The Coat of Arms

Annual Journal of the Heraldry Society

Series 4 Volume 1 Number 235 2018

The Heraldry Society is an educational charity. Its purpose is to promote greater understanding and appreciation of heraldry and its related subjects. The society organises lectures, study days, congresses, dinners and other social activities. It offers a course in heraldry leading to examination for a diploma. It publishes a range of source material at modest cost. Members receive the *Coat of Arms* and the quarterly *Heraldry Gazette*.

Help to support our work and participate in our social activities by joining today via our website www.theheraldrysociety.com

Registered office
53 Hitchin Street, Baldock, Hertfordshire SG7 6AQ
The Society was registered in England in 1956 as registered charity no. 241456.

coatofarms@theheraldrysociety.com

Printed in Bristol by 4word Ltd.

ISSN 0010-003X

THE COAT OF ARMS

The journal of the Heraldry Society

Fourth Series

Volume I

2018

Number 235 in the original series started in 1952

Guidance for authors will be found online at
www.theheraldrysociety.com

Figure 1: Westminster Hall looking north (UK Parliament).

THE HERALDRY AND BADGES OF KING RICHARD II AT WESTMINSTER HALL, PALACE OF WESTMINSTER

D. MARK COLLINS FSA

Absract

King Richard II ordered a major remodelling of the Great Hall at Westminster in the Perpendicular Gothic style, and the work took place between late 1393 and 1401. The hall was heightened, with the addition of a decorative string course, and above that new windows, and a hammerbeam roof. A new North Front was also constructed. All of these aspects were embellished repeatedly with the king's heraldic shields, crests and badges. There are many variations of design in the crests and badges on the string course, including examples where the king's white hart is seemingly under attack, an aspect which has previously escaped scholarly consideration.

The Palace of Westminster has been at the centre of royal and political life for over nine hundred years. Edward the Confessor rebuilt the palace in the middle of the eleventh century which, from later evidence, appears to have contained a hall, chapel and bedchamber, the latter rebuilt and known as the Painted Chamber. It was said that in this chamber the Confessor died, in December 1065. The devout Edward also re-endowed and rebuilt the Benedictine abbey nearby – the minster in the west – and in so doing created the first building in England in what we now know as the Norman style.[1]

A new Great Hall, Westminster Hall, was built by King William II (known as Rufus; reigned 1087–1100) and was completed in time for him to celebrate Whitsun there in 1099. Rufus commissioned a hall of extraordinarily large dimensions – 239 feet long and 67 feet wide, or 73m by 21m – exactly twice as long as the Confessor's hall.[2] The new hall created the stamp of Norman authority at Westminster providing

[1] For the early history of the palace and abbey, see: Warwick Rodwell and Tim Tatton Brown (Edd.) *Westminster: The Art, Architecture and Archaeology of the Royal Palace and Abbey. 2 Vols*. (Leeds 2015).

[2] The walls of the hall are 6 feet 8 inches or over 2m thick, with a rubble core faced by a mix of small blocks of Caen stone from Normandy and Reigate stone from Surrey, thus providing a simple chequer-work pattern of lighter and darker stones. Remnants of this external walling have survived, albeit repaired, on the western side and the masons' marks are visible on some blocks to the present day.

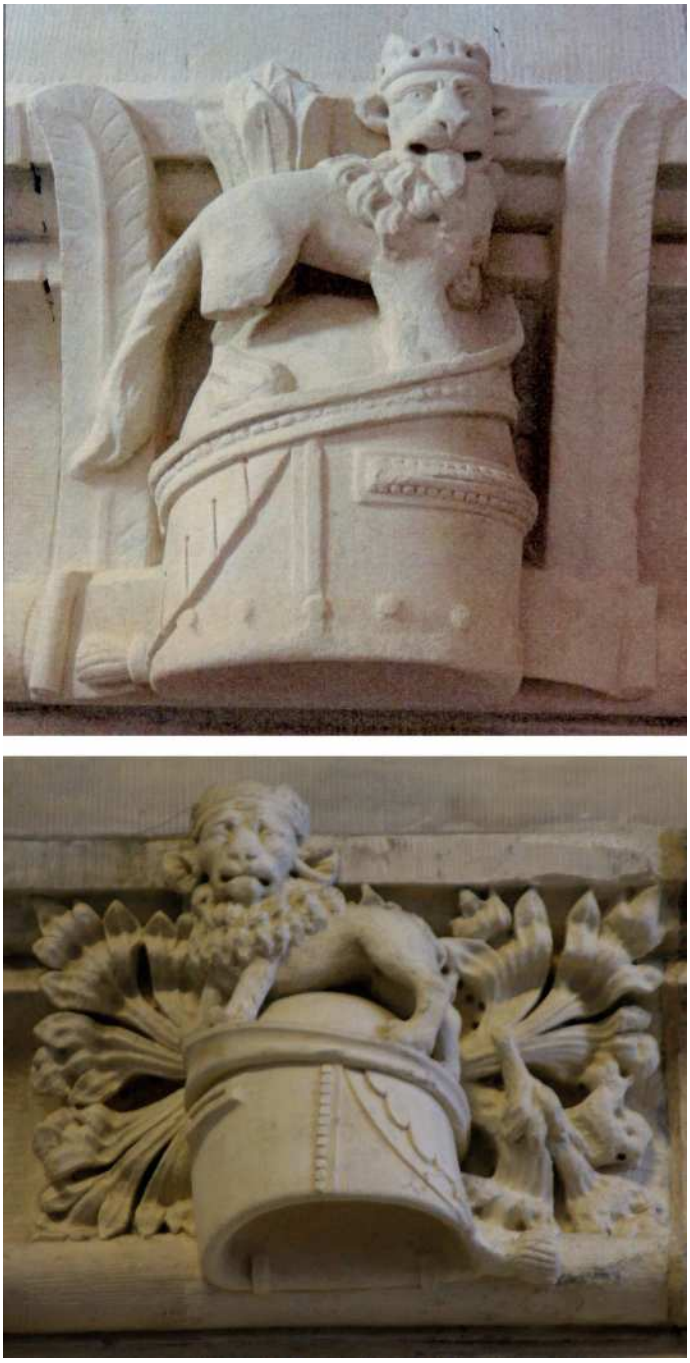

Figure 2: Royal helm and crest on the string course, with and without feathers. TOP: UK Parliament; BOTTOM: Editor.

