

# The Coat of Arms

Annual Journal of the Heraldry Society



Series 4 Volume 1 Number 235 2018

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The Society was registered in England in 1956 as registered charity no. 241456.

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Printed in Bristol by 4word Ltd.

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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

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# HERALDRY IN OLD ST PANCRAS CHURCH

THOMAS WOODCOCK, CVO, FHS  
Garter Principal King of Arms

## Abstract

*Of the ten heraldic monuments remaining in Old St Pancras church four are floor slabs without colour, and of the remaining six tombs three have been poorly restored using incorrect tinctures. Taken as a whole the assemblage provides an interesting case study in the difficulties of confirming the veracity of arms even from so recent a period as the eighteenth-century, with some of the families using arms to which they were not entitled.*

Old St Pancras Church contains ten heraldic monuments dating between 1588 and 1768. The church is dedicated to the Roman martyr St. Pancras, and is believed to be one of the oldest sites of Christian worship in England after an altar dated to 625 A.D. and Roman tiles were found there. St. Pancras is particularly venerated in England because St Augustine dedicated his first church to St Pancras, and it is one of five early churches in England dedicated to him. It was also the parish church of the first Garter King of Arms, William Bruges.

The dates of the surviving heraldic monuments would support a Tudor rebuilding, as suggested by a note in *The Building News* written by Robert Roumieu, the architectural partner of Alexander Dick Gough. Gough's drastic restoration of 1848 included the removal of the West Tower, the lengthening of the Nave, and a new South Tower. Roumieu's note stated:

*"The old church was principally late Tudor. When it was pulled down to be rebuilt, several small Norman columns, pilaster piers and other remains of a Norman edifice were found among the materials used in the wall, leaving no doubt but that the original church had been a Norman structure which had been at some time completely rebuilt and part used as building material in the reconstructions".<sup>1</sup>*

The church was prone to flooding, and in 1642 was said to be deserted, and was used to house fifty Parliamentarian troopers.<sup>2</sup> Towards the end of the eighteenth-century services were only held once a month and in 1822 it lost its designation as a parish

<sup>1</sup> *The Building News*, 17th February 1871, p.137.

<sup>2</sup> London County Council, *St. Pancras Old Church, Survey of London: Volume 19, the Parish of St Pancras Part 2: Old St Pancras and Kentish Town* (London 1938) pp 72–95.

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church when New St. Pancras Church was built on what is now the Euston Road. A population increase in the early nineteenth-century led to the re-modelling of Old St Pancras in 1848, increasing the capacity of the congregation from 120 to 500. It became an independent parish again in 1863 (**Figure 1**).

As well as official heraldic records, the College of Arms houses many antiquarian collections. Two heralds, Benjamin Pingo, York Herald and John Charles Brooke, Somerset Herald both recorded monuments not so much in the Church as in the Churchyard Pingo and Brooke were suffocated to death together in 1794 when the gallery in the Little Theatre in the Haymarket collapsed.

Pingo's collection of transcripts contains the following note:

*“The Roman Catholics are attach'd to the above Parish as a Burial Place for the following reasons which were told me by a Boorish Priest.*

*1st Because the Roman Service was performed later in this church than in any other church in England.*

*2nd There is Mass performed twice a year in the Episcopal Church (i.e St Peter's) at Rome to this day for those that are buried at St. Pancras.*

*3rd As it is the custom for the Catholic Church to pray for the dead, many prefer St. Pancras as a resting place that they may be included in the prayers offer'd for them at Rome & elsewhere at that Church”<sup>3</sup>*

One monument which shows the low esteem in which attorneys and solicitors were held in the second half of the eighteenth-century is to Thomas Ibbot, an attorney who died on 16 August 1762 aged 48. It reads:

“Here lieth One (believe it who can)  
Who tho an Attorney was an honest man  
The Gates of Heaven for him will open wide  
But will be shut to all the Tribe beside”.

Brooke noted that many of the gravestones and monuments contained the words *Requiescat in Pace*, indicating that the deceased was a Roman Catholic.

