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Ayscoughfee Hall Lincolnshire: lead cistern showing the arms of Johnson, 1680s or 1690s. *See pages 64f.*

Asteley's daughter is 'uxor Coghlan, who slew his father in lawe John Asteley in the castle of Ballybreton, thinking to have delivered it by treason unto the enemy – had he not bene prevented by Roger Asteley, who by chance gott in at a wyndowe & slew both him and iii other, not without much perill, 1599'. Asteley, Constable of Ballybreton, was Coghlan's brother-in-law.

I do not think that the compiler was himself a herald, but it is fairly certain that he was on terms of close friendship with at least one of the members of the College, for he clearly had access to one or two of the more recent books of visitation pedigrees. Glover's Yorkshire visitation of 1584 is evidently one of his sources. His interest in the Old English and Latin words used to define the liberties of Coxford priory in Norfolk – *soka*, *saka*, *thol*, *infangthef*, *blodwite*, and so forth might – suggest someone with a legal training; but that might equally be said of almost any London-based gentleman in about 1600. For the present, then, the author's identity must remain a tantalising mystery.

Arms on a Seventeenth-century Cistern. *E. J. Redshaw* writes: In the last number of this journal Anton C. Zeven and Robert A. Laing of Colington were authors of an a short note ('The Evelyn arms on a cistern?', *CoA* 3rd ser. 3 (2007), no 214, pp. 159-62) concerning arms shown on a seventeenth-century cistern, as depicted in John Evelyn's MS study of horticulture (Evelyn Papers vol. clxxv, now BL Add Ms 78342). The drawing shows a cistern on which appears an heraldic shield with the year 1660.

The questions raised were as follows. Was Evelyn depicting a real cistern dated 1660? Was it usual to depict arms on such objects or was it a hypothetical cistern? Also, does one survive anywhere and were such mundane and functional artifacts in 1660 suitable vehicles for heraldic display? A lead cistern at Ayscoughfee Hall, Spalding, Lincolnshire, and examined by the herald Everard Green (whose note on the item is preserved among his papers at Spalding Gentlemen's Society: Everard Green Ms J) may provide the answers to these questions.

The cistern has a depth of 89 cm (35") and appears originally to have been semi-circular with a diameter of one metre (39"), but has lost some of its shape over the years (**Plate 7**). The exterior has six vertical panels approximately 30cm wide, the central four being further divided horizontally into threes. The end panels and end groups of three bear lead mouldings of botanical subjects and cherubs' heads. The centre two panels bear in the upper part two heraldic crests: *A pair of wings displayed* for Johnson of Sutterton and Spalding; and *A lion's head erased crowned with a coronet between two ostrich feathers* for Johnson of Pinchbeck.

Below each crest is a shield. One bears the arms *A water-bouget and in chief three annulets* for Johnson of Sutterton and Spalding impaling *Three pallets wavy* for Downes of Debenham; the other shows Johnson of Sutterton and Spalding impaling *A chevron between three lions' heads erased and crowned with crest coronets* for Johnson of Pinchbeck.

SHORTER NOTES

An information note in the building states as follows:

It is thought that the cistern dated from the late 1700s, but the scratched name and date – William Smith 1750 – on the object means that it was in existence much earlier. The date also means that the cistern was made either for Maurice Johnson ‘the Antiquary’ (1688-1755) or his son Col. Maurice Johnson (1714-99).

The Antiquary’s father, Maurice Johnson (1661-1747), was the son of Walter Johnson (1619-92) and his second wife Katherine, daughter and heiress of William Downes of Debenham, Kent. Maurice Johnson married as his first wife Jane Johnson, daughter and eventual heiress, in 1688, of Francis Johnson of Ayscoughfee Hall, son and heir of John Johnson of Pinchbeck Hall in Lincolnshire; see A. R. Maddison, *Lincolnshire Pedigrees* (Harleian Society pubns. vol xx, London 1906). Their son Maurice Johnson, ‘the Antiquary’ and founder of Spalding Gentlemen’s Society in 1710, married Elizabeth daughter and heiress of William Ambler of Spalding. Col. Maurice Johnson (died 1793) was the son of this latter union; see *Genealogist* 1 (1876), pp. 105-15.

If the cistern had been made for ‘the Antiquary’ it seems likely that the water-bouget arms would have been impaled with Ambler *A cross and in canton a leopard’s head affronty*). Maurice Johnson the elder married Jane Johnson in 1683 and then would then have been able to impale her arms. His father and mother were also alive and Maurice would have still been able to display their impaled arms. His father Walter died in 1692, but his mother-in-law Katherine did not die until 1697. After that date Maurice would have been able to quarter her arms. Although the crest with the displayed wings is moulded on some of the rainwater hoppers at the hall together with the date 1794, it seems clear that, as the information sheet suggests, the cistern has a much earlier date. Since both arms are impaled it seems reasonable to assume that the cistern was made for Maurice Johnson the elder between 1683 and 1697; arguably, it can be dated before 1688 when Jane Johnson became heiress of her father, the owner of the hall, whereupon her husband would have been entitled to place her arms in an escutcheon of pretence. However the marshalling of arms in this period was still too fluid a practice for this conclusion to be wholly reliable.

I am grateful to Spalding Gentlemen’s Society for allowing access to Everard Green’s manuscript pedigrees and other documents, to Richard Davies, Ayscoughfee Hall Museum Manager, South Holland District Council, for giving permission to photograph the cistern, and to the editors of this journal for suggestions.