a place for celebrating feast days and for the entertainment of magnates from the kingdom and overseas on a prodigious scale. On the dais at the southern end, the king's throne was placed behind the table facing down the length of the hall. The hall was also used for part of the coronation ceremonies of every monarch from King Richard I (1189) until King George IV (1821). In the morning, the new monarch would receive the acclamation by the peers; the king was lifted bodily into the throne on the dais and next he witnessed the presentation of the regalia by the Dean and Prebendaries of Westminster Abbey. The long service in the abbey would follow, and then the anointed sovereign would return to the hall for a lavish banquet.[3]

During the twelfth century, it was to be appropriated by the judiciary as the home of the courts of law, with the first judges sitting there by 1178. It was the place in which the English legal system was developed over several centuries. The king's council, or *Curia Regis*, came to include four law courts: the Exchequer, the Common Pleas, the King's (or Queen's) Bench and Chancery. The Court of the King's Bench and the Court of Chancery both sat adjacent to the king's throne at the southern end; the judges actually sat on stone benches fixed to the south wall, hence the name. The hall witnessed numerous state trials including those of Sir William Wallace in 1305, Sir Thomas More (1535) and Guy Fawkes and fellow conspirators (1606), all subsequently found guilty and executed. King Charles I was tried for treason by the Commons there in 1649 and Oliver Cromwell held his 'coronation' there in 1657.[4] The courts continued to sit inside the hall until 1820. From the thirteenth century, the first English parliaments were convened in the hall when called to Westminster.

Inside the hall, the Norman wooden roof may have been supported by two rows of twelve wooden posts, but archaeological investigations have failed to explain how the roof was spanned. At a height of nearly twenty feet from the floor, an arcaded walkway ran, perhaps uninterrupted, around the entire length of the four sides of the hall; fragments of it may still be seen on the east side. On the same level were the windows forming twelve bays in total.

The history of the building is clearly divided into two periods; the original construction by William Rufus in the late eleventh century, and the comprehensive remodelling by King Richard II (ruled 1377–99) in the late fourteenth century.[5] Richard's accession took place when he was 10 years old following the death of Edward III in June 1377. In 1381, at the age of 14, he successfully put down the Peasant's Revolt and the following year he married the daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor, Anne of Bohemia (1366–94) in Westminster Abbey.[6]

[3] For a general history of the hall, see: Dorian Gerhold, Westminster Hall: nine hundred years of history (London 1999).

[4] C.V.Wedgwood, *The Trial of King Charles I* (London, 1964).

[5] For repairs to the hall over the years, see F.Baines, *Report to the First Commissioner of H.M. Works Etc., on the Condition of the Roof Timbers of Westminster Hall* (London HMSO 1914).

[6] For a life of Richard, see: Nigel Saul, *Richard II*. (New Haven and London 1997).