One funeral which Brooke commented on was that of the Comte de Lucchese. He wrote:

*“not far from the church & east of Mrs. Townley's tomb was on 18th June 1790 interred Comte de Lucchese, Envoy-Extraordinary from the King of the Two Sicilies who died at his House in Portman Square of a Dropsy in his breast 13th June preceding & was buried here with great funeral pomp, after a Dirge at his Chapel which was attended by all the Foreign Ministers and many of the English Nobility: In the procession was a horse of State, led with suitable trappings, His Secretary bareheaded on horseback bearing a Coronet on a Cusheon – His Excellency's State Coach empty – The Foreign Ministers in 6 Mourning Coaches, their State Coaches empty – The Ambassadors of the House of Bourbon, France and Spain Marq: de Luzerne & Marq: del Campo, Chief*

<sup>3</sup> CA MS RR13/A.

# OLD ST PANCRAS CHURCH



*Figure 1:* View from the chancel. On the left side is the Platt monument, on the right side in the nave the Draper column monument, and in the chancel the Offley monument. On the floor in the centre of the chancel is the Harland monument. (photograph Robert Harrison)

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*Mourners. The Duke of Leeds, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs would have been there but was prevented by business but his State Coach with servants in their full liveries went in the procession to Pancras."*

Not all the monuments in the churchyard are particularly Roman Catholic or even Christian. Sir John Soane designed in 1815 a tomb above the vault where his wife was buried, in and in which he was subsequently buried 22 years later. It avoids any Christian symbolism. The roof has a pine cone finial, an ancient Egyptian symbol of regeneration below which is an *ouroboros*, a serpent swallowing its own tail, a symbol of eternity. It is described as architecturally the most ambitious tomb of any British architect, though it does not contain any heraldry. Soane was the son of a bricklayer and never had a grant of arms.

The earliest heraldic monument listed by the Reverend Daniel Lysons in 1795 was that of Mary Beresford who died on 21st August 1588.<sup>4</sup> She was the wife of John Beresford, a Barrister of Gray's Inn and the quartered arms of *Argent a bear rampant sable muzzled and collared argent with a chain or attached thereto, quartering Per chevron argent and or three pheons sable* were confirmed in 1563 by William Hervey, Clarenceux, to George Beresford of London, leatherseller. The quartering appears to be for Hassell of Hankelow and Nantwich in Cheshire. The cadency mark of a crescent suggests that John Beresford was a second son. Descendants of George Beresford's son Rowland Beresford and his wife Sarah, daughter of Ralph Woodcock, an Alderman of London who came from Holmes Chapel in Cheshire recorded pedigrees with these quartered arms at the 1634 Heralds' Visitation of London.<sup>5</sup>

Another floor tomb, which in Lysons' time was within the rails of the communion table, is that of Richard Nicholls and his wife Isabel. Richard Nicholls died on 20 April 1612 aged 59, and his widow Isabel, daughter of John Clarke of Elstow in Bedfordshire (the parish in which John Bunyan was born) died over forty years later on 6 July 1652. His arms are shown as *A fess between three lion's heads erased with a crescent for difference* impaling for his wife *Ermine, on a chief indented an annulet*. Her arms of Clarke appear on some unidentified early glass in Houghton Conquest Church, Bedfordshire as *Ermine on a chief indented gules an annulet in dexter chief or*. John Nicholls of London, gentleman, recorded arms of *Azure a fess between three lion's heads erased or* at the 1568 Heralds' Visitation of London.<sup>6</sup> He was then Comptroller of the Works of London Bridge. Richard Nicholls, whose monument this is, was born in about 1553. His use of the cadency mark of a crescent implies that he was a younger son of John Nicholls, but the 1568 Visitation records only two daughters to John Nicholls by his first wife, and no children by his second.

Of similar date is the first wall monument, that to Philadelphia (d.1616), wife of Thomas Wollaston (**Figure 2**). This monument has been restored in a cavalier

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Lysons, *The environs of London : being an historical account of the towns, villages, and hamlets, within twelve miles of that capital* 4 vols (London 1792–96), vol 3 pp 351–3.

