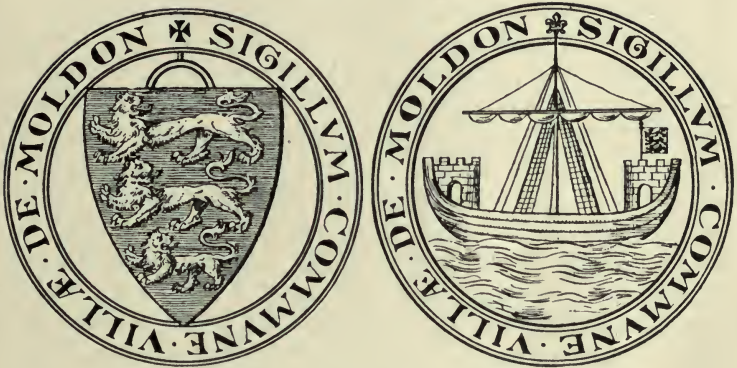
[This is an incomplete description of the trick in the official record, as the tincture of the waves is omitted, there is no mention of the sail furled argent, and the fleurs de lis or, on the top of mast and flagstaff, are also unrecorded.]

Strange to say, in contradiction of the above description, Dr. Howard gives two illustrations, derived presumably from the Warburton MS. In both of these pictures it will be seen that the lions are portrayed as regardant instead of gardant. Dr. Howard does not vouchsafe any comment or explanation.



SPURIOUS ARMS OF MALDON.

From Dr. Howard's Edition (1888)  
of 'Visitation of Essex 1664.'



SEAL OF MALDON.

FROM DR. HOWARD'S EDITION (1888) OF 'VISITATION OF ESSEX,  
1664.'

These drawings are very perplexing, and one would like to know (1) whether they are identical with drawings given in Warburton's MS. ; and (2) where, if so, Warburton's MS. and the drawings originated. The picture of the seal seems to be partly copied from the ancient seal, which was in use, as we know, up to the year 1600. But the legend in the borders is quite unaccountable. The mis-spelt 'Moldon' (a quite unknown form of the name) and the later form 'Villæ' instead of the archaic 'Ville,' as well as the style of lettering, suggest that the legend was a concoction. There is the possible explanation that this is a drawing of some fresh seal (of which no impression has ever been



known) substituted between 1600 and 1664. Apparently Sir Edward Bysshe meant to include a drawing of the 'Common Seales' of Maldon in his Visitation Record, for he left a space for such drawing, as already intimated. Whether that drawing was to have been a design for a new seal or a copy of the old seal cannot be said. It seems not unlikely that during the Commonwealth period the old seal with the royal arms may have disappeared, and in that case perhaps some drawing (omitted in the official record) was made by Sir Edward Bysshe's assistant or clerk, as a design for a new seal. But why, in such case, the lions should have been made 'regardant' instead of 'gardant,' and why even in the drawing of the Arms they should be so represented, are mysteries difficult to solve.\*

At any rate it seems probable that the seal made for William Vernon in 1682 was based either on a drawing similar to this picture of the seal, or on an actual seal from which this drawing was copied. It is true that in the engraved seal of 1682 the word 'CORP.' has been introduced into the legend, between 'COMMUNE' and 'VILLÆ,' but the ship on the seal is very like the ship in the drawing. Compare the fleur de lis in the border, and the omission of the pennon.

Presumably, then, the unfortunate mistake of changing the lions gardant into regardant, on the seal of 1682, was due either to some such drawing as that reproduced by Dr. Howard being left at Maldon or filed as part of the Visitation Record; or there must have been an erroneous seal already in existence, and in use at some period between 1600 and 1682. The latter supposition is rather improbable.

The question is not of very great consequence. That the present seal was a mistake seems undeniable. How it happened does not matter very much. The Rev. Henry L. Elliot, of Gosfield, who has most kindly rendered me great assistance in compiling this article, and who has placed all his records and his exceptional knowledge freely at my service, remarks, in a

\*The Rev. Henry L. Elliot is of opinion that the alteration of the lions from 'passant gardant' to 'passant regardant,' was probably made by Sir E. Bysshe some years before it was recorded in his visitation. 'The reason of the change' (writes Mr Elliot) 'may have been that the outlines of the older charges bore too close a resemblance to the arms of the King who had lately been beheaded.' Mr. Elliot also thinks that Bysshe's expression 'entered' (in his official record of the arms) presumably does not convey the same meaning as 'approved.' 'Bysshe no doubt intended the change to be permanent, but when later heralds were called upon to give a docket of the Maldon Arms, they seem to have felt that Bysshe had no sufficient authority to alter the coat formally granted by Dethick and subsequently confirmed by officers of the College of Arms.'



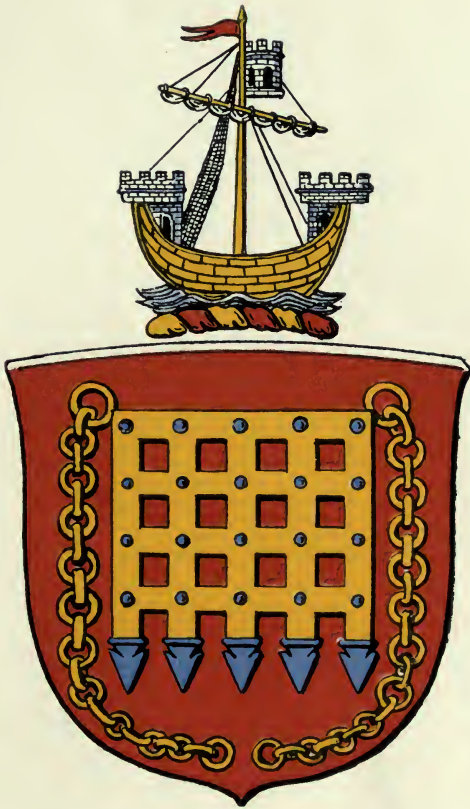
note which he sent me on this subject, that 'if a new seal were now to be made, it is to be hoped that the die-sinker would receive instructions to reproduce the ancient design and thus once again bring the charges on the seal into agreement with those on the arms of the borough.'

I am indebted to the Editor of the *Essex Review* (Miss C. Fell Smith) for valuable help in consulting and transcribing MSS. at the British Museum, and for several tracings which have been reproduced as illustrations of this article.

### III.—HARWICH.

THE Borough of Harwich, which includes Dovercourt, was first incorporated in 1318, by Edward II., 'through the procurement,' says Morant, 'of his brother Thomas de Brotherton, Lord of Harwich.' Thomas of Brotherton, Earl of Norfolk and Marshal of England, was half-brother of Edward II., and married, as his first wife, according to the *D.N.B.*, Alice, daughter of Sir Roger Hales, of Harwich. Morant, however, states that Mistress Bridget Hales, who made this astonishingly good match, was the daughter of 'Sir Edward Hayls, of Harwich.' In any case the manor of Dovercourt and Harwich did not come to Thomas of Brotherton through this marriage. It was part of the estates of Roger Bigod, escheated to the crown about 1306, and given to Thomas of Brotherton on 16th December, 1313, by Edward II.

From 1318, the government of Harwich was carried on by a Portreeve and other officers, until 18th April 1604, when James I. granted the town a charter, which gave it the right to appoint a mayor from year to year. This charter, as translated from the Latin by order of the Harwich Corporation, in 1797, and printed in London by W. Bulmer and Co. in 1798, provided 'that the Mayor and Burgesses of the Borough aforesaid, for ever, may have a Common Seal, to serve for executing whatsoever their Causes and Affairs, and of their Successors; and that it may well be lawful, and shall be lawful, for the same Mayor and Burgesses, and their Successors, that Seal, at their Pleasure, from Time to Time to break, change, and anew to make, as to them shall seem better to be done and to be.' By the way, that very remarkable personage, Sir Edward Coke, mortal enemy of Francis Bacon, terror of James I., and afterwards of Charles I., was by this charter appointed the first Recorder of Harwich. It has been the lot of Harwich to have a transitory connection with an extraordinary variety of famous and distinguished persons.



ARMS OF THE BOROUGH OF HARWICH.



SEAL OF THE  
BOROUGH OF HARWICH.



It may be assumed that the Portreeves of Harwich had used a seal of office, but all traces of any seal of the borough earlier than the one now in use (figured in the frontispiece plate) are lost. The modern seal, identical with the arms of the borough, bears the device of a portcullis. The earliest evidence that I have been able to trace, of the use of the portcullis as the emblem of the borough, dates from 1669 or 1670. Probably that was about the date when the arms were first used or granted.

There is no mention of any arms of Harwich in the Visitation of Essex of 1664, though Colchester, Maldon and Saffron Walden are all referred to in that record. Nor does any earlier Visitation allude to the borough. In the British Museum there are many manuscripts of the 16th and 17th centuries containing lists of the arms of cities and boroughs. In none of these does Harwich appear. It is probable that the Portreeves of Harwich, from 1318 onwards, had an official seal, and it seems likely that some sort of seal, as authorised by the charter of 1604, was used by the Corporation. But all traces of these earlier seals have disappeared. All that can be said is that about the year 1669 the present arms of Harwich appeared upon the borough mace.

A research amongst the corporation records enables me to fix this date. On 9th February 1668 (*i.e.* 1669 in modern style), it was 'agreed and resolved' at an assembly of the mayor, aldermen and head burgesses of the town to purchase 'at their own proper costs and charges,' that is to say by subscription amongst themselves, 'one large mase.' The record gives a full list of the subscribers, and it appears that the mace cost between £35 and £36, a goodly sum in those days. This mace is still in use. It has upon it the arms of Charles II., with his grandfather's, James I.'s, motto, *Beati pacifici*. In fact the arms are probably meant to be those of James I. as granter of the Charter of 1604, his arms being identical with those of Charles II. There is no decipherable hall-mark, but the maker's initials 'W. H.' are stamped in several places. Silver plate made by 'W. H.' of the year 1662 is on record, but the exact name of this maker is unknown. On the upper part of the mace, the portcullis is shown in bold relief, with the word HARWICH over it, much as it appears in the seal. The portcullis is repeated in three other places on the mace.

It is worthy of note that about two years previously Charles



II., with his brother, the Duke of York, and with the Duke of Monmouth and a number of other peers and notabilities, visited Harwich. During their stay they attended service at Harwich church, when the King's chaplain preached. All this is duly recorded in the corporation books. It is probable that the want of a borough mace on this great occasion was felt by the Harwich Corporation, and it may be that when they made good this deficiency in February 1669, they also adopted armorial bearings for the borough.

The heraldic description of the arms of Harwich, as now recognised by the heralds, is as follows:—

*Gules*, a portcullis with chains pendent or; nailed and pointed azure.