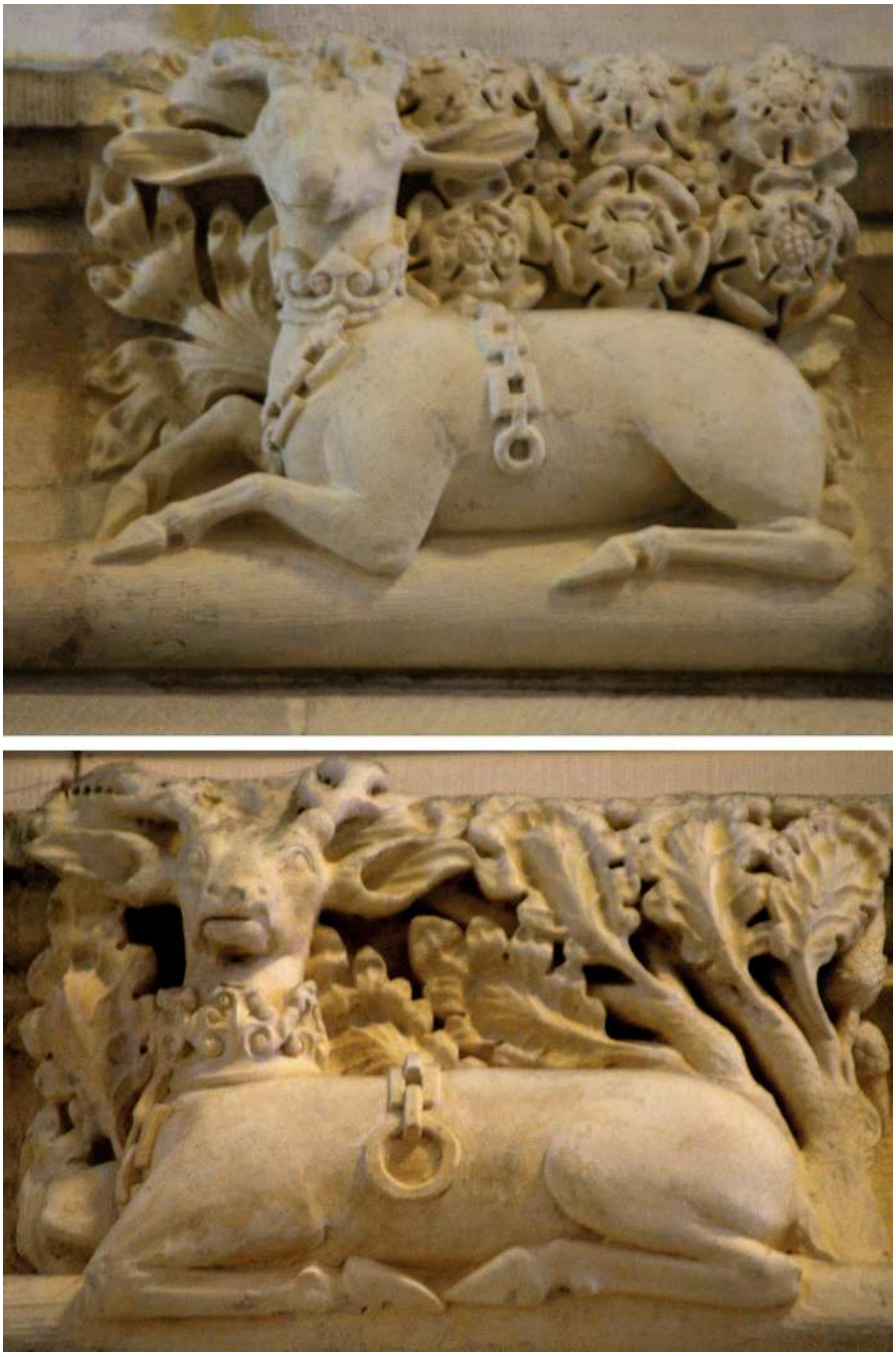

Figure 3: Collared harts from the string course (photography by Editor).

Richard II's remodelling of the hall
The six kings above the dais

In 1385, when he was 18 years old, Richard commissioned thirteen statues of kings for the interior – six remain in their niches in the south wall. The statues do not represent any particular king but were perhaps meant to represent those from Edward the Confessor to Richard as well as reflecting Christ and the twelve Apostles. Below the statues, a small sculpture depicts a man reading a book – perhaps alluding to the lawyers below; others show paired lions and strange beasts.[7]

The overall concept of a dynastic display of this kind was to be found in the Grand'Salle – the great hall of the Valois kings at the Palais Royale on the Ile de la Cité in Paris.[8] The statues also complement the sequence of kings on the pulpitum of 30 years before at St Stephen's Chapel built by his grandfather Edward III at the Palace of Westminster. The kings and niches also reflect some of the rood screens and reredoses added to cathedrals in the fourteenth century, such as the choir screen at old St Paul's Cathedral, London of c.1327. The concept was repeated at, for example, the quire screen in York Minster of about 1420, Henry V's chantry, Westminster Abbey, c.1430 and the pulpitum at Canterbury Cathedral dating from about 1450. Below the statues in his hall, Richard kept the throne and high table of about 1250, both made from stone – a display of the permanence of royal authority.[9]

The strength of purpose which gave him the character to take possession of a situation when in peril led to him to an overbearing self confidence; the five rebel barons – the Lords Appellant – were to challenge him in 1388. It was probably as a response to this challenge that Richard commissioned his own portrait for the abbey as a pertinent display of sacral kingship.[10]

Remodelling the hall

The major remodelling of the hall in the Perpendicular Gothic style took place between late 1393 and 1401. During a dramatic demonstration of his kingship, Richard II commissioned his esteemed master mason, Henry Yevele (fl. 1353, d.1400) to raise the walls by about three feet and to build two towers at the north entrance. The old walls were strengthened with flying buttresses, six on the west and three on the east, in order to take the great weight of the new roof. The stone towers were added to the north façade to give the principal entrance greater prominence and the timbers

[7] Howard Colvin (Ed), *The History of the King's Works, I: The middle ages*. Vol. 2 (London HMSO 1963) p.528.

[8] Elizabeth Hallam, *Capetian France 987–1328* (Harlow 2001).

[9] The fixed chair for the king and the 12 feet (4m) long table in front of it – both made from Purbeck Marble – were installed by Henry III in about 1250 on the dais at the southern end of the hall, and remained in position for over three centuries. Before the thirteenth century, justice was dispensed from the chair, either in the person of the king himself, or by the Lord Chancellor in the name of the king. In 1661, the table supports were used as rubble for a wall in front of the law courts, and were not rediscovered for 300 years; see: Mark Collins et al. "The King's High Table at the Palace of Westminster." *The Antiquaries Journal,* 92 (2012): 197–243.

[10] Caroline M Barron, *The regal image of Richard II and the Wilton Diptych* (London 1997).