<sup>5</sup> CA MSS C24(1) 135 & C24(2) 541b.

<sup>6</sup> CA MS G10 94.

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Figure 2: The Wollaston monument. (photograph by Editor)

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fashion, as a consequence of which the tinctures of the arms of both husband and wife are wrong. Sculpturally this is an important monument, with a semi-reclining figure of Mrs. Wollaston and a small dead baby beside her. Philadelphia's paternal arms are displayed above the tomb on a lozenge, this being the correct way to display the arms of a spinster, while her married arms are displayed below on an oval, which is an alternative form for a shield. On the oval, to the dexter, Thomas Wollaston's arms are given as *Gules three mullets or*. He was the son of Henry Wollaston, an Alderman, Citizen and Draper of London, whose father came from Staffordshire. The arms were recorded at the 1663 Heralds' Visitation of Staffordshire as *Argent three pierced mullets sable*.<sup>7</sup> These correct tinctures are confirmed by a contemporary note of the funeral of Henry Wollaston, who died in c.1617.<sup>8</sup>

Philadelphia's arms are those of Vincent, which now appear as *Argent (azure) a chevron between three quatrefoils slipped gules (argent)*, the correct tinctures provided in brackets. Two families named Vincent recorded arms at the 1634 Herald's Visitation of London, one showed this coat in the tinctures *Azure a chevron between three quatrefoils slipped argent* and the other *Azure three quatrefoils unslipped*, (i.e. without a stalk) *argent*.<sup>9</sup>

The monument to Daniel Clarke was described by Lysons as being on the East Wall of the Chancel, but since the rebuilding has been on the north wall.<sup>10</sup> Daniel Clarke was Master Cook both to Queen Elizabeth and King James for 29 years. He died on 30 June 1626 aged 79, so he was born in about 1547. His arms are shown as *Per chevron azure and or in chief three leopard's faces or, and in base an eagle displayed gules* (**Figure 3**). These same arms are attributed to Dorothy, daughter and heir of Sir Francis Clarke of Houghton Conquest, Bedfordshire, on the funeral certificate of her husband Sir Edmund Wylde (d.1620) in the College of Arms.<sup>11</sup> The crest was *a leaping goat argent with horns or against a pine tree*. Sir Francis Clarke was knighted in 1626, and his will was proved in 1640, and the chronology makes it impossible that the cook was his son, so Daniel Clarke was not entitled to use the undifferenced arms of the Clarke family of Houghton Conquest in Bedfordshire. Nor has any relationship been found between the cook and that family.

The next monument in date order is by far the most remarkable heraldically as it contains 38 shields, many of them of quartered and impaled arms. It was originally in the Chapel of Highgate School, but was moved to St. Pancras in 1833. It commemorates William Platt (d. 1637) and his wife Mary (d. 1686), daughter of Sir John Hungerford of Down Ampney in Gloucestershire, who survived her husband by almost fifty years (**Figure 4**). Lysons commented on it in its original location, when he wrote "*On the south wall is the monument of William Platt Esquire Founder of some Fellowships in St. John's College, Cambridge, who died in 1637. He was son of Sir Hugh Platt of Kirby Castle, Bethnal Green. The monument is surrounded with a great number of*

<sup>7</sup> CA MS C36 97.

<sup>8</sup> CA MS I.16 387b.

<sup>9</sup> CA MS C24(2) 411 & 528b.

<sup>10</sup> The monument also commemorates his wife Katherine who predeceased him in 1613.

<sup>11</sup> CA MS I.19 108.

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*Figure3: Daniel Clarke d.1626, the arms and crest assumed without authority.  
(photograph by Editor)*

*escutcheons, under arches are busts of Mr. Platt and his wife Mary who was daughter of Sir John Hungerford of Down Amney in Gloucestershire and afterwards wife of Edward Tucker Esquire of Madingley in Wiltshire*<sup>12</sup> Lysons added “I have been able to appropriate only the following coats”, and started with *Or fretty sable on each joint a plate*, for Platt. These are William Platt’s paternal arms and they are seen beneath the two busts impaling *Sable two bars argent in chief three plates* for Hungerford, so these are

<sup>12</sup> Lysons op cit vol 3 pp 66–7.