*Crest.* An antique ship with one mast, or, in water proper; on the head and stern towers argent, and a third tower fixed near the top of the mast on the sinister side; the sail furled and on the mast head a split pennon floatant gules.

These arms are shown in colour in the plate.

The portcullis was an emblem and favourite badge of the Tudors. Henry VII. and Henry VIII. especially favoured the 'portcullis gold.' They derived this badge from the Beauforts, Dukes of Somerset, descendants of John of Gaunt, 'time-honoured Lancaster.' From this line are descended the present Fitz-Roy Somersets, Dukes of Beaufort, whose crest is a portcullis or, nailed azure—identical with the arms of Harwich.

The Beauforts never seem to have had any special connection with Harwich. Possibly the portcullis was taken for the emblem of the town in honour of the Tudors. Henry VIII., as recorded in the corporation records, visited Harwich on 8th June 1543, and as this fact is given a place of conspicuous honour on the first page of the oldest extant volume of the records of the borough, it may have some connection with the adoption of the portcullis for the borough arms. But in any case the portcullis is a specially appropriate emblem for Harwich. From very early times Harwich was not only a principal gate or port of entrance to England from the continent, but also a watch-tower or place of defence against unwelcome visitors. Having discovered in conversation with Harwich people that a good many of them believe that their portcullis is a gridiron, I may be allowed to explain that it is really a second door, composed of crossed timbers and armed with studs and massive

iron teeth, and let down in front of a gateway to make it additionally secure. Hence the motto of the Beauforts, used in connection with the portcullis—*Altera securitas*, a further safety, a second safeguard. At the same time I would like to repudiate that shocking explanation—for which I believe Mr. Fox-Davies is responsible—that the Tudors used the portcullis badge because it was a pun on their name—Tudor, otherwise ‘two door.’ The heralds of Tudor days did not stick at much in the way of puns, but I refuse to believe that they went as far as this.

As to the ‘crest’ used in connection with the Harwich arms—a ship placed above the shield on the usual torse or wreath of the colours—this may have been derived from some old seal of the borough. It is so constant a rule in connection with the official seals of port-towns to have a ship, similar to that now used as the Harwich crest, either on obverse or reverse, that we may regard this as a likely explanation.

As we have seen in the case of Maldon, the ship on the reverse of its old seal was incorporated with the obverse, in the borough arms, by ‘impaling’—that is placing side by side in one shield. In the case of Harwich it would have been obviously inconvenient (almost impossible) to have impaled a portcullis with a ship. The square form of a portcullis would have made it extremely difficult to crowd it into one-half of a shield, and the effect would have been bad. This may account for the ship being used as a crest. It was unusual in early times to give a borough a crest at all, and this again points to the fact that the arms of Harwich are probably not of very great antiquity, though they may be founded on an ancient seal so far unknown to modern research.

The Harwich crest is chiefly distinguished from other ancient municipal ship devices by the third castle at the top of the mast, no doubt intended to symbolise the need for watchfulness in the harbour famed for its Beacon Hill.

The earliest definite reference to the crest is in Morant’s *History of Essex* (1768) :

The Arms of this Burgh, are, a Portcullis. Crest. An ancient one-masted ship, with sail furled, the poop and stern much higher than the middle.

Morant was not strong in heraldic descriptions. In this case his omission of all reference to tinctures seems to show that

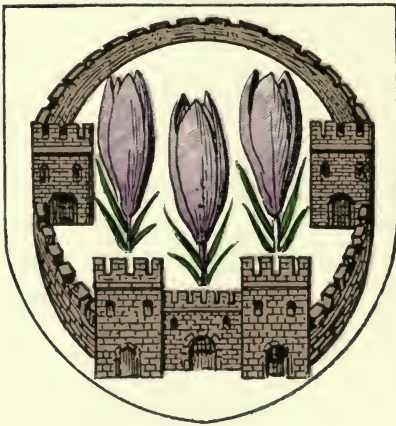
he took his description from an old seal not now in existence, or from some uncoloured carving or other similar representation.

Amongst the possessions of the Harwich corporation is an oval silver armlet, worn as a sergeant's badge of office. On this in good bold relief is a spirited reproduction of the Harwich crest, but without any torse or wreath. This silver armlet is dated 6th April 1786. The Town Clerk of Harwich (Mr. A. J. H. Ward) has also shown me some fine old silver livery buttons which belong to the corporation. Each button has the borough arms and the crest neatly stamped in relief upon it, with the tincture of the field of the shield (gules) properly indicated. These buttons have the hall-mark of the year 1782-3, and the maker's initials 'P. F.,' for Philip Freeman, of Whitechapel.

The modern seal, shown in the plate, beneath the arms, is an ugly production of poor workmanship. It is said to be of silver, but it has no hall-mark. It has an ivory handle. Judging by the lettering, it probably dates from the latter part of the 18th century, but it may be somewhat later.

I am also indebted to Mr. A. J. H. Ward for allowing me to inspect the printed translation of the Harwich borough charters. Written in a fairly modern handwriting—and repeated twice—in this volume is a memorandum, indicating that the motto of the borough is *Omnia bona Bonis, i.e.* 'All things are good to the good,' or 'All good things are to the good.' This is the motto of the Wenman family, descended from Henry Wenman, co. Berks. (temp. Edward IV.), whose descendant, Sir Richard Wenman, became Viscount Wenman of Tuam, co. Galway. The title became extinct on the death of the seventh Viscount Wenman in 1800. This family had no connection that I am aware of, with Harwich or Dovercourt, or with Essex. But the motto is an excellent one. It might mean nowadays, having regard to the vast tonnage and variety of the shipments to Harwich harbour and Parkeston, that all manner of goods come to those particularly good landing-places. And so I commend it to the notice of the enterprising Directors and General Manager of the Great Eastern Railway.





ARMS OF  
THE BOROUGH OF SAFFRON WALDEN

*(Founded on the Borough Seal, supposed to date  
from 1549).*



#### IV.—SAFFRON WALDEN.

THE darkness of antiquity surrounds the earliest known seal of the town of Walden, afterwards known as Saffron Walden. Not until 1549 was Saffron Walden a chartered town, but the seal here pictured is reported to date from the reign of Edward IV. (1461-1483).



EARLIER SEAL OF  
SAFFRON WALDEN  
(Temp. Edward IV.?)

As will be seen, it bears a crowned lion and the fleur-de-lis of France, both royal emblems. In somewhat similar style the borough of Lancaster—according to Lewis's *Topographical Dictionary of England*—seems to have used at one period as its arms a fleur-de-lis in the upper part of the shield and a lion passant guardant (uncrowned) in the lower portion.

The legend on this early seal of Saffron Walden is in Gothic letters: SIGILLŪ COIE VILLE DE WALDEN IN ESSEX. 'Coie' seems to be meant for 'communie.' 'Communia' in Low Latin (of which 'communiæ' is the genitive case) means 'community,' and according to Charles Gross (in his well-known and authoritative work, *The Guild Merchant* [1890]) is also employed to signify 'guild.' Thus the meaning of the inscription would seem to be: 'Seal of the community (or guild) of the town of Saffron Walden.' There is another possible explanation. 'Cois' is often employed as a contraction for 'communis' and so 'coie' may have been carelessly

engraved for 'coē,' that is 'commune, in which case the meaning would simply be 'Common seal of the town of Saffron Walden.' But the former explanation seems more consistent and probable.

Evidently there was some early corporate authority—probably a guild—in Walden, possessed of a sort of jurisdiction over the town. We do know that in the year 1514 a religious Guild of the Holy Trinity was incorporated by royal licence at Walden. Whether this particular Guild had any previous existence is doubtful. According to Lord Braybrooke's *History of Audley End* (1836), the Guild of the Holy Trinity at Walden was established about the year 1400. No authority is given for this statement, but Lord Braybrooke prints 'a copy of an ancient memorandum in the handwriting of Thomas Hall Fiske, formerly Town Clerk,' to the effect that in 1392 certain commissioners sat in the town of Walden 'to enquire after rents and other things due to the King.' These commissioners, it appears, rightly or wrongly came to some unpleasant conclusions. They found that every brewer ought to pay to the king (as owner of the manor, I suppose) a farthing duty on every quarter of malt bought or sold; that every man who used the market or kept a shop in the town must also pay farthings; also that every brewer and baker must have his corn ground at the king's mill, and submit to other exactions. The result was, according to this memorandum, that 'chapmen forsook the town,' and that Walden market was killed, whilst the market of Newport, three miles off, sprang into life.

Then we are informed, as if it were a consequence of these sad happenings, that 'in 1413' John Leche, vicar of Walden, and certain others, 'by the influence of Lord Broke' and 'other great men,' secured the incorporation of the Guild of the Holy Trinity and the grant of a market, at an annual rent of £10, in lieu of all former tolls, farthings and exactions.

Obviously '1413' is a misprint for '1513,' for John Leche did not become vicar of Walden until 1489, and the real date of the licence incorporating the Guild is 24th March, 5 Henry VIII., which would be 1514. Henry VIII., his wife, Katherine of Arragon, and Cardinal Wolsey were, as usual in such grants, made members of the order.

It must not be assumed that the early seal of 'the town of

Walden' was necessarily the seal of this Guild. Certainly the style of lettering seems earlier than 1514, and may well be of the reign of Edward IV. Possibly there was at Walden an earlier 'guild,' which exercised local jurisdiction and used a seal, either with or without authority.

The Guild as founded in 1514 had a short life. It was dissolved in the first or second year of Edward VI., and in 1549 a charter of incorporation was granted to Saffron Walden on the intercession of John Smyth, brother of Sir Thomas Smyth (1513-1577), who had been appointed Secretary of State to Edward VI., in 1548. This charter bore date 18th Feb. 1549. By it the Government of the town was vested in a treasurer, chamberlains, 24 assistants and commonalty. John Smyth seems to have been the first treasurer. Queen Mary in 1553 ratified this charter, and, according to Lord Braybrooke, it was confirmed 'without alteration by Elizabeth, on May 6, 1558,' but as Queen Elizabeth did not come to the throne until November 17, 1558, it is probable that 1559 is the date intended. James I. subsequently confirmed the privileges of the town, but it was not until 1685 that it became a full-fledged borough with Mayor and Aldermen.

The so-called 'arms of Saffron Walden' seem to date from 1549. At any

rate there is a record in the municipal archives (according to Lord Braybrooke) as follows:

1549. Mr. Goddriche, making the common seal 20s. An ounce and a quarter of silver for the same, 10s. 6d.

There can be little doubt that this seal is the one here shown. This time the engraver has come to grief with the Latin. He made the inscription: SIGILLVM COMVNIS VILLAE DE WALDEN IN COMITATV ESSEX. The only way to justify 'comunis' (instead of 'commune') would be to suppose that he meant



SEAL OF SAFFRON WALDEN,  
1549.