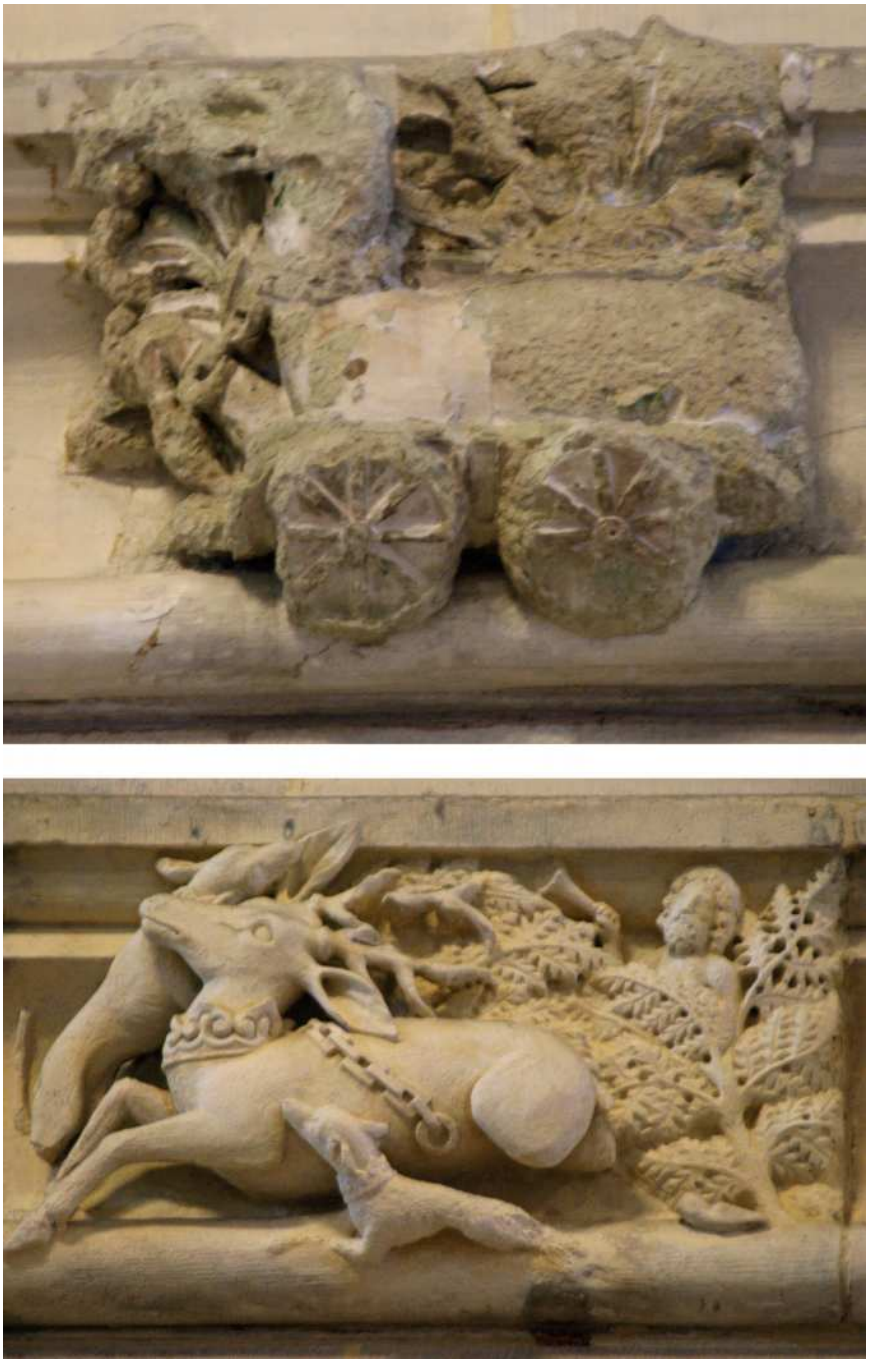

Figure 4: TOP: hart on cart, badly eroded, BOTTOM: hart being hounded (photography by Editor)

of a new roof were to be prepared.[11] On 7th June, 1394, before much work had been carried out on the hall, Queen Anne died at Sheen Palace and the king was distraught. He tore down Sheen, which had been the scene of much of their contented marriage. Work at Westminster, however, continued without interruption.

The String Course

Richard Washbourn and John Swalve (Swallow), were the masons engaged to heighten the walls of the hall with Reigate Stone from Surrey and Caen Stone from Normandy, together with a decorated string course below the twenty-six windows.[12] Washbourn and Swallow were also to provide the twenty-six 'souses' or corbels of Marre Stone from Yorkshire, and carve them to a pattern shown to them by the treasurer, to be paid 20s for each. The first moiety of the work was to be completed by the feast of John the Baptist, 24th June 1394 and the other by Candlemas Day, 2nd February of the following year.[13] The corbels have shields with the arms of England ancient alternating with those of Edward the Confessor.[14]

On each of the long walls inside the hall, twelve new windows were framed by thirteen corbels/trusses. A long string course, or decorative moulding of Reigate Stone beneath the windows, runs all the way round the hall making about 615 feet or 187m in total, interrupted only by the corbels and the six niches which held the statues of kings above the dais. String course carvings were a new concept in 1395, and provided decoration when no tapestries were hanging on the otherwise plain stone walls. Almost 200 carvings appear in the sequence altogether, forming a sculptural frieze embellished with the personal badges of the king: the chained white hart alternating with a helm surmounted by a chapeau and a lion (**Figures 2–5**). Each bay contains typically six of these boss sculptures boldly projecting from the horizontal course of stone. The principal entrance to the hall on the north wall shows a small break in the pattern with a central shield over the door with the king's arms supported by an angel on each side.[15] On both sides of this shield is a crowned lion's head with its tongue protruding; these sculptures are original to the 1390s, but have

[11] Colvin, pp.527–33.

[12] John Botterell Clerk of the Works; E.W.Brayley and J. Britton, *The History of the Ancient Palace and Late Houses of Parliament at Westminster* (London, 1836) p.437; John Harvey and A. Oswald, *English mediaeval architects,* 2nd ed (Gloucester 1984) p.317.

[13] Brayley and Britton, p.438.

[14] L.F. Salzman, *Building in England Down to 1540* (Oxford, 1967) p.472.

[15] Fourteen of the string course sculptures below the south window were lost in 1850; see south wall elevation, in: L.N. Cottingham, *Plans, elevations, sections and details at large of Westminster Hall,* London, 1822. As part of his new Palace of Westminster, the architect Charles Barry (1795–1860) removed the south window of Westminster Hall and created a great arch into its vast interior, with a flight of twenty-four limestone steps to connect the principal floor of his new building with the lower level of the old hall. The window tracery was recreated and set back to form St. Stephen's Porch as a main entrance for the public. At the top of the stairs, Barry introduced sculptures of two white harts holding shields. With the construction of the Victorian Annexe (by John Loughborough Pearson (1817–97)) to the east of the hall in 1888, stairs were constructed with large free-standing sculptures as follows: west stairs: two white harts, a lion and a falcon; north west stairs: a lion and a unicorn.