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Figure 4: The Platt monument. (photograph by Editor)

the arms of the commemorated couple. Straight above this at the top of the monument are the impaled arms of William Platt's parents Sir Hugh Platt and Dorothy Albany (Figure 5). Platt is shown quartering Birchells *Argent on a chevron between three cross crosslets fitchy azure three fleurs de lys argent*. The fleurs de lys have vanished since Lysons saw them in 1795. Hugh Platt's mother was Alice Birchells. Hugh Platt's wife (and William Platt's mother) was Dorothy, daughter of William Albany. The arms of Albany are *Argent on a fess between three cinquefoils gules a greyhound courant or*. The greyhound seems to have turned into a lion. These arms were recorded at the 1568 Heralds' Visitation of London for William Albany who was a Merchant Taylor. Lysons recorded Albany as quartering *Gules (correctly sable) a chevron between three combs*

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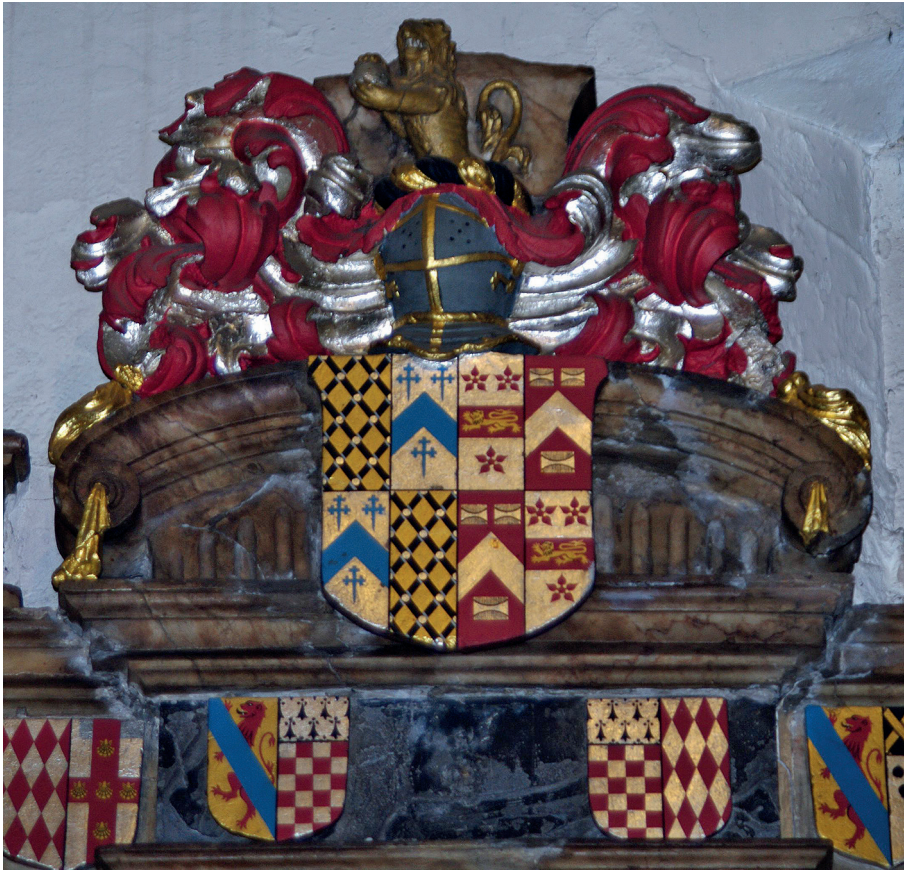


Figure 5: The quartered arms of Platt impaling those of Albany. (photograph by Editor)

*argent*, the arms of Bootle. William Albany married Thomasin, daughter of Richard Butle of London. The crest of Platt appears above the helm namely *Issuing from a crest wreath a demi lion or holding a plate*. Lysons comments that the monument was repaired and beautified by St. John's College, Cambridge in 1743 and that in the process it is probable that some of the coats were altered and deranged. He adds it is very evident that many of these coats are improperly marshalled. Many of the coats appear to have been made up out of the charges belonging to those already described, perhaps at the discretion of the sculptor.