Actual size.

'The seal of the common town of Walden.' Perish such a thought! It has been suggested to me that we might stretch charity so far as to fancy that 'comunis' was meant as an abbreviation for 'communitatis' (*i.e.* 'of the commonalty'), but those who are familiar with the rules of abbreviation in those days will agree that this theory is not tenable. The real explanation is no doubt, as Dr. Johnson would say, 'sheer ignorance.'

Anyhow the design on the seal is clearly a punning allusion to the name 'Saffron Walden.' The curious representation of three saffron flowers walled-in leaves no other interpretation possible. Whether a local wag originated the joke, or whether a herald from the College of Arms was responsible, I cannot say. The heralds seem to have taken some responsibility in the matter. In 1569 there is this item in the corporation records:

Paid for a pottell of wine and sugar give to the King of harrolde 1s.\*

In 1594 5s. 4*d.* was paid 'to Dum' for 'the towne armes,' and in 1650 4s. was paid for 'setting upp the towne armes.' In 1740, Nathanael Salmon, in his *History of Essex*, says:

The Arms of the town of Saffron Walden are three Safron flowers walled in.

But for all that there is no official sanction for using this device on the seal as the arms of the town. The College of Arms has not at any time granted arms to the borough, or recognised its so-called 'arms.'

The nearest approach to recognition seems to have been in the Visitation of Essex, in 1664, by Sir Edward Bysshe. In the official record of this visitation at the College of Arms, is this entry:

WALDON.

The Com'on Seale of the Towne of Waldon in com. Essex Incorporated by the Name of Treasurer, Chamberlaines and Comunalty by King Edward the sixt, and since confirmed by Queene Mary, Queene Elizabeth and King James, w fower and Twenty Assistants; and att this present Visitation made by Sir Edward Bysshe Knt. Clarenceux King of Armes was John Fisher, Treasurer, Jasper Townsend and Thomas Runham, Chamberlaines, William Lingwood Esq<sup>r</sup>. Chancello<sup>r</sup> att Law, Recorder, and Thomas Sell Towne Clerke.

JOHN FFISHER, Tre.	} Chamberlains.
JASP. TOWNSEND,	
THOMAS RUNHAM,	
THO. SELL,	Towne Clarke.

\*Dr. Andrew Clark's article *Saffron and Walden* (*Essex Review*, xix., 63).



Over the entry a space has been left, evidently for a drawing of the seal, but the space is left blank. However, in a copy of this 1664 Visitation, printed in 1888, under the editorship of J. J. Howard, LL.D., F.S.A., there appears this picture:



Dr. Howard tells us that this version of the visitation was from a copy made by John Warburton, Somerset Herald (b. 1682—d. 1759). The copy afterwards came into the possession of Stephen Tucker, Somerset Herald, and was bought at the sale of his collections. As already stated in the article on the arms of Maldon (page 13), I cannot say what has become of this MS., but there seems no reason to doubt that the illustration is a more or less accurate copy of a drawing in the manuscript.

Saffron Walden, as has been mentioned, became a real 'borough' in 1685, when James II. granted a charter which conferred full municipal privileges. A fine new silver-gilt mace was procured to glorify this event. Upon this mace the punning seal is reproduced in semi-armorial fashion, upon a cartouche (in lieu of a shield) with heraldic supporters—a dragon on the dexter side, and a lion on the sinister, as shown in the illustration. Around the design is the legend 'RELUCTANTIBUS PHANATICIS COMMUNITAS DE SAF. WALD. IN COM. ESSEX REFLORUIT 29 IUL. AN. SALUT. 1685.' ('In spite of the opposition of fanatics the commonalty of Saffron Walden, in the County of Essex, blossomed once more, July 29, in the year of grace, 1685.')

In scrolls over and above the arms are the words : 'FAVENTE REGE HIS PATRONIS' ('The King showing favour to these patrons.')

\* 'These patrons,' whose names are engraved outside the design, were Sir Edward Turnour, Knight, the first Mayor of Saffron Walden, and Christopher Monck, Duke of Albemarle, who by the charter was appointed Recorder. This Duke of Albemarle had as supporters of his arms a dragon and a lion, sometimes shown dexter and sinister respectively, as engraved on the mace, and sometimes sinister and dexter respectively.

This fact seems to be the explanation of the introduction of these animals as supporters—though it must be confessed that it was an unwarrantable heraldic liberty to have so employed them.

Not content with its gorgeous new mace, Saffron Walden seems to have felt that its newly obtained municipal dignity required also a new Borough Seal. On 23rd August 1688, there is an entry in the municipal accounts :

'Paide for a new seale, £2.†

The new seal (here shown) was of the same size as the old one (of 1549), and was in fact a careful copy of it, with a new inscription. The engraver succeeded fairly well with the walls and the towers and gateway, and the saffron flowers. But again it may be said that Fate literally dogged the Latin. This was the astonishing result : 'COMMIE. SIGILL. MAIORIS. ET. ALDERMAND. VILLE. DE. SAFFRON. WALDEN. IN. COND. ESSEX.'

Here are three particularly fine 'howlers'—'COMMIE' for

\*Dr. Andrew Clark thinks that the scrolls should be read as two separate legends : (1) 'The King favouring' (i.e. the design) ; (2) 'These being patrons.'

†Lord Braybrooke's *History of Audley End* (1836).



'commune,' 'ALDERMAND' for 'Aldermannorum,' and 'COND.' for 'Com.,' otherwise 'Comitatu.'



SEAL OF SAFFRON WALDEN, 1688.

Actual size.

In 1836, after the passing of the Municipal Reform Act, another seal was made. This time it was on a rather larger



SEAL OF SAFFRON WALDEN, 1836.

Actual size.

scale, and it was decided to take no more risks—or liberties—with the Latin tongue. So the inscription was neatly engraved



in English : 'MAYOR ALDERMEN & BURGESSES OF THE BOROUGH OF SAFFRON WALDEN IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX, 1836.'

For some reason or other the engraver made free with the crocuses. One is shown in bud, another is opening, and the third as fully opened. Perhaps it was meant to symbolise the three stages of Saffron Walden's municipal history—first, its incorporation as a mere commonalty in 1549 ; second, its 'blossoming forth,' as stated on its mace, as a municipal borough, in 1685 ; third, its re-constitution as a borough under the municipal Reform Act of 1835.

Strictly, as already stated, there is no authority for using the seal as the arms of Saffron Walden, but there is evidence that the 'town arms' have been used as such for over 300 years, and the device itself is over 350 years old. So there is some justification for Saffron Walden continuing to show the 'Saffron walled-in' in armorial fashion.

There is of course a difficulty about the tinctures. For these there is no authority and they have varied from time to time. I have chosen to blazon them in the simplest form, namely :

Argent, in base a gateway with two towers, and in fess two similar towers, all conjoined with a circular wall embattled, enclosing three saffron flowers slipped and leaved, all proper.

In giving the 'proper' or natural colour of the saffron flowers, I have shown them as mauve, in preference to the yellow of the more ordinary modern crocus. In Dr. Andrew Clark's article on *Saffron and Walden* (*Essex Review*, vol. 19), he claims that the saffron plant (*crocus sativus*), formerly cultivated at Saffron Walden, was the purple or mauve variety. In this article much interesting and curious information is supplied respecting the introduction of saffron to England, its method of cultivation, and the marvellous medicinal properties which it was imagined to possess. Particulars showing its great commercial value to Saffron Walden are also given by Dr. Clark. Further information on this subject, of much interest and evidencing very full and careful research, will be found in Mr. Miller Christy's article, *Saffron Culture*, in the *Victoria History of Essex*, ii. p. 359.

Another still stronger reason for showing the flowers as mauve is the fact that the original royal licence incorporating the guild of the Holy Trinity at Saffron Walden, 24th March 1514 (as already stated), is ornamented with drawings of a



considerable number of saffron flowers, all coloured mauve. This very interesting deed is preserved in the Guildhall of Saffron Walden.

Mr. Guy Maynard, curator of the Saffron Walden Museum, who is well known as an authority on the history and antiquities of the town, informs me that according to some authorities the 'field' in the coat of arms is shown as 'or' (*i.e.* gold or yellow), and according to others 'azure' (blue). In the latter case the saffron flowers are portrayed as 'or,' but, having regard to the true colouring of the saffron flowers grown at Saffron Walden, this seems an anachronism.

I also gather from Mr. Maynard that at one time it was the custom at Saffron Walden to add the embellishment of a crest to the 'borough arms' and to display a lion for that purpose. There was certainly no authority for this usage, which may have been due to a praiseworthy desire to keep alive the lion of the earliest and obsolete seal of the town. Later on the lion was discarded in favour of a scallop shell, displayed at the top of the arms as a crest. This seems to have been the result of a funny misunderstanding of a scallop-shaped ornament which surmounts the cartouche on the engraved borough mace (see illustration). It is hardly necessary to say that this conventional bit of ornamentation is not a crest and was never intended to be one.

Unfortunately the mistake has been perpetuated in the *Victoria History of Essex* ii., 361, where it is not only affirmed that a 'cockle shell' is the crest of the borough, but it is further asserted that this emblem is taken from the arms of the Abbey of Walden, 'azure, on a bend gules, cotised or, between 2 mullets of the last, 3 escallops argent.' The only authority for this use of this alleged 'crest' is the design on the borough mace of 1685. This is clearly only a commonplace embellishment of a decorative character. If it had been meant for a crest, the usual 'torse' (or wreath) would have been shown beneath it.

I must conclude by acknowledging the very great courtesy and assistance which I have received from Dr. J. P. Atkinson very many times Mayor of Saffron Walden. He has taken great trouble in giving me much valuable information and in supplying me with photographs and other material.

## V.—THAXTED.

FROM a remote period Thaxted—once a flourishing manufacturing and market town—was known and legally described as a borough. Its earliest charter, as far as can be ascertained, dates from 1554 (1 and 2 Philip and Mary). This charter was confirmed by Queen Elizabeth, and, according to Morant, King James I. by a subsequent charter enlarged the liberties of the town. Thaxted remained a municipal borough until the reign of James II., but in 1684, on a writ of *quo warranto* being issued against it, the town made no attempt to assert or maintain its chartered privileges. The borough was accordingly dissolved. The fact was that Thaxted had decayed in prosperity and dwindled in population, and had no money to spend upon the forlorn hope of preserving its former dignity.

As early as 1483 or 1484, and probably from a considerably earlier date. Thaxted had been known in legal documents as a borough (*burgus*). Richard III.'s grant of the town to his mother (1483 or 1484) describes it as 'manerium et burgum de Thaxted,' and the same words were used in the letters patent of Henry VIII. (1511) granting £57 7s. annually from this 'manor and borough' to Anne of Cleves. It appears that the town belonged to the lord of the manor until 1554, and that the officers of the so-called 'borough' were appointed, from time to time, at the manorial courts.