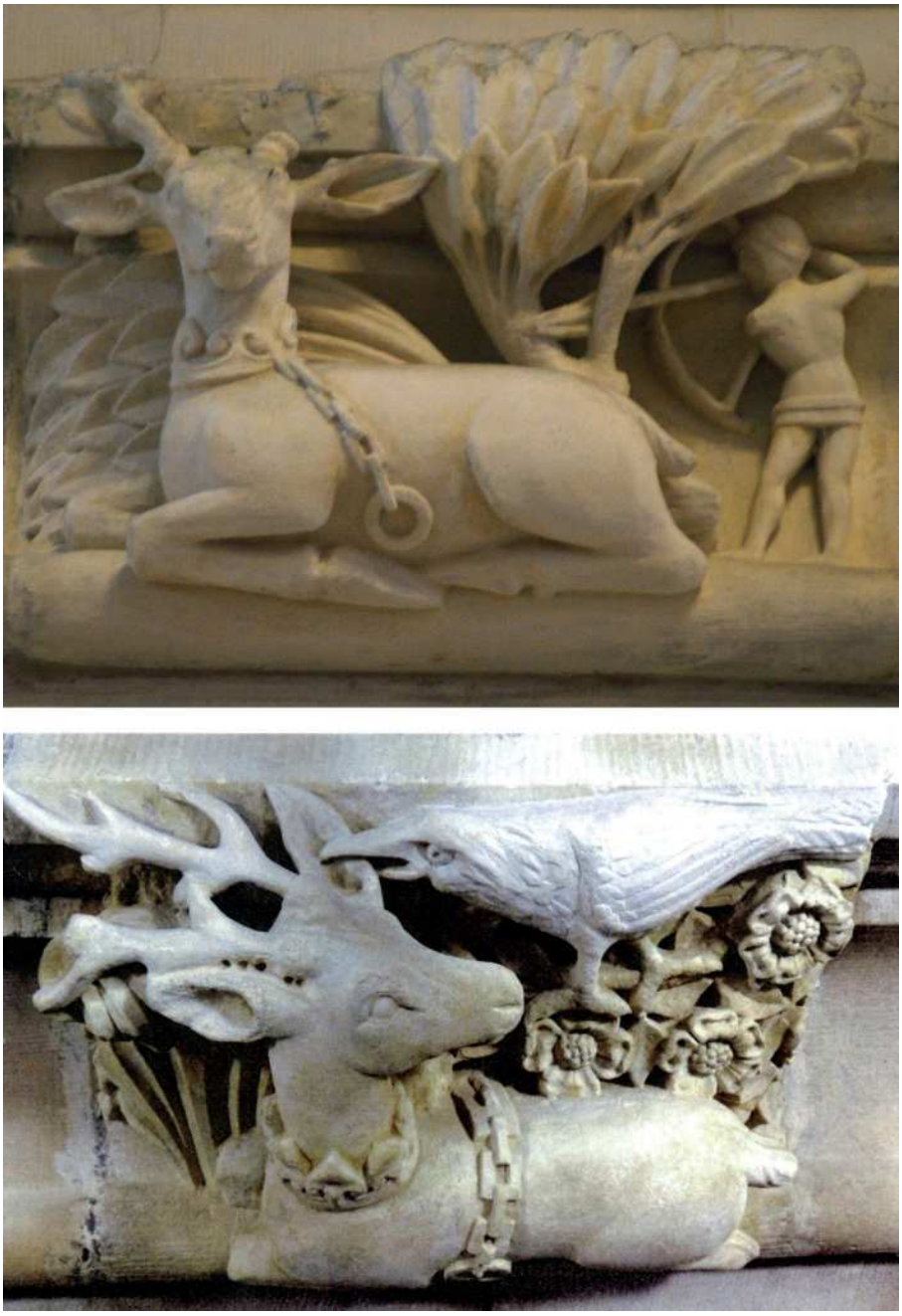

Figure 5: TOP: hart hunted (Editor). BOTTOM: hart pecked by a crow (UK Parliament).

been hidden by the nineteenth century wooden inner door-case. A small, plain shield interrupts the regular cycle on the west side adjacent to the dais, and may have been painted with the arms of the queen.[16]

The helms are sometimes supported by angels, and sometimes they have an upright ostrich feather on both sides. The feather was introduced into the royal household as an emblem by Philippa of Hainault, King Edward III's queen, and her son (Richard's father) Edward of Woodstock (1330–1376) used the three feathers on his shield of peace as Prince of Wales. The white harts are always couchant, gorged with a coronet; their heads are turned to face into the hall and towards the dais end, thereby breaking with heraldic principles on the east side. Some harts are appearing from a mass of stylized foliage, almost like a 'Green Man' carving was often surrounded by leaves, or from oak leaves and acorns, or a rose-bush, or fleurs-de-lys. Other harts are captured in a cart with wheels (**Figure 4)** , or behind a palisade.

Only in the last three bays on the south side of the west wall does the pattern change significantly – and in a surprising and mysterious way – the hart is shown under attack. For example, a man with a bow and arrow takes aim at the hart from behind a tree, in another, a hound leaps at its head and in a third, a huge bird descends upon a cowed and terrified hart (**Figures 4 and 5**). Could Richard have conceived these to represent the threatening barons, the scourge of the previous few years of his reign? Or could a change have been made to these sculptures at a later date, perhaps by Bolingbroke? The king was confident enough to have shown self-awareness about his fears but such an indication of vulnerability, however subtle, would have been a display of his self-doubt too.

The White Hart

The white hart was a stag, a buck, an unusual variation of a red deer, a beautiful mythical beast honoured in medieval times as special, as a creature set apart. Captivating, strange, rare and other-worldly, the hart with a chained coronet around its neck represented for the king a unique being captured in servitude to his kingdom. Richard's use of the symbol probably derived from his mother, Joan, countess of Kent, heiress of Edmund of Woodstock, earl of Kent, the younger son of Edward I, but it also can be seen as a play on his own name: 'Rich – hart'. The hart's portrayal of gentleness and the white of the animal also suggest purity, and Richard's rejection of the warlike natures of his grandfather, Edward III (1312–1377) and of his father,