An example of this muddle can be seen in the shield at the bottom right where we have the arms of William Platt's paternal grandmother Alice Birchells namely *Argent on a chevron between three cross crosslets fitchy three fleurs de lys argent* impaling those of his maternal grandmother Bootle *Gules a chevron between three combs argent* in the wrong colours, gules rather than sable (**Figure 6**). It is possible that in some earlier generation a Mr. Birchells married Miss Bootle, but very unlikely.

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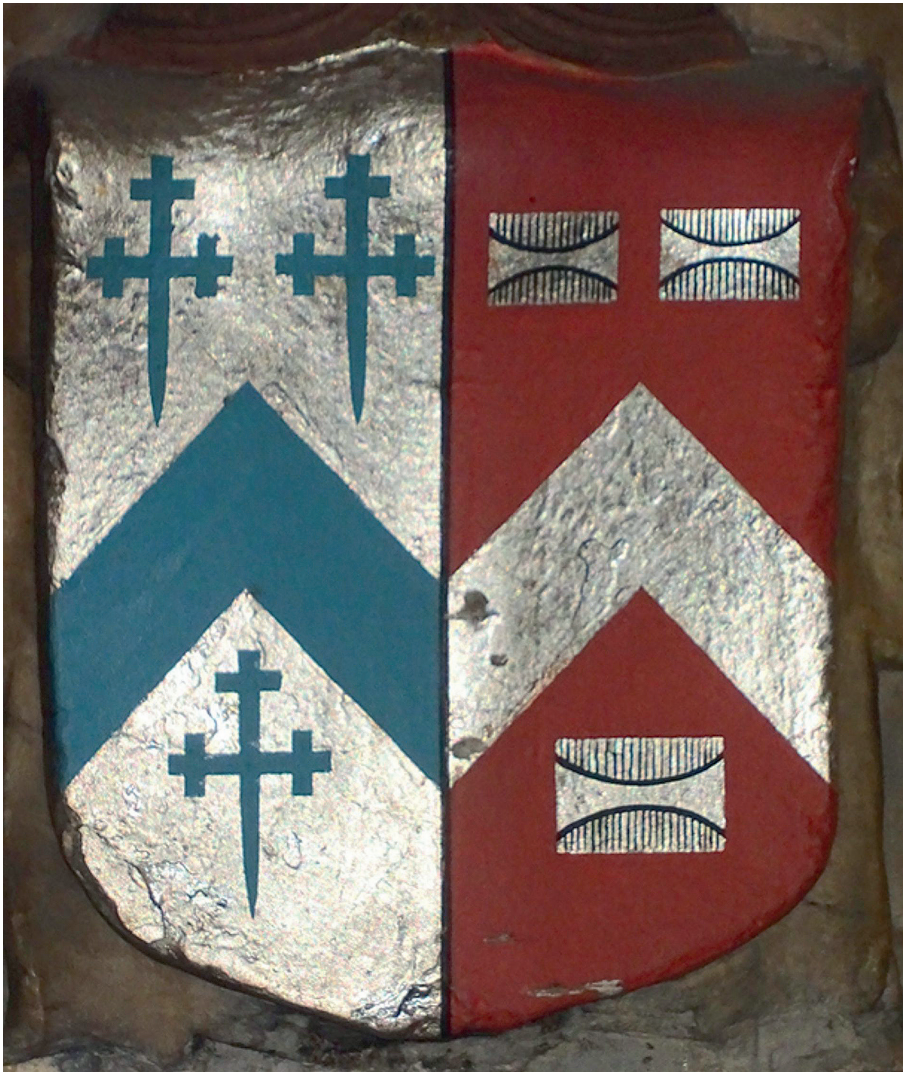


Figure 6: Birchells impaling Bootle or Buttle on the Platt monument.  
(photograph Robert Harrison)

The monument proclaims that it was subsequently restored at the expense of St. John's College, Cambridge in 1848, 1871 and 1983. The College uses the arms of its founder Lady Margaret Beaufort namely France modern (*azure three fleurs de lis or*) quartering England (*gules three lions passant guardant or*) in a *bordure gobony argent and azure*. These arms are prominent at the centre at the foot of the monument. An entire article could be written on the muddled heraldry on this monument.