Morant (1760) states that the former borough of Thaxted 'had a common seal but no arms.' The borough seal possibly originated soon after the grant of the charter in 1554. As will be seen later on the seal was in existence and used in the year 1617. Morant mentions a 'visitation of the heralds' to Thaxted on 20th August 1637, 'when Robert Humphreys was Mayor and Justice of the Peace and Quorum within the Liberty and Borough of Thaxted.' The town also had a Recorder and two Bailiffs and 'about 20 Chief Burgesses' at this date. In Thaxted church is a framed modern copy of the record of this



ARMS OF THE FORMER BOROUGH OF  
THAXTED.





visitation. It mentions the same particulars but gives the date as 1634 instead of 1637. It is accompanied by a picture of the seal which shows the fetterlock as a sort of nondescript horse-shoe, with the white rose beneath it. The drawing seems to be an incorrect copy of an original which was perhaps faded or defaced. What has become of the original is not known.

At some period (in spite of Morant's assertion to the contrary) Thaxted seems to have obtained sanction from the College of Arms to use a coat of arms identical with its seal. These arms, stated by Messrs. Fox-Davies and Crookes to be 'recorded at the College of Arms,' are thus described:—

Gules, two swords in saltire argent, in chief a rose of the last within a fetterlock or.

On making special enquiry at the College of Arms, I learn that the arms are recognised and recorded there in this form.

In the days of its prosperity the great industry of Thaxted was cutlery. Mr. Miller Christy records in the *Victoria History of Essex* (vol. ii., 421) that this trade is said to have been 'a large and flourishing industry from the end of the 14th century to the end of the 15th,' and he also mentions a trade token issued in Saffron Walden as late as the latter half of the 17th century, bearing two crossed swords, which may perhaps have meant that the trader who issued it was a cutler. Mr. A. P. Humphry, of Horham Hall, Thaxted, tells me that Thaxted lost its prosperity owing to the gradual using up of the wood available for the fuel required in the manufacture of cutlery.

I am also indebted to Mr. Humphry for pointing out that the two crossed swords ('in saltire') in the Thaxted seal and arms are evidently derived from the arms of the Cutlers' Company of London, granted 16 Edward IV. (1476-7), which are:

Gules, three pair of swords in saltire argent, hilts and pommels or, two pair in chief and one in base.

The fetterlock,\* which is a Yorkist emblem and badge, and the white rose of York are accounted for by the lordship of the manor of Thaxted coming into possession, by inheritance, of the royal house of York, as portion of the extensive Clare estates. As to this, Nathanael Salmon (*History of Essex*, 1740) states that 'the Honor of Clare and Gloucester

\*In *Vict. Hist. Essex* (ii., 421) there is a rather unfortunate statement that 'the common seal of the mayor, bailiffs and commonalty [of Thaxted] bore two swords crossed and a horse-shoe in chief.' The error is probably due to the incorrect modern drawing in Thaxted church already mentioned.

was in jointure to Cecilia, mother of Edward IV.,' and that she probably had Thaxted as a branch of it. Afterwards (in 1483-4) she had a grant for life of the 'Manor and Borough of Thaxted' from her other son, Richard III. She lived until 1494. After her death Thaxted descended to her grand-daughter Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV, and queen of Henry VII.

In one of the carved bosses in the roof of the south aisle of Thaxted church a fetterlock is displayed. Mr. Miller Christy, in his *Handbook of Essex* (1887), mentions that in the main street of Thaxted is a very ancient timber and plaster house, with projecting upper storeys. Beneath its oriel windows on the first floor are carved the royal arms of King Edward IV., supported by a lion and a bull (the supporters used for the royal arms by that monarch).\* The royal arms also appear on the North Porch of Thaxted church, believed to have been built by Edward IV., who also finished the chancel of the church. Morant mentions that 'in the East window at the south end of the cross aisle' of Thaxted church, there are several golden falcons accompanied by white roses and the motto 'Min Grace.' A white (or silver) falcon within a fetterlock was a badge used



by Edward IV. as Duke of York. Thus the town possessed some important Yorkist associations, and had good reason to identify itself, in its seal and arms, with the house of the white rose.

As far as I can ascertain, there is no perfect impression from the ancient seal of Thaxted in existence.

\*The Rev. Henry L. Elliot reminds me that the black bull was the badge of the Honour of Clare, and often used as a supporter by members of the House of York.

Mr. A. P. Humphry writes to me as follows on this subject :

' I ought to have two impressions of the seal, on two documents relating to vexed questions between the Lord of the Manor and Borough and the Corporation, but they have at some time been broken to pieces. Of one of them enough is left to show ' ORIS,' no doubt part of MAIORIS, and part of the hilt of a sword. The other, in a small silk bag, might be complete, but it is in such small pieces that I have not ventured to open it or to try to unite them.'

These two deeds are dated respectively 3rd March 1617 and 20th May 1617.

The best representation of the ancient seal is that here reproduced. It is taken from the version of Sir Edward Bysshe's *Visitation of Essex*, 1664, edited and published by J. J. Howard, LL.D., F.S.A., in 1888, as already mentioned. There is no allusion of any kind to this drawing in the text, and no reference to any visit by Sir Edward Bysshe to Thaxted. In the official record of the Visitation, at the College of Arms, the drawing does not appear, and is not mentioned. Probably Thaxted was visited by the heralds and a drawing or impression of the seal made, but, the town being at this time in a very impoverished state, it is likely that the usual fees were not forthcoming, and that therefore the seal, though included in the rough draft or notes made by the heralds, did not find a place in the final and official record.

## VI.—CHELMSFORD.

THE borough of Chelmsford was incorporated on 19th September 1888, and after the manner of the newly ennobled it lost no time in adopting a coat of arms, a crest and a motto. These were duly settled by the College of Arms, in 1889, within a few months of the granting of the charter.

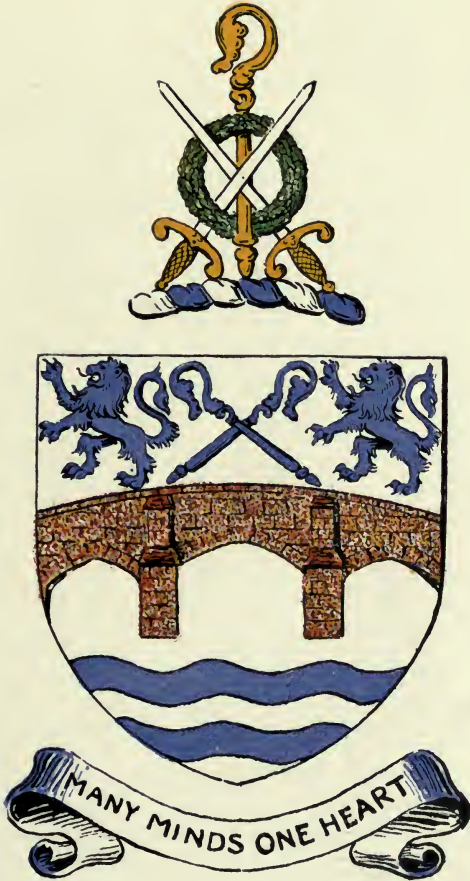
The present writer had some share in suggesting the various charges, but the chief author of the device was Mr. A. J. Furbank, solicitor, of Chelmsford, who acted as Provisional Town Clerk of the borough, and who took a leading part in securing the incorporation. He, I believe, was solely responsible for suggesting the admirable motto of the town, 'Many minds, one heart.' The heraldic description of the armorial bearings is as follows :—

Argent, in fess a bridge with three arches and with buttresses proper ; in chief two crosiers crossed between two lions rampant azure ; in base two bars wavy azure.

*Crest* : A crosier erect between two crossed swords hilted and mounted or, encircled by a wreath of oak leaves proper.

These arms have been described, without any intentional word-play, as an 'abridged history of Chelmsford.' The bridge represents the first bridge built over the river Cann, about the year 1100, by Maurice, Bishop of London, Lord of the Manor of Chelmsford. This bridge is reputed to have been the making of the town, for it brought the main traffic from London through Chelmsford, instead of through Writtle, which had formerly been the main thoroughfare. The two blue lions are from the arms of the Mildmay family, whose shield bears





ARMS OF  
THE BOROUGH OF CHELMSFORD.



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argent three lions rampant azure\*. The Mildmays obtained the Manor of Chelmsford at the time of the Reformation, by grant from Henry VIII. From the reign of Edward the Confessor until that period, the Bishops of London had been Lords of the Manor of Chelmsford, and had been very good friends of the town, securing it a market by royal charter, and otherwise promoting its prosperity. The Manor of Moulsham, now part of the borough, had belonged to the Abbots of Westminster from pre-Norman times, but the Abbey had to relinquish it at the Reformation, and it was granted to the Mildmays (who appear to have paid a good round sum for it) by Queen Elizabeth. The two crossed croziers, between the two triumphant Mildmay lions, represent the dispossessed manorial lords, the Bishop of London and the Abbot. Whether the heralds intended by crossing these emblems to show the natural displeasure of the disendowed ecclesiastics must remain one of the secrets of the College. The two blue wavy bars in the base of the shield indicate, as usual, in heraldry, water. They are intended to denote the ancient ford of the river Chelmer, from which Chelmsford (Celmersford in the *Domesday Survey*) derives its name. In the *Victoria History of Essex* Mr. J. Horace Round remarks on the number of parishes in Essex taking their names from fords—' Uttlesford Bridge in Wenden preserves the memory of the first of these fords. The course of the great London road is marked by Stratford, Ilford, Romford, Widford, Chelmsford, Easterford (Kelvedon), Copford and Empford (Stanway Bridge).' (*V. C. H. vol. I, p. 406.*)

In the crest is a second but more compressed edition of the history of the two manors. The crozier represents the Abbot of Westminster. The two crossed swords are the arms of the see of London, the sword (which also figures in the arms of London city) being of course the emblem of St. Paul. The circlet of oak leaves is the ancient symbol of civic dignity and freedom.

It is interesting to note that in 1889, when these arms were adopted for Chelmsford, there was no thought of the possibility of Chelmsford ever becoming a bishop's see. The ecclesiastical emblems were very properly introduced as a memorial of the past, and of the fact that Chelmsford owed very much of its prosperity to the mitred lords of its manors, and especially to

The Mildmay crest is also a blue lion rampant.

the Bishops of London. The constitution of the See of Chelmsford in 1914, just over a quarter of a century after the incorporation, makes the arms of the borough additionally appropriate.