[16] Sir Robert Smirke (1781–1867) repaired the interior stonework, beginning just before the fire of 16th October 1834 badly damaged the palace but not the hall. Smirke renewed all the interior wall facings with six-inch deep ashlar of Huddleston Stone from Yorkshire and the corbels and string course were also renewed like for like, the work completed in 1836. Brayley and Britton, p.441. The sculptor was William Grimsell Nicholl (1796–1871). It is clear from comparison with drawings predating their replacement, that the carvings are apparently exact copies of the originals. Some originals were left in place without being re-carved, showing that this was a careful restoration for its time. The stonework of the interior was cleaned and repaired in 2012–15. Huddleston is a hard, pale cream limestone also used at York Minster, King's College Chapel, Cambridge and Eton College. The original carvings were probably not at first painted with colours because it is known that a plain wash was used on the walls when completed.

the Black Prince. Richard used the hart from the beginning of his reign. A notable example of the way that he distributed it was at a joust at Smithfield in October 1390 when he led twenty knights accompanied by twenty ladies, all of them wearing the white hart with the crown around its neck.[17]

Other royal uses of the white hart and chained beasts

Richard's beautiful private, folding altar-piece, now known as the Wilton diptych, contains many white harts worn by the angels who surround the Virgin Mary to whom the king is being presented by his patron saints, St John the Baptist, St Edward the Confessor and St Edmund. The backs of the two panels have more heraldry, one with the white hart and the other's with the king's helm and lion crest. In the Chapel of the Pew in Westminster Abbey there is a wall painting of the white hart, and it is possible that the diptych once resided here when the king was in Westminster. There is another large painting of a hart in what may have been the private pew of the king in the south transept of the abbey, now the Muniment Room.[18]

Richard's copy of Roger Dymmok's refutation of the Twelve Conclusions – a heretical document which had been fixed to the doors of Westminster Hall by the Lollards in 1395 – has two harts on a bed of rosemary.[19] Anne of Bohemia's plant symbol was rosemary; Richard adopted it and it appears beneath the white hart on the outer panel of the Wilton Diptych. The winged stag with a coronet round its neck was one of various emblems used by Charles VI of France, whose daughter Richard married in 1396. The motto on the collar read: *Caesar hoc mihi donavit*, "*This Caesar gave to me*" and the symbol was also used by subsequent French kings. The hart appears in Philippe de Mezieres' *Songe du Vieil Pelerin* of 1389, although the copy with the illustration maybe late fifteenth century. In 1395, de Mezieres (d.1405) wrote an *Epistre* to Richard pressing for his marriage to Isabella of Valois in order to promote lasting peace with France.

Corbels

The large stone corbels which mark the base of the oak roof posts have shields charged with the royal arms of England alternating with those of Edward the Confessor. The king's arms always have white hart supporters, and the arms of the Confessor always have lion supporters (**Figures 6 and 7**). Richard by 1395 was using the arms of England impaled with those of Edward the Confessor, a combination which is notably absent from Westminster Hall.

Label Stops of windows

In addition, sculptures were carved into the label stops, these being the lower points of the hood moulds above each of the twenty-six windows.[20] Many of these are badly mutilated through time, but a number show the white hart (**Figure 8**). Others are

[17] Siddons, Badges vol 2.1 pp. 134–41.

[18] See: Jane Spooner, in Rodwell and Tatton Brown, op cit, pp. 262–90.

[19] Trinity Hall Library Cambridge MS.17.

[20] The most southerly window on the east side has no such mouldings.

Figure 6: Corbel with shield of St Edward the Confessor supported by lions (photography by Editor)

Figure 7: Corbel with royal arms of England supported by harts (photo by Editor).

human heads, and there is a single owl, perhaps to imply the wisdom of the lawyers at the courts of law. The two larger label stops of the south window were lost when the window was set back.[21] The east label stop shows a white hart gorged and couchant in

[21] L.N. Cottingham, *Plans, elevations, sections and details at large of Westminster Hall (*London 1822). Fortunately, the architect John Soane (1753–1837) had made plaster cast copies of them, probably during his work to repair the hall in about 1820, and these are still to be seen at his former home in London, now the Sir John Soane Museum. The casts are displayed in the Corridor; John N Summerson, *A new description of Sir John Soane's Museum* (London 1955) p.17 and John F Cherry, and Neil Stratford, *Westminster Kings and the medieval Palace of Westminster* (London 1995) pp. 65–66.

Figure 8: Label stop of a hart within an enclosure (photograph by Editor).

a palisade, and a shield bearing the arms of the Confessor. The west label stop shows the white hart supporting a shield with the royal arms dexter, with the sinister plain and un-carved, which must have been intended for the queen.[22]

Roof and angels

The original Norman structure may have had two rows of wooden posts to support the very wide roof making an aisled hall, but we have no records. About six hundred

[22] A small carved Reigate Stone figure of a man which once apparently held a bag of coins in each hand is to be seen above the arch of a blind doorway. The figure, dating from about 1400, was once over the main doorway of the Receipt of the Exchequer in the north-east corner of the hall. The Latin inscription below, perhaps aimed at the clerks of the exchequer, reads: '*Ingrediens jani, rediturus sis emulus argi'*; literally: '*On entering, may you be a rival of Janus and may you come [or 'rise'] to be a rival of Argus*', or: '*May you begin [or 'enter'] by looking in front and behind you [and] may you [eventually] attain the watchfulness of Argus'*). Janus, the classical god of gateways and beginnings, had a double face, one looking back into the old year and the other forward into the new. Argus, the alert watchman who guarded the white heifer named Lo, had a hundred eyes.

and sixty tons of oak were brought from the royal forests for the creation of a new and spectacular roof designed by the king's Master Carpenter, Hugh Herland (c.1330–c.1405) with John Godmeston as clerk of works.[23] The fourteenth century structural techniques of the carpenters allowed them to span the whole width of 67 feet or 21m without supports, and the hammer-beam roof at Westminster became one of the great masterpieces of woodwork in late medieval Europe. The timber was carved to form posts, braces and trusses at Farnham in Surrey and the component parts were then brought on barges along the River Thames to Westminster.[24] Thirteen roof trusses were made in total, a number almost certainly intended to represent Christ and the twelve Apostles, a reflection of the divine authority of the judgements delivered in the hall by the king. The number may also concurrently have represented the sequence of kings from Edward the Confessor to Richard II. The carved oak angel at the termination of each hammer beam wears dalmatics and clasps a shield bearing the coat of arms of the king; the fleur-de-lys of France quartered with the three lions of England (**Figure 9**). The angels in the hall were the first to appear in wooden roof decoration and were soon to gain popularity, spreading into numerous hammer-beam roofs of the fifteenth century, especially so in East Anglian wool churches.