The next monument is that of 1667 to John Offley. His great-uncle Sir Thomas Offley was Mayor of London in 1556 and was granted arms in 1547, the year in

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which he was Master of the Merchant Taylor's Company: *Argent on a cross couped flory at the ends azure between four owysylls sable beaked and eyed or a lion passant guardant or*, with a crest of *A demi lion guardant per pale or and azure with a plain collar counterchanged holding between the forepaws a branch of olive vert fructed or*.(Figure 7)<sup>13</sup>

The owysylls in the arms are presumably Water Ousels better known as Dippers. As Offley and owysyll are both six letter words containing o & l it is tempting to think that it is a poor canting reference. Again, the tinctures in both arms and crest are wrongly depicted as though the field of the arms is correctly shown as argent and the red and white mantling is in the correct tinctures the cross with its ends terminating in fleurs de lys should be azure, that is blue and not black and the crest wreath should be of alternate white and blue not white and black twists (Figure 8). The lion in the crest which with the arms was recorded at the Heralds' Visitation of Hertfordshire and Middlesex in 1634 should be divided vertically with the front half being gold and the back half blue with the collar round its neck counterchanged.<sup>14</sup>

At the foot of the monument the arms of Offley are shown quartered with those of Moore, *azure a chevron between three fleurs de lis argent* (Figure 9). John Offley's wife was Elizabeth, daughter of Robert Moore of London, goldsmith. They had, as the monument tells us, fourteen sons and three daughters. Whether the tinctures are correct or not is uncertain. Printed sources give *Sable a chevron between three fleurs de lys argent* as the arms of Moore of Herefordshire and *Azure a chevron between three fleurs de lys argent* as the arms of Moore of Yorkshire. Robert Moore, the London goldsmith, left a will proved in 1651 which reveals that he had no son and only two daughters Elizabeth Offley and Margaret Webb. This means that if he was entitled to arms the children of his daughters would be able to quarter the arms of Moore. Whether he was entitled to arms is more questionable, as he never established a right, and all his relations named Moore mentioned in his will lived in Essex and not Herefordshire or Yorkshire. A printed pedigree of Offley, after mentioning the quarterings adds "*This last coat should have been impaled not quartered, it being that of the family of Moore*".<sup>15</sup> If the arms related to the husband and wife they should be impaled, but I think it is reasonable to relate this quartered coat to the children of whom four of the sons and one of the daughters are referred to on the Memorial. The eldest son Robert Offley was a Bencher of the Middle Temple, and is referred to in his maternal grandfather's will as both his grandson and his godson. The most interesting son was perhaps the fourteenth, Joseph Offley. He was a lawyer and in 1710 Treasurer of the Middle Temple, who as Member of Parliament for Rye, in 1699 instigated a Bill in Parliament to outlaw lotteries.

A floor slab commemorates Lady Frances Wintour (d.1720), the widow of Sir Charles Wintour of Lidney, Gloucestershire and daughter of George Napier of Holywell in Oxfordshire. (Figure 10) Two impaled coats of arms adorn the slab, to the left a lozenge with her husband's arms of Wintour (*Sable*) *a fess ermine*

<sup>13</sup> CA MS F12 103.

<sup>14</sup> CA MS C28(2) 34b. The sketch in the London Visitation CA MS C24(1) 7 is unfinished.

<sup>15</sup> G.C.Bower and H.W.F Harwood, Pedigree of Offley, Genealogist NS vol 19 (1903) pp 226–31 (227).