Strictly speaking, I believe that in the crest the crozier and swords should be shown as resting on a rock 'proper' or a piece of rockwork. This rockwork is said to be in accordance with the grant of the College of Arms, but it certainly spoils the design, has no obvious meaning or use, and is not, I believe, usually shown in the official designs and insignia.

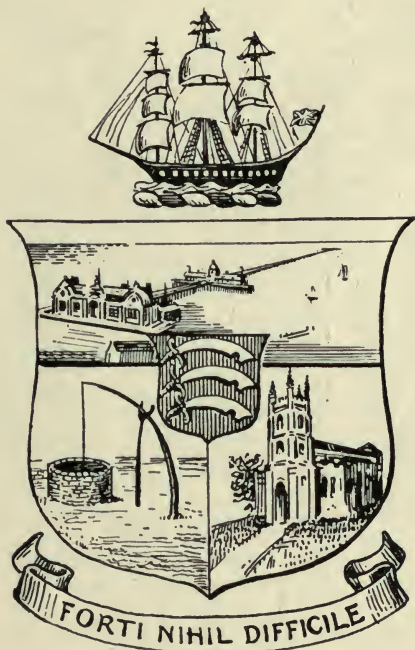
It should be added that Chelmsford was indebted for the grant of its arms to Mr. W. M. Tufnell, J.P., of Hatfield Place, Chelmsford, who defrayed the heavy fees payable to the College of Arms.



## VII.—SOUTHEND-ON-SEA.

**S**OUTHEND was incorporated as a municipal borough in August 1892, and became a county borough in 1914. 'Southend' proper is distinctly a modern creation and the town can boast of a quite phenomenal growth in prosperity and in population.

For over some twenty years or more Southend used a



PSEUDO-ARMS OF SOUTHEND.

*Discarded in 1914.*

strange device in place of borough arms. This design is here shown. It is hardly necessary to say that it never had any sort of authority from the College of Arms.

A really heraldic description of this curious design is not possible, but it may be roughly indicated as follows :—

Party per pale, on the dexter side a landscape representing a well in a meadow, on the sinister side a representation of Prittlewell Church, all proper ; in a chief a picture representing a pier and esplanade, also proper ; over all, an inescutcheon with the reputed arms of the East Saxons, namely, gules, three seaxes fessways argent, hilted gold. Crest On waves of the sea a ship of three masts in sail proper. Motto : *Forti nihil difficile*. (To a brave man nothing is difficult.)

These pseudo-arms were the subject of many unfavourable criticisms, and early in 1914 a movement was set on foot



ARMS OF THE COUNTY BOROUGH OF SOUTHEND-ON-SEA.  
Granted by Letters Patent, dated 1 and 2 January 1915.

to obtain a suitable and authorised coat-of-arms for the newly-constituted county borough.

After some vicissitudes the proposal received sanction from the Southend Town Council, and eventually Letters Patent were obtained, dated 1 and 2 Jan. 1915, from the King of Arms, granting an entirely new coat of arms (as here shown) to the county borough of Southend-on-Sea.

The Town Clerk of Southend (Mr. H. J. Worwood) specially interested himself in the subject, and it was due, in considerable measure, to his advice that the application to the College of Arms was made. The Southend Town Council were advised in the matter by Mr. E. A. Ebbelwhite, barrister-at-law.

The heraldic description of these arms is as follows :

*Arms.*—Azure, on a pile argent between on the dexter an anchor erect, on the sinister a gridiron, and in base a trefoil slipped or, a flower vase, issuing therefrom a sprig of lilies proper.

*Crest.*—Issuant out of a mural crown gules the mast of a ship proper, flowing therefrom a flag argent charged with a cross throughout, also gules.

*Supporters.*—On the dexter side a mediæval fisherman trailing a net with his exterior hand, all proper ; and on the sinister side a Cluniac monk proper, holding in the dexter hand a book gules, and in the exterior hand a staff, also proper.

*Motto.*—' Per Mare per Ecclesiam ' (By the sea, by the church).

I am indebted to Mr. Worwood for the following information explanatory of these bearings. The charges on the shield represent emblematically the four parishes comprised within the county borough of Southend. The vase with the lily indicates the priory and the parish of St. Mary the Virgin, Prittlewell, and the device is taken in its entirety from the 13th century seal of the Cluniac Priory of St. Mary, Prittlewell, an important religious foundation which had considerable influence in this district. The anchor (gold) is the symbol of St. Clement, who, says the legend, was martyred by being drowned in the sea, with an old anchor attached to his neck. St. Clement is patron Saint of Leigh-on-Sea, now comprised within the borough. The gridiron (also of gold) is the emblem of St. Laurence, patron saint of the ancient parish church of Eastwood, dedicated jointly to St. Laurence and All Saints. According to tradition St. Laurence was roasted to death on a gridiron over a slow fire. Eastwood (which in 1841 had only 516 inhabitants, and in 1911 had a population of 1,617) has also been added to the borough of Southend. The gold trefoil in the base (which is also gold) is emblematical of the Holy Trinity, to whom the ancient parish church of Southchurch (once known also as Southsea) is dedicated. Southchurch was incorporated in the borough of Southend as long ago as 1 Nov. 1897, and has now a population of 3,954 against 432 in 1841.

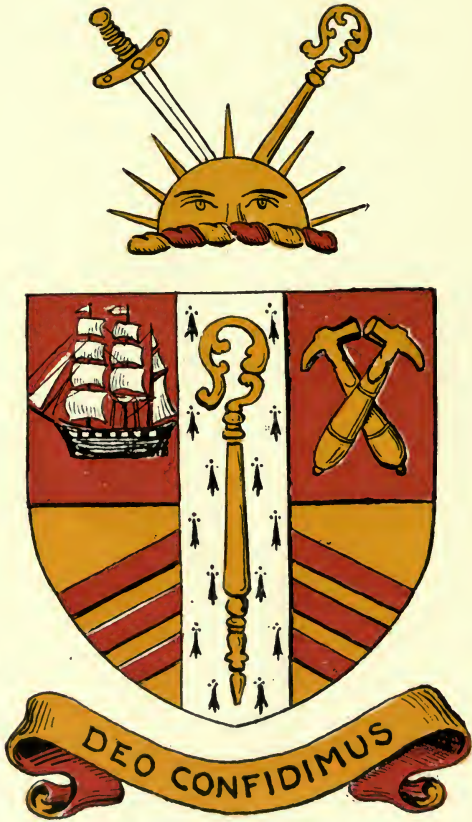
The mast of an ancient galley, forming the crest, indicates the former reputation of Leigh as a port. The old English flag—the cross of St. George—has been introduced. The former importance of Leigh has been eclipsed by the modern development of the place. It had in 1911 a population of 7,713 against 1,271 in 1841. Leigh (or Leigh-on-Sea, as I believe it likes to be called) was incorporated with the borough of Southend by the Southend Corporation Act, 1913, which came into operation on 9 November 1913.

The figures of the supporters have been copied from mediæval illuminated manuscripts in the British Museum, and are intended to indicate the two classes of men who in early days influenced and developed the district now comprised within the county borough.

The motto ' illustrates the armorial bearings, and recognises the effect of the proximity of the sea and the influence of the church upon the early history of the borough '—or rather of the parishes now comprised within the borough.







ARMS OF  
THE BOROUGH OF WEST HAM.

## VIII.—WEST HAM.

THE municipal borough of West Ham obtained its charter of incorporation in June 1886, and two or three years later, under the provisions of the Local Government Act, 1888, it became a county borough. Soon after its incorporation West Ham secured a grant of arms from the College of Arms. The heraldic description of these armorial bearings is as follows :—

Per fesse, gules and or, in chief a ship under sail proper and two hammers in saltire of the second ; in base 3 chevronels of the first ; over all a pale ermine, thereon a crosier erect of the second.

*Crest* : On a wreath of the colours in front of a sword in bend dexter point downwards, proper, pommel and hilt gold, surmounted by a crosier in bend sinister or, a sun rising in splendour, proper.

*Motto* : Deo confidimus (We trust to God).

These arms have reference to the ancient and famous Abbey of Stratford, otherwise Langthorne-at-Bow, founded in 1135 by William de Montfitchet. The arms of this abbey, which existed up to the Dissolution in the reign of Henry VIII., were :

Or, three chevrons (or chevronels) gules, over all a crosier in bend argent.

Stratford Abbey had taken its arms (by counterchanging the tinctures) from the coat of its founder. The Montfitchet arms were :

Gules, three chevronels or.

Chaucer has a well-known reference to Stratford, in the Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales* :

Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,  
 That of hir smyling was ful simple and coy ;  
 Her grettest ooth was but by seynt Loy ;  
 And she was cleped madame Eglentyne.  
 Ful wel she song the service divyne,  
 Entuned in hir nose ful semely ;  
 And Frensh she spak ful faire and fetisly,  
 After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,  
 For Frensh of Paris was to hir unknowe.

Here Chaucer is assumed to be referring to the Benedictine nunnery at Stratford, 'famous even then for its antiquity.' According to Tanner it was founded by William, Bishop of London, before 1087, whilst Dugdale says it was founded by Christiana de Sumery, and that her foundation was confirmed by King Stephen. These statements appear to be erroneous, unless there was some smaller and earlier foundation than that alluded to by Chaucer. Mr. R. C. Fowler, M.A., in his very careful and authoritative article on the Religious Houses of Essex (*Victoria Hist. Essex*, vol. ii.), states that the abbey was founded by William de Montfitchet in 1135, as a House for Benedictine nuns. The abbey was at first endowed with the lordship of West Ham and other property, and in 1309 it was further enriched by the possession of the advowson of East Ham. In 1147 the abbey, which was affiliated to the house of Savigny in France, became (like its parent house) Cistercian.

The ship in the dexter chief of the West Ham arms is in token of the Victoria London Docks, situated in the borough. They were constructed in 1855-6, at a cost of £800,000, and have, of course, materially helped the growth of West Ham and Plaistow. The crossed hammers are not (I hope) intended to allude to the name 'Ham,' but merely to another cause of West Ham's greatness—the Thames Ironworks and Ship-building Company. The crosier on an ermine pale is in honour of the Abbey already referred to.

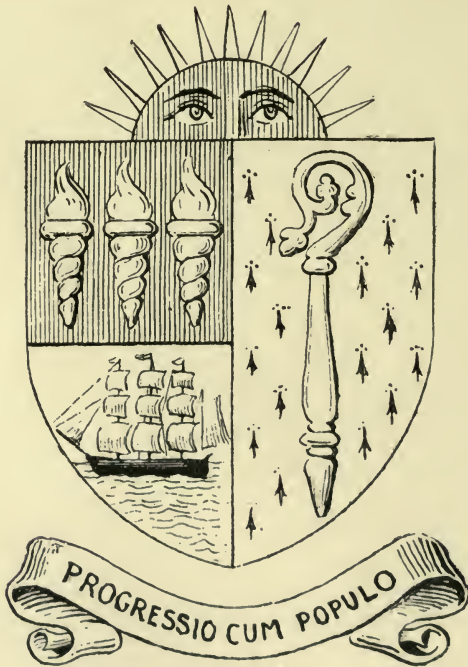
In the crest this crosier reappears, crossed with a sword, which is presumably meant to indicate the neighbouring City of London. The sword of St. Paul figures in the arms of the City of London, and West Ham is now the chief portion of 'London-over-the-Border.' The rising sun is meant to typify the rapid rise and growth of the borough.