The North Front

The north front resembles that of an abbey and is remarkably close in form to the main west entrance to the nave of Westminster Abbey of 1376–87, for which money was provided by Richard.[25] Yevele must have been responsible for this work as well. Richard's intention to demonstrate a parallel between the entrance to the royal church and the main doorway of the hall at his principal palace is obvious. At the front of the hall twenty-seven niches were filled with statues depicting kings and queens, most of which, twenty-two altogether, occupied a single, lower, horizontal tier.[26] The spandrels of the porch were provided with carved coats of arms: the west with the arms of the Confessor, and the east with the royal arms (**Figure 10**). A single shield below the statues on the east side of the main entrance was carved with the arms of England, and each of the two drip moulds on the north window depicts a white hart.[27]

Stained Glass

In 1399 and 1400 the glazier William Burgh was asked to supply stained glass depicting birds for the side windows in the hall. The tracery lights, or 'Oylettes' contained the arms of the king and those of Edward the Confessor. The glass post-

[23] Harvey and Oswald, op cit, pp.129–131.

[24] Colvin, p.529.

[25] Harvey and Oswald p.318.

[26] Cherry and Stratford pp. 74–91.

[27] Barron p.284 n.80. The north front was renewed in Bath Stone 1819–20 by John Soane who employed the master-mason Thomas Gayfere (1775–1827) who was working also on the careful re-facing of the Henry VII Chapel at the abbey nearby. All the fourteen surviving statues were lost at, or by, this time. Soane also undertook repairs to the timber roof whilst the hall was closed for the preparations for the coronation of George IV.

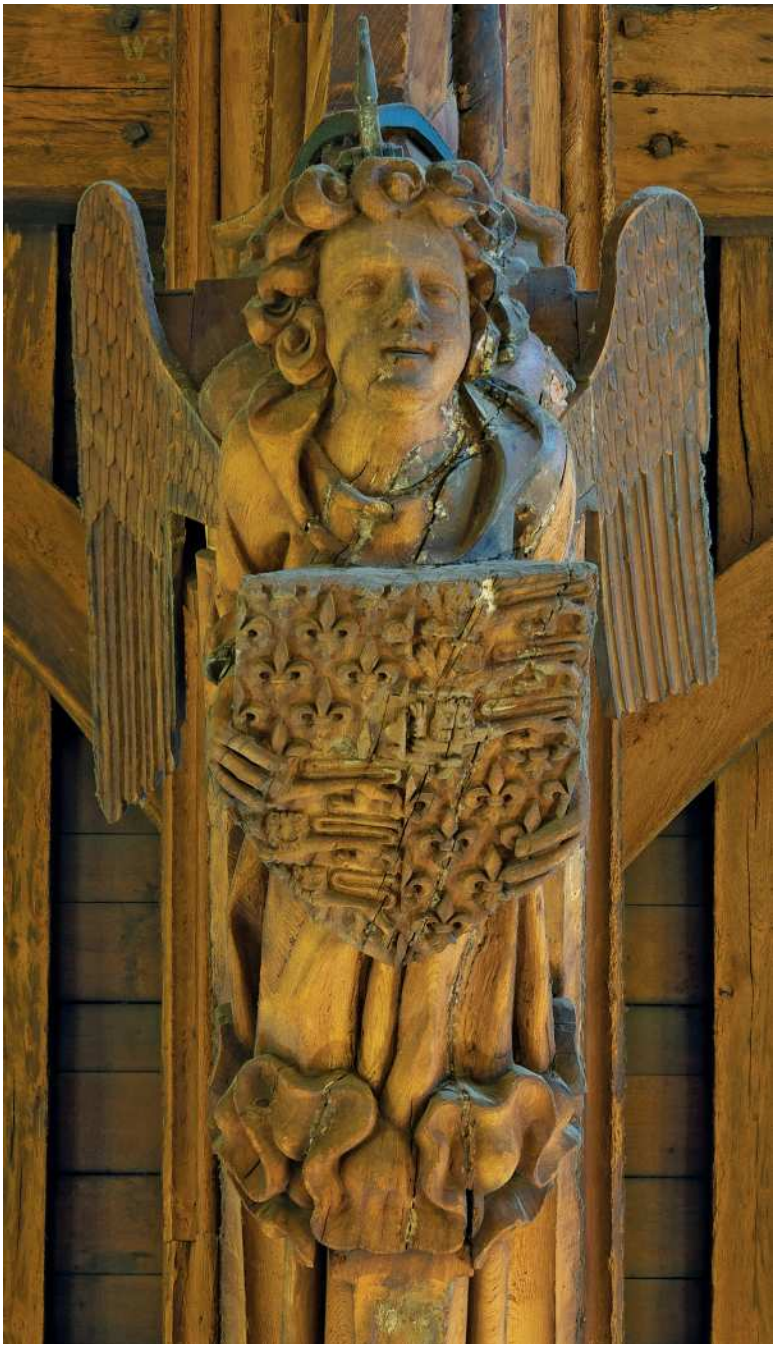

Figure 9: Hammerbeam end roof angel (UK Parliament).