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*Figure 7: The Offley monument. (photograph by Editor)*

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Figure 8: Offley crest-detail. (photograph Robert Harrison)

impaling Napier (*Argent*) *a saltire engrailed between four roses (gules)*. Sir Charles Wintour was the son of a celebrated ironmaster Sir John Wintour, who was the largest landowner in the Forest of Dean. Sir Charles Wintour was High Sheriff of Gloucestershire in 1686 and knighted at Bristol in the same year.<sup>16</sup> The pedigree of Napier was recorded at the 1669 Heralds' Visitation of Oxfordshire when George Napier was shown with three daughters, of whom Frances was the youngest.<sup>17</sup>

The arms of Napier were recorded at the earlier Oxfordshire Visitation of 1634 by Frances's grandfather.<sup>18</sup> To the right is a shield of Nevill of Holt as recorded at

<sup>16</sup> The arms of Winter of Lidney are recorded in CA MS 4D14/231.

<sup>17</sup> CA MS D25(2) 16.

<sup>18</sup> CA MS C29 64.

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*Figure 9: Offley quartering Moore. (photograph by Editor)*

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Figure 10: Lady Francis Wintour née Napier. (photograph Robert Harrison)

the 1634 Heralds' Visitation of London, blazoned *Gules a saltire ermine*. Frances Napier's eldest sister Margaret married Henry Nevill of Holt, so after the death of her first husband she appears to have married her brother-in-law's brother.<sup>19</sup>

Captain Robert Harland (d.1750) and Frances his wife (d.1717) are recorded on a black ledger stone (**Figure 11**). Harland was a Captain in the Royal Navy and his arms have a nautical flavour, *on a bend engrailed between two sea lions three stag's heads caboshed*. There is no record of them in the College of Arms. The couple's son Robert, born in 1715, became an Admiral, and was created a Baronet in 1771. The records of the College of Arms contain arms for Harland of *Three stag's heads on a bend* but not the sea lions. Except for the evidence of their presence on this monument one might suppose that they were granted to the son in 1771 when he was created a Baronet. Since this monument is earlier the origin of the arms has not been solved. The Harland arms are impaled with those of Clyatt for Frances, who was the daughter of Samuel Clyatt of Butley Abbey, *(argent) a bend between two cotises (sable)*.

These arms are known only from an unofficial printed source, and no record of these arms has been found in the College of Arms.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> The arms of Nevell of Holt-on-the-Hill, co. Leicester were recorded at the 1634 Visitation of London, CA MS 2C24/512.

<sup>20</sup> Walter Arthur Copinger, *The manors of Suffolk: notes on their history and devolution*, 7 vols (London 1905–11), vol 4 p.228.