It will be seen that the College of Arms bestowed upon Chelmsford a crest very similar to that of West Ham, which may be merely an accidental coincidence, or may be the result of poverty of ideas. To most people, including Sir W. H. St. John Hope, Mr. Oswald Barron, Mr. J. H. Round, LL.D., and other modern authorities on heraldic subjects, the idea of giving a crest to a borough is incongruous, the crest being rather a personal emblem or cognisance. However, there is the ancient precedent of the City of London crest, and in modern times the College of Arms has always encouraged boroughs in the practice of assuming a crest in addition to the shield of arms.

## IX.—EAST HAM.

**E**AST HAM was constituted a borough by charter dated 27 August, 1904. It has no grant of arms, but uses a pseudo-heraldic device here shown :



It is not a satisfactory design from the heraldic point of view. If an attempt to describe it in heraldic terms were made, this might be done somewhat as follows :

Party per pale, in the dexter half of the shield party per fesse, gules and argent, three flaming torches proper and a three-masted ship in full

sail on waves of the sea proper ; on the sinister half of the shield ermine a crosier erect or.

Issuant behind the chief of the shield, in lieu of a crest, a sun rising, gules.

*Motto* : Progressio cum populo (Progress with the people).

The arms are a somewhat obvious imitation of the arms of West Ham. Presumably the three torches are meant to be torches of progress ; the ship denotes the shipping of East Ham on the Thames ; the crosier may refer to the fact that East Ham anciently belonged to the endowment of Westminster Abbey, or it may be meant to allude to the grant of the Manor of East Ham, in 1309, to Stratford Abbey.

The fiery sun in the background, which is not a crest, and has no heraldic justification or significance in such a place, is no doubt intended, like the crest of West Ham, to indicate the spreading glory and greatness of the borough.

## X.—SOME DOUBTFUL ‘TOWN ARMS.’

### HALSTEAD.

IN Sir Bernard Burke's *General Armory*, 1875 and 1878 editions, there is the following entry:

**Halsted, Town of** (co. Essex). Az. a coronet composed of one fleur-de-lis and two leaves or.

The Halstead Urban District Council, upon its formation some thirty years ago, adopted these arms and placed them in the council seal. The Rev. Henry L. Elliot, vicar of Gosfield, Halstead, subsequently made some enquiries upon the subject, and he received a letter dated, from the College of Arms, 15 May 1903, from the then editor of Burke's *Armory*, as follows:

‘The result of a search here [College of Arms] shows that you are correct in stating that the town of Halstead has no right to arms. . . . I cannot understand how the entry crept into Burke's *Armory*.’

In communicating this information to me Mr. Elliot adds that ‘the only Corporation in Halstead in the past was the College founded by the Bouchiers, and endowed in 1411. It is possible that this coat belonged to that foundation, but of this no proof has been forthcoming.’

For some reason, however, certain heralds of the 17th century (more than a century after the extinction of the ‘College of Halstead’) seem to have assigned these arms to ‘the town of Halstead in Essex.’ *Harleian MS.* 1370, is a small oblong octavo volume, with an entry at the beginning:

‘A Retorne of Entreys made by me Thomas Wootton from the 5th of November 1647 and so fforwards.’

The entries appear to have been continued up to the year 1660 or thereabouts. In this manuscript, folio 16, is the drawing here shown. It is given with the arms of many other towns and cities.

In *Egerton MS.* 1073, which is entitled 'Arms of Cities and Families,' and which is also of the seventeenth century, there is a similar drawing, here reproduced. It is headed 'Halstead in Essex.'

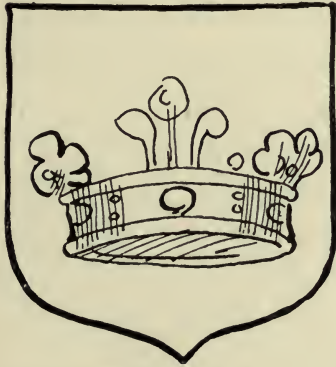
It appears on the same page as a trick of the arms of the borough of Sudbury in Suffolk, and it may be noted that these are given

*Halstoda in  
Essex:*



HARL MS. 1370, fo. 16.

accurately and carefully with the tinctures marked.



EGERTON MS. 1073, FO. 11d.

time to time hath served within the said lordship and taken the fees thereof, without rendering account for the same.' Holman adds that the lord of the manor of Halstead 'hath always had the nomination of the coroner.'

From a remote period Halstead had a market, which belonged to the King. It also had a pair of stocks, a pillory, and an assise of bread and beer, but I imagine that many small and non-corporate towns possessed these blessings. The kings of England, according to Holman, 'continued lords of this market

\* '*Holman's Halstead*, being Historical Notes arranged by William Holman, "Pastor of the Church of Protestant Dissenters" in Halstead, Essex, 1700-1730 A.D. Prepared for the press by T. G. Gibbons, M.A., sometime Vicar of Halstead' (1902).



till the reign of Henry III., who in the 35th year of his reign [1250-1] did, by his letters patents, grant unto Abell de Sancto Martino and his heirs for ever that he should have a market on Saturdays at his manor of Halstead, and a fair yearly, to last two days, namely the eve and day of St. Dionysius, with all liberties and customs belonging to such market and fair.'

Edward III. in the fourth year of his reign (1330-1) granted to Robert Lord Bouchier a Court Leet and also a market every week upon Tuesdays and a fair yearly upon the eve and day of St. Luke—this being in place of the market and fair granted by Henry III., about eighty years earlier. As Colchester had a market on Saturday and a fair on St. Denys's day (the latter granted in 1318), we may guess why the days of Halstead market day and fair were altered.

Holman has other references which seem to indicate the existence of some corporate guild or authority. He notes :

MOOTE HALL. In this town was an house so called, for at a court held 20th Henry VII. John May, after the death of his father, John May, took up a parcel of customary garden with the appurtenances lately called Le Mote-Hall.'

YELD-HALL.—There was a Guild Hall, alias the Yeld-Hall, in this town, that had a Fraire Clerk belonging to it, as I find by a deed dated 10th October, 20th Henry VIII.'

A further reference to this Guildhall was unearthed by the industrious Holman, namely Letters Patent of 3 Edward VI., whereby the king 'gave a message in Hawsted called Le Yeld-Hall to William Berners and George Wattes and their heirs. Isaack Metcalf paid a fine for it 20th Elizabeth. 'Tis the house at the bottom of the town where the widow Clayton liveth.'

The widow Clayton was no doubt a most worthy personage, but her name alone would not be sufficient to identify Halstead's Guildhall. Local tradition, however, preserves the information. The Rev. T. G. Gibbons appended this note to Holman's record :

'*Fraire Clerk.* Morant ii. 283, note, speaks of a "Farrye Clerk" (whose business it was to officiate in divine things). Derived from *Feria*—a festival, or one who officiates at festivals. This Fraire Clerk acted as chaplain for the members of the Guild. Their Guild House still remains and was occupied as a butcher's shop and dwelling house by Mr. G. D. Green, and he has been succeeded by Mr. Nash, who has cased the old timber structure with brick.'

This note seems to clear up, at any rate, the position of the Guildhall.

The derivation of 'Fraire Clerk' or 'Farrye Clerk' from the word 'feria' is not Morant's. It is probably a surmise by the Rev. T. G. Gibbons—and a doubtful one. Morant's note was in reference to the preceptory of Little Maplestead:

'To this preceptory belonged a Farrye Clark, whose business it was to officiate in divine things. He had a pension out of several lands and tenements in divers parishes.'

With all his research the careful and industrious Holman has no other information likely to throw any light on the use of arms or of a heraldic seal by any official or guild or corporate body at Halstead. Nor does he appear to have been aware of any arms in use by the town or any functionary of the manorial court or of the 'College of Halstead.' His record of this 'College' is meagre. As it is possible that the arms may have been the seal of this 'College,' it is desirable to quote some particulars relating to that foundation as given by Mr. R. C. Fowler, M.A., in the *Victoria History of Essex* (vol. ii.):

THE COLLEGE OF HALSTEAD. Edward III., on 2 April 1341, granted licence for Robert Bouchier, chancellor of England, to found a college or chapelry of seculars in Halstead and to endow them with lands. . . . This licence appears never to have taken effect. On May 2, 1412, Henry IV granted licence for Richard, Bishop of London, to found a chantry of five chaplains to celebrate divine service daily in the parish church of Halstead, for the souls of Sir Robert Bouchier and Margaret his wife [and others of the family] . . . One of the five chaplains was to be the master, and the chantry was to be called Bouchier's chantry. The college was founded accordingly on 12 Nov. in the same year and endowed with 3 tenements in Halstead, etc.

The college appears to have existed up to the year 1535, when John Reston was master. In 1551 (June 24) it was granted to William Parr, Marquis of Northampton.

It will be seen that there is no evidence in these various items of Halstead history to account for the so-called arms of the town. Possibly the future discovery of some ancient seal may elucidate the matter.

The crown of fleurs-de-lis and leaves alternately seems to have been first used as a royal emblem in the reign of Edward I. 1272-1307. It was superseded in the reign of Edward III., who, according to Berry's *Encyclopædia Heraldica* (ii., 268), 'seems to have been the first sovereign of England who enriched the crown with fleurs-de-lis and crosses pattée.'

## CLACTON-ON-SEA.

CLACTON, like other watering places, has suffered from cheap china. The excessive commercial zeal of British and foreign china-merchants has led them to flood watering-places and other pleasure resorts with small articles of china or earthenware purporting to bear the armorial bearings of the town. Like most modern seaside resorts, Clacton has no right to any armorial bearings at all. Such places present no difficulty to the ingenious manufacturer. He promptly fabricates some strange armorial device—generally absurdly inappropriate and always infringing the elementary rules of heraldry. Fraudulent monstrosities of this sort appeared in Clacton-on-Sea and were bought by innocent visitors in the belief that the designs were really the authentic arms of the town.