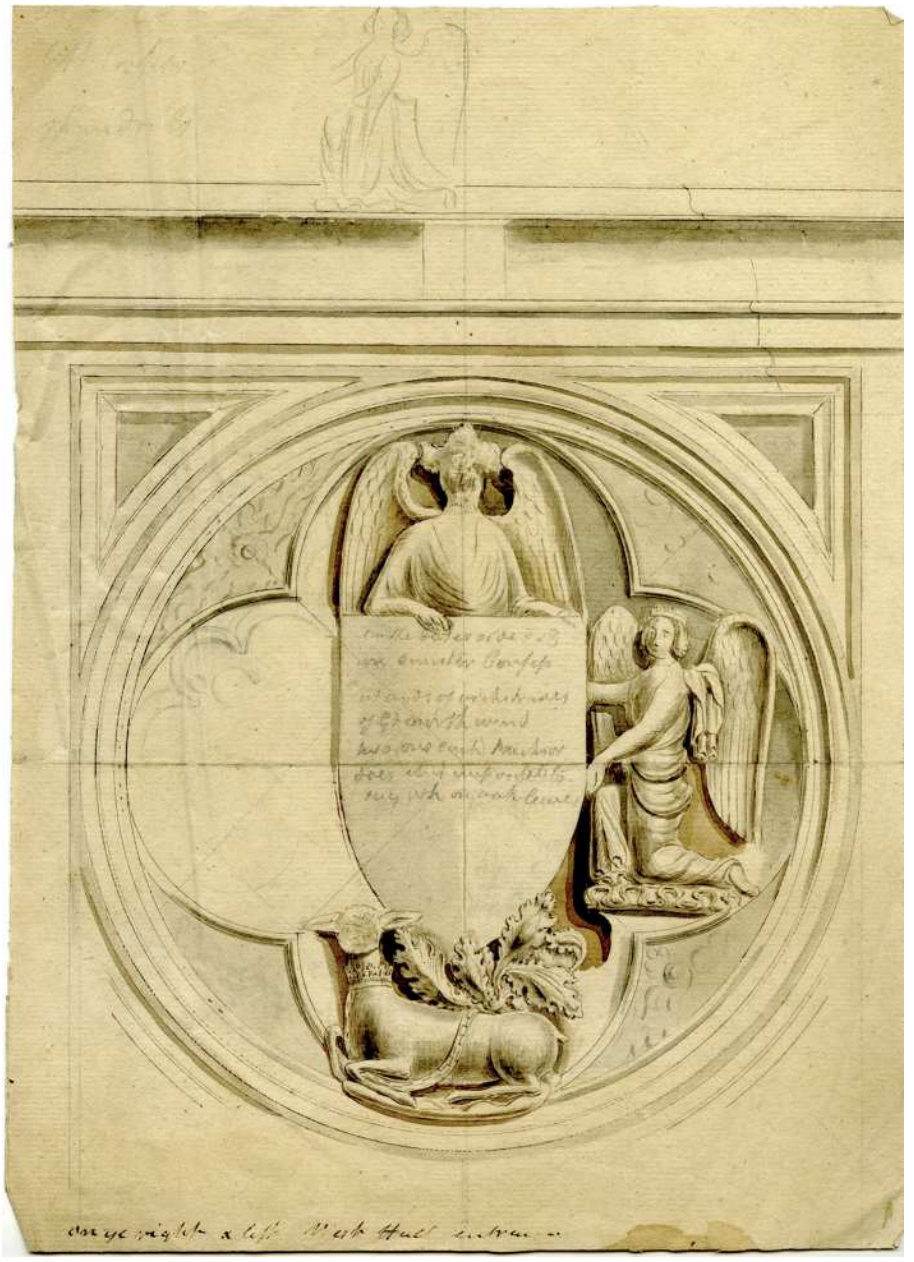

Figure 10: Westminster Hall detail from North Front, drawing of c. 1810 perhaps by Thomas Willement (UK Parliament)

dates Richard II's reign, and the subject of it may have been chosen by Henry IV. The idea of portraying birds is a pretty one, and is characteristic of Richard II and his elegant and sophisticated court.[28] Other than swans, birds do not appear in English royal heraldry to any great extent, and if heraldic in nature, I can only think that they may have related to the five martlets around the cross in the arms of Edward the Confessor. Otherwise they may have been comparable to the borders of an illuminated manuscript, a reference to the birds eaten in the hall at feasts, St. Francis of Assisi, or a reference to hawking. In 1400, Burgh also supplied glass for 'the great window in the gable' but it does not mention subject matter; it cost £50. This window could be either the north or south, of course, and may have contained the arms of England.

The coronation feast of Isabella of Valois (1389–1409), Richard's second wife, was held in the hall in 1397, although the roof was not yet complete. In the same year, Richard made the unwise decision to banish his cousin, Henry of Bolingbroke, and in 1399 he made an equally unwise decision to prevent Henry from inheriting the duchy of Lancaster. After Richard's overthrow by Bolingbroke his fate was sealed in the incomplete Westminster Hall, when Parliament was called to witness the restored duke of Lancaster take the crown as Henry IV on 1st October 1399. The event took place before the lead had fully covered Richard's new roof. In 1400 Henry IV confirmed Godmeston and Herland in their roles, and although work to the hall continued with the east wall, the roof was left unfinished by Henry when work to it was abandoned in 1402.[29] Henry IV might have added one small symbol of his own, however – a carved label stop of a swan, one of his personal badges, although Richard's father also used it.[30]

The work sponsored by Richard II at Westminster Hall must be considered as an architectural and aesthetic triumph, with some fine examples of heraldic art. Another magnificent survival which reveals further aspects of the king's artistic taste is his nearby tomb in Westminster Abbey, again created by Yevele in collaboration with his eventual successor, Stephen Lote (d.1417/18). Perhaps had Richard's life not been cut so cruelly short – he died in 1400, and this led to almost a century of warfare – the English Renaissance might have ignited many decades earlier.

[28] Barron p.285, n.93.

[29] Harvey and Oswald p.130. The most northerly truss was not completed until the architect John Soane undertook his repairs during the 1820s.

[30] Siddons, Badges vol 2.1 pp.239–40.