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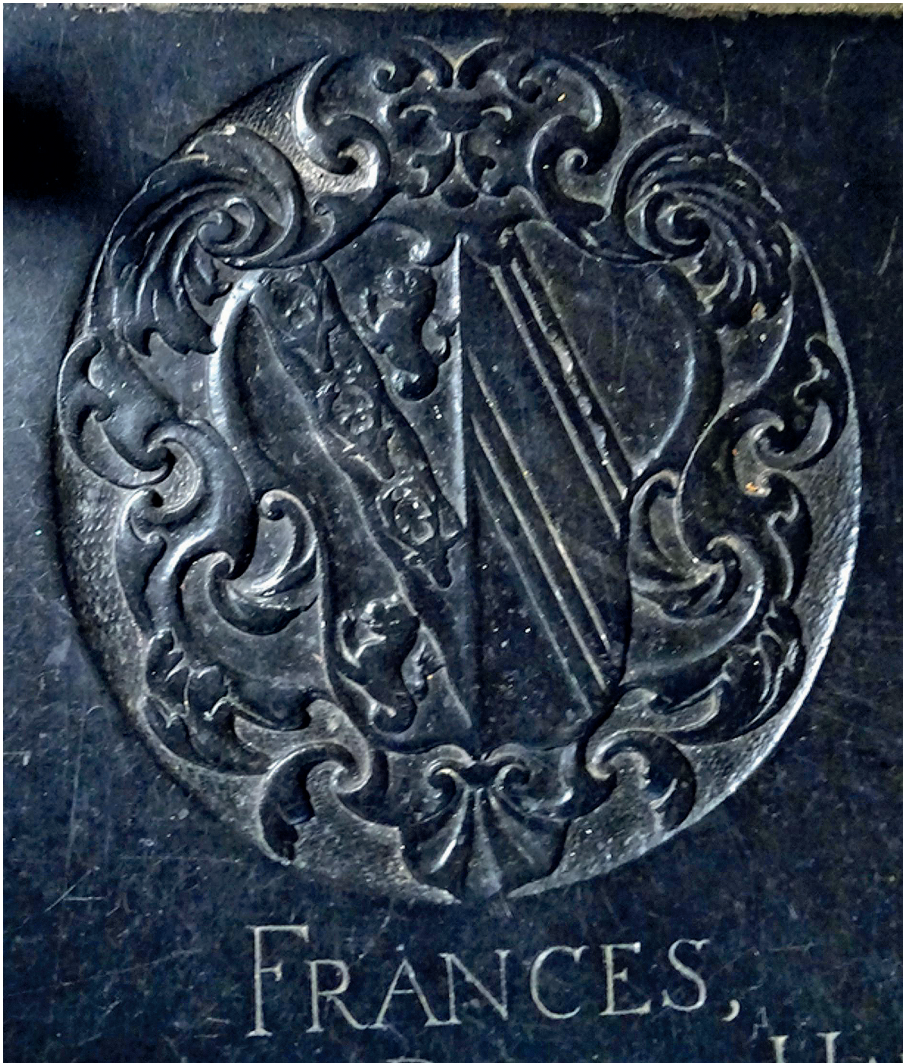


Figure 11: The Harland ledger stone. (photograph Robert Harrison)

There is an interesting column monument for Richard Draper, Serjeant-at-Law, who died at Highgate in 1756 aged 61.<sup>21</sup> Upon the upper part of the shaft of the column is a shield of arms. (Figures 1 and 12) The arms shown are those claimed by Richard Draper's father Thomas Draper at the 1687 Heralds' Visitation of London. He produced a steel seal without any colours which showed arms of *Four bendlets a chief per fess the upper part charged with three fleurs de lys the lower part ermine*. There is a note that the arms were confirmed to Thomas Draper of Stroud Green in

<sup>21</sup> This is now on the north wall of the nave, but in Lysons' time was on the east wall of the chancel.

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Figure 12: Arms on the Draper Column. (photograph by Editor)

Middlesex by William Camden, Clarenceux in 1612 and proof was needed of descent to establish a right to the arms in 1687. As Thomas Draper's father Joshua Draper of Braintree in Essex died in 1686 aged 73, he must have been born in 1613, a year after the grant, so would not appear to be a descendant of Thomas Draper the grantee, particularly as his father is also recorded as another Joshua Draper of Braintree, who died in about 1630. The arms *Or four bends gules a chief per fess argent and ermine in chief three fleurs de lys sable* first appear in a grant of 1571 to Thomas Draper of Marlow in Buckinghamshire.

The final monument is that of the Honourable Rowland Belasyse (d.1768) and shows arms of *Argent a chevron gules between three fleurs de lys azure* (**Figure 13**). This is a medieval coat and appears on a seal attached to a deed of the family dated

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*Figure 13: The Belasyse monument (photograph by Editor)*

1404.<sup>22</sup> The arms were therefore already in use in the decade before the appointment of the first Garter, William Bruges. Belasyse was the younger brother of the Earl of Fauconberg.

This short survey of heraldic monuments erected in one London church between 1588 and 1768 provides evidence of more unofficial use of arms than a herald might wish to see. It additionally supplies examples of a cavalier approach to the repainting of monuments over a number of centuries, where some professional advice from a herald would have been helpful.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> DBA vol 2 p.338.

<sup>23</sup> This paper is based on that delivered to the Heraldry Society as the John Brooke-Little Memorial Lecture on 18th October 2017.