In self-defence the Clacton Urban Council—in the year 1911—formally adopted a device which has at least the merit of being correct heraldically and of embodying some local history. The chief fault of the design is that it is overloaded. An Urban District Council has no right to armorial bearings, but Clacton is a growing town, and in course of time will probably become a municipal borough. Its corporation will then be able to claim legitimate arms, and may perhaps induce the College to recognise the coat now adopted without authority—or some variation of it. Meanwhile, as the design has some sort of official status, a description of it—for what it is worth—may be given. Heraldically this description is as follows :

Party per chevron, azure semée of cross crosslets and gules ; in chief two cinquefoils argent ; in base between two escallops or, two crossed swords argent, hilted gold ; over all on an inescutcheon gules, bordure or, 3 seaxes argent hilted gold.

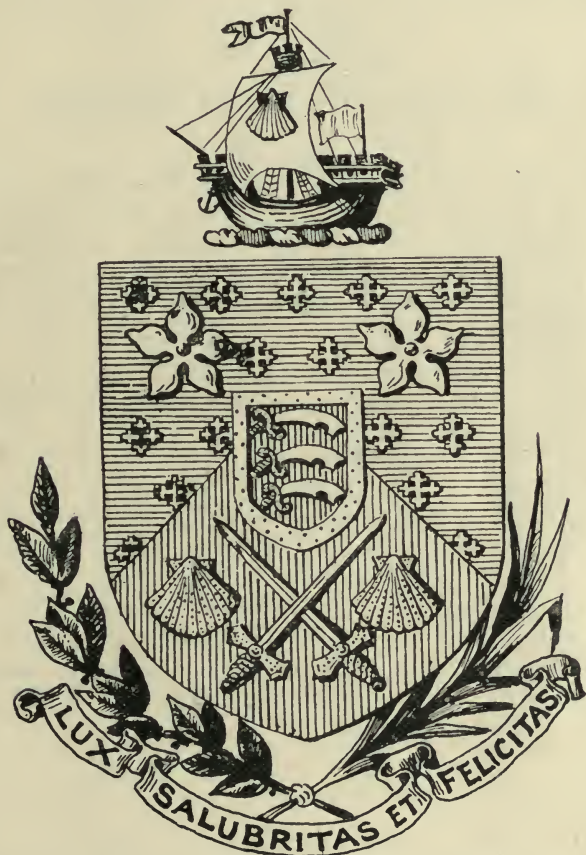
*Crest.* A galley proper with one sail charged with an escallop gules ; from the mast and from the stern two flags, floating in each case to the dexter.

*Motto.* Lux, Salubritas et Felicitas. (Light, Health and Happiness).

The upper portion of the shield is borrowed from the armorial coat of the D'Arcy family. The D'Arcys of St. Osyth held the manor of Great Clacton for some time after the Reformation. The crossed swords in the lower part of the shield are in token of the episcopal see of London, Clacton having been part of the possessions of the Bishops of London from the time of the Norman conquest until 1545. The scallop shells are the emblem



of St. James, to whom the new district church at Clacton-on-Sea is dedicated. It has also been suggested that, the scallop being used as a badge by pilgrims, these shells have reference to the modern sea-shore of Clacton to which so many pilgrims resort. The inescutcheon is, of course, the traditional shield of the East Saxons, used also to denote Essex. The bordure of gold is ap-



parently introduced to enable this inescutcheon to be superimposed on the tinctures of the shield without offending the laws of heraldry. The crest indicates the maritime importance of Clacton, the escallop being shown on the sail of the galley to distinguish the crest from similar badges, charges, or crests used by other maritime towns and ports.

## ARMS OF THE SEE OF CHELMSFORD.

THE arms of the See of Chelmsford (here shown in colours) were designed, soon after the formation of the Chelmsford diocese, by the Rev. Henry L. Elliot, vicar of Gosfield. The arms were approved and adopted by the newly appointed Bishop of Chelmsford in April 1914.

The heraldic description is as follows :—

Or, on a saltire gules in bend sinister a sword argent pommelled gold, surmounted by a pastoral staff of the field in bend dexter.

The shield is surmounted (in the usual way) by a Bishop's mitre, proper.

The design commemorates the various ecclesiastical jurisdictions under which the church in Essex has at various times been placed, viz., the sees of (1) London (represented by the sword of St. Paul); (2) Rochester (by the red St. Andrew's cross); and (3) St. Albans (by the gold of the field, gold being, in the arms of the Diocese of St. Albans, the metal of the saltire there shown). The pastoral staff is added to indicate the episcopal nature of the arms.





ARMS OF THE  
DIOCESAN SEE OF CHELMSFORD.



TRADITIONAL ARMS OF  
THE KINGS OF THE EAST SAXONS.

## THE REPUTED ARMS OF THE EAST SAXONS.

THERE is a mystery about the three seaxes or Saxon swords, the reputed arms of the East Saxon Kingdom, sometimes used in modern times as being the arms of Essex and known to the irreverent as 'the three fish-knives.'

The earliest reference to these traditional 'arms' of the East Saxons, as far as I have been able to trace, is to be found in Richard Verstegan's *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence*, printed at Antwerp by Robert Bruney in 1605.

Verstegan was no doubt a deeply-read man, but his book-learning was of the kind prevalent among the learned in those days. He was a ready believer in almost all that he found in ancient manuscripts or volumes. In his unquestioning way he informs us that Erkenwyne, the first King of the East Saxons, bore for his arms three seaxes argent in a field gules. Verstegan gives no authority for this statement, but there is no reason to doubt that he had it from what seemed to him a thoroughly respectable source, and also that it was by this time a well-established heraldic legend.

Verstegan's remarks on the subject of these arms are diffuse, but they are also curious, and as his book is difficult of access it may be as well to give the passage in full :

This name then of Saxons they vndoubtedly had (though some hold it vnlykely) of their vse and wearing of a certaine kynd of sword or weapon inuented and made bowing crooked, much after the fassion of a sythe, in imitation whereof it should seem to haue first bin made. And when of late I conferred with the excellent learned man *M. Iustus Lipsius* about the Saxons true appellation (who I also found to concurr with mee in opinion) hee could presently put mee in mynd that a sythe is yet at this

present in the Netherlands called a saisen. Now the swords of our anceters being made somewhat after that manner (the edge beeing on the contrarie syde) they might wel carrie a like name vnto such an edge-tool as they were made after: albeit wee fynd these kynd of swords anciently written seaxen, or seaxes, yet is it lyke enough that our anceters sounded the x as s, for the welshmen wrote them Saison as they yet write vs, which it is lyke they wrote, according as they hard them pronounce there own appellation.

Of this kynd of weapon they had two sortes, the one whereof being long were worne for swords & the other beeing short, as hangers or wood knyues, and these they called hand seaxes, and such they were which after there coming into *Britaine*, they had still in vse, and did weare priuately hanging vnder there long skirted cotes; wherewith at a banket on *Salisbury plaine* where *Hengistus* had enuyted King *Vortiger*, about three hundreth of his nobles, the watch-woord, *Nem cour seaxes*, that is *Take your seaxes*, beeing giuen, were all of them suddenly slaine. And as these long seaxes or swords, were as is said before, made after the forme of a sythe, so might there hand-seaxes as well in fassion & bignes as somewhat in name, agree unto there then vsed manner of sicles. Of this kynd of hand-seax, *Erkenwyne* king of the East-Saxons did beare for his armes three argent, in a feild gules. And the learned *Engelhusius*, of the kynd of seax and of the name of the Saxons, hath this ensuing Latin rythme

*Quippe breuis gladius apud illos Saxa vocatur,  
Vnde sibi Saxo nomen traxisse putatur.*

which may be englished thus.

*Because a Saxa termed is,*

*The short swoord which they weare,*

*There-of the name of Saxons they*

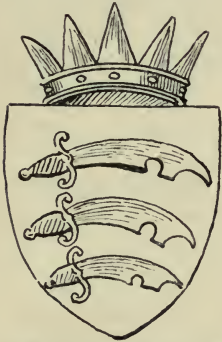
*May wel be thought to beare.*

Now then it being manifest that our anceters did affect & vsually beare this kynd of weapon called a Seax, & that we fynd it not to have bin vsed among the other Germans, vnlesse of such as afterward may haue followed them in that fassion, why may not the peculiar bearers of that kynd of weapon, haue gotten after the same there appellation? for seeing the name of the weapon & the name of the bearers thereof, is all one, either the weapon was so called of the men, or the men of the weapon: but that men are vsually called according to the weapons which they beare, dayly experience doth shew vs, espetially in warre, where by the names of Lances, Carabines, pykes, muskets, &c., the bearers of such weapons rather then the weapons are vnderstood."

John Speed, in his *History of Great Britaine*, Lond., 1611 (p. 285), summarises Verstegan thus:

'*Iustus Lipsius* coniectureth and *Engelhusius* affirmeth (as *Verstegan* saith) that the name *Saxon* tooke the appellation from the *Fashion* of the *Weapon* that vsuallie they wore; which was a *Crooked Bowing Sword*, somewhat like vnto a *Sithe*, with the edge on the contrarie side, called by the *Netherlanders* a *Saisen* and by themselves *Seaxen*; and the shorter of like fashion for hand-weapons, *Seaxes*; such as were those that were hid vnder their Garments in the Massacre of the *British Nobilitie* vpon

*Salisbury Plaine* when *Hengist* gaue the watch-word *Nem couz Seaxés*, that is *Take you (sic) Swords*: three of which *Kniues Argent* in a *Field Gules*, were borne by *Erkenwyne*, King of the *East-Saxons*, vpon his shield of *Armes*, as some of our *Heralds* have imblazed.'



ARMS OF THE KINGDOM  
OF THE EAST SAXONS

from *Speed's History of  
Great Britaine (1611) p. 300.*

In the second edition of *Speed's History* (1623) the statement about the arms is repeated without any variation, and the arms themselves are again illustrated, this time by a new wood-block copied from the former one, the shield being, however, displayed on a waving banner.

In *Stowe MS. 670, folio 110*, in a handwriting of late 17th century, or early 18th century, is given the following list of the arms of the Saxon kings:

- K. of Kent, G a Horse saliant A.
- K. of South Saxons, B 6 martlets or
- K. of West Saxons, G a Wiverne Or.
- K. of East Saxons, G 3 Swords in pale barrywise ppr., hilts & pomells O.
- K. of East Angles, B 3 Crowns Ducall O.
- K. of Northumberland, Paly of 6 B.O.
- K. Mercian, B a X or.
- K. Egbert, B a + flory (alias potency), or.

Here is the oldest corroboration of the arms of the East Saxon kings, as described by *Verstegan* in 1605, and pictured by *Speed* in 1611. The description 'Gules 3 swords in pale barrywise proper, hilts and pommels or' is practically identical with *Verstegan's* statement.

As already stated *Speed* also gives a coat of arms for each

*John Speed* seems to have been more doubtful than *Verstegan* about King *Erkenwyne's* actual use of these arms. At any rate his statement is guarded by 'as some of our *Heralds* have imblazed.' However, on page 300, *Speed* printed at the head of his account of the kingdom of the East Saxons, a neat wood-block showing the arms as here reproduced. In like manner *Speed* gives the other traditional arms of the kingdoms of the Saxon heptarchy, including of course the arms of the Kings of East Anglia.



From *Speed's 'History,'  
2nd Edition, 1623.*



kingdom of the Saxon Heptarchy. All these Saxon 'coats of arms' are probably spurious. Heraldry cannot be said to have existed in Anglo-Saxon days. But badges and emblematic devices have been associated with nationalities and with sovereigns and chieftains from earliest times, and it may be that here and there some sort of ancient authority may exist for the armorial devices which the Tudor or medieval heralds chose to assign to some of the ancient kings who ruled in Britain before the Norman conquest.

In many cases the kings themselves are quite imaginary, and we can therefore dismiss the arms attributed to these personages as inventions. Necessity was their mother. The heralds delighted in making up 'pedigrees,' and great licence was taken in compiling them. The evidence of such an easy-going fabulist as Geoffrey of Monmouth was accepted as quite sufficient. Thus such kings as Coilus of Colchester (old King Cole), King Arthur of many legends, King Woden (apparently of East Anglia), King Brute and other mythical royalties figure in the illuminated genealogies, each with his coat of arms duly emblazoned near his name. The Kings of the East Saxons and the other lines of Kings of earlier periods had to be provided with coats of arms to give the pedigrees proper pictorial effect. This I assume to have been the origin of these traditional devices.

The arms of the East Saxons are portrayed in various other works published later than Speed's *History*. They are shown in Peter Heylyn's *Help to English History* (copied evidently from Speed), but there only in the posthumous third edition of 1671, where they are amongst the additions by Christopher Wilkinson. In a later edition (1773) 'with Great Additions' by Paul Wright, B.D., the pictorial illustration is omitted, but this information is supplied :

The Kingdom of the East Saxons is the fourth in order of the Heptarchy ; began in an. 527, some five years after that of the West Saxons. It comprehended the counties of Essex, Middlesex, and part of Hertfordshire ; the Kings those that follow.

Arms. G. three Seaxes Arg. pomelle O.

This was a weapon of the Saxons which they wore under their coats when they slew the Britons on Salisbury-plain. They were called Saxons from the use of this weapon. See Verstegan, p. 21.

In the Harleian, Egerton, Stowe and other collections of

heraldic manuscripts, in the British Museum, there are many which give descriptions and pictures of reputed arms of ancient British, Saxon and Danish Kings, but as far as I have been able to discover, only one of these (*Stowe MS.*, 670), already cited, corroborates fully the arms portrayed by Speed in 1611.

*Harl. MS. 1894, fo. 262*, has the following list :

Oute of a petegree of Mr. Stoves made in Henry the 7 tyme.

1. Woden bare B a cross or formie, florie or patie.
  2. The Kinges of Briteyre, B three crownes in pale or.
  3. The Kinges of Kente, G iij. faulchens in pale poyntes down.
- [A small sketch is added showing roughly three swords somewhat of the 'Seax' pattern with their points downward.]
4. The Kinges of Essex, a shield G.
  5. The Kinges of Westsex, B a crosse formie patie florrie between 5 martlets or.
  6. The Kinges of Sussex, B iij. trefoyles or.
  7. The Kinges of Easte Angle, or iij. crownes G.
  8. The Kinges of mercia, B iij. crownes or.
  9. The Kinges of Northumberland, G a crosse betweene 4 lions rampant or.
  10. Elle son of Isse, G iij. crownes or.

This MS. has the name of R. Holme on the cover. There were four Randle Holmes, all collectors of pedigrees and heraldic matters, the earliest being born in 1571, and the latest dying in 1707. The handwriting of this particular MS. is of the 17th century. It will be noticed that according to this authority the arms of Essex were simply a red shield. The other descriptions quoted do not tally with the accepted arms of the Kings mentioned. Other manuscripts for instance agree in giving the arms of the kings of East Anglia as 'Azure, three crowns or.' but the arms mentioned in this MS. are : 'Or, three crowns gules.' These were the arms of St. Osyth Priory in Essex, but St. Osyth, though of royal birth, was not descended from the Kings of East Anglia, and was married to a King of the East Saxons.\*

It may be here remarked that the reputed arms of East

\**Harleian MS. No. 2160*, a Tudor Book of Arms tricked by Robert Cooke, professes to be a copy of a MS. temp. Henry VI. (1422-1471), but evidently there have been additions and some entries from another source. There is, however, another corroborative copy of the Henry VI. MS. at the College of Arms (known as L 8), and we may assume that in the 15th century, probably about 1450, there were some reputed arms assigned to the various Kings of the heptarchy. The arms of the 'Roy de Essex' are given in *Harl. 2160* as 'Gules, three crowns or' and the MS. at the College of Arms adds to this, 'Zebbe, anno 665,' meaning Sebba or Sebba, King of the East Saxons, whose reign commenced about the year 665. The arms of the 'Roy de Kent' are stated to be 'Gules, three seaxes, vel cutlasses, argent handles or' but the trick shows three clasp-knives erect. Altogether this MS. is too confused to be of much interest. It seems to show that the reputed arms of the Kings of the heptarchy had not been definitely 'settled' by the heralds in the reign of Henry VI.

Anglia, or of the kings of East Anglia, have nothing whatever to do with Essex, although the London Society of East Anglians has managed to convey to its members the false impression that they are applicable to Essex as well as to Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridge. It ought not to be necessary to point out that Essex was never at any time part of East Anglia, and that the East Angles and their kings were from first to last entirely distinct from the East Saxons and the Kings of the East Saxons.

On the other hand Essex has, of course, no exclusive claim to make use of the reputed arms of the East Saxon kingdom. They belong equally to Middlesex and 'part of Hertfordshire'—these territories having formed part of the ancient East Saxon kingdom. Now that counties are ruled by corporate County Councils such councils have a right to a grant of arms for use as the seal and symbol of the county. The Middlesex County Council has obtained such a grant, its arms as sanctioned by the College of Arms being :

Gules, three seaxes argent pointing to sinister hilted and pomelled or ; in chief a Saxon crown of the last.



OLD FIRE PLATE OF ESSEX INSURANCE SOCIETY, ISSUED PREVIOUS TO 1806.

It has been suggested that Hertfordshire should be allowed similar arms with two crowns in chief instead of one, and that the Essex County Council should also in like manner use the three seaxes, but with three crowns in chief as the distinguishing addition.

For about fifty years or more the Essex Archaeological Society has displayed upon the covers of its *Transactions* a shield bearing the three 'seaxes' as shown in our coloured illustration. But one of the earliest examples of the use

of these arms as a distinctive emblem of Essex is found upon the early fire-plate of the Essex Equitable Insurance



Society. This Society was established at Colchester in 1802. The fire-plate must have been issued before the year 1806, as after that date the Society became the Essex and Suffolk Equitable Insurance Society.

At about the same period as this fire-plate the same armorial device was in use by the Essex Militia and Essex Volunteers. Examples may be seen in the Colchester Museum. One of these is the waist-plate of the Writtle Loyal Volunteers, of about the year 1800. Here the three seaxes are shown in an oval cartouche, the background being scored with horizontal lines, which heraldically imply blue or azure. Probably, however, the designer did not intend to convey this impression.

In conclusion it may be interesting to note how far modern authorities corroborate Speed and Verstegan and the early writers in deriving the word 'Saxon' from the weapon 'seax.' The *New English Dictionary* gives a guarded etymology of the word:—

SAXON. (O.F. Seaxan, Seaxe *pl.*, O.H.G. Sahsun *pl.*, G. Saches.) It has been conjectured that the name may have been derived from *sahso*, Saxon substantive [a word not actually found but of which the existence is inferred] as the name of the weapon used by the Saxons. Compare the probable derivation of the German tribe-name *Cherusci*, Original Tentonic *heru*, sword {*heru* being also a word inferred to exist but not actually found.}

In the same dictionary 'Sax' (otherwise seax, sæx, sex) is stated to be an obsolete word meaning 'a knife; a short sword or dagger.' An example is given from *Beowulf*. It is also mentioned that 'saixe' is a word used for a steel tool, not unlike a large knife, used in building, especially in slating. It is sometimes spelt 'sects' or 'sex' or 'zax,' and it is 'the hewing instrument of the slaters.'

In Baron J. de Baye's standard work *The Industrial Arts of the Anglo-Saxons* (tr. by T. B. Harbottle, 1893), is the following:

The iron knife, *sachs*, *seax*, or *scramas-axe*, seems, as we stated in our sketch of the origin of the Saxons, to have given its name to the nation (Ducange, *Glossarium*, article 'Saxa'). We have the testimony of several historians that the *scramasaxe* was a weapon of war among the Saxons (Florentius Wigorniensis, anno 1130, is cited). Some English authors, misled by the constant presence of the small knife, have thought that this was the true *Seax* of the Saxons; but according to the received idea the *seax* was a weapon only smaller than the sword. Mr. Roach Smith, referring to these weapons, which he called sword-knives, considers these

*cultri validi* to be identical with the scramasaxes mentioned by Gregory of Tours (*Histoire des Francs*, bk. 4, ch. 46; and bk. 8, chap. 29). The description given by this historian is quite applicable to the large knives which are much more common in France, Belgium and Germany than in England. Widukind (bk. 1, chap. 6) says that these large knives were included in the ancient Saxon armoury. The best preserved specimens have two long narrow grooves along the back of the blade.

These war knives, or *seax*, are often referred to in the poem of Beowulf. Thus the mother of the demon Grendal in her struggle with Beowulf is represented as drawing her *seax*, and Beowulf himself, when his sword was broken, turned to the *seax* which was attached to his coat of mail:

Drew his deadly seax,  
Bitter and battle-sharp,  
That he on his byrnie bore.

*Beowulf*, line 5400.

According to Nenius it was with the scramasaxe that the Saxons were armed when, at the famous feast of reconciliation, the signal was given by Hengist for the massacre of the Britons: *Nimed eure Saxes*. . . . Anglo-Saxon scramasaxes were occasionally ornamented. The Rev. Mr. Beck describes one, ninety centimetres long, found at Little Bealings, Suffolk (see *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London*, 2nd series, vol. x., No. 1, 1883), which is decorated with a band of damascened work throughout its length.

Among the scramasaxes found in the Thames the most interesting is one which is ornamented with a runic alphabet, and bears the name of the soldier to whom it belonged, in similar characters. The letters are inlaid in copper and silver (Ib.)

Inscriptions on scramasaxes are extremely rare, but in the Frankish Cemetery of Pondrome, Belgium, one of these weapons was found which bore the maker's name.











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