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THE HERALDIC FUNERAL

Julian Litten

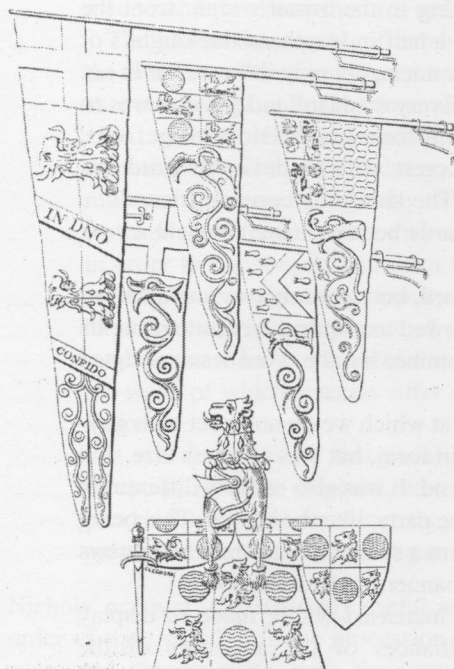


Figure 1: Funerary achievement of Sir John White (died 1573), Aldershot, Hants.

I: The Monopoly of the College of Arms

The role of the College of Arms, a division of the royal household, in the evolution of the English funeral, with its complex panoply, order of precedence, and the chivalric element within the Church's formulary for the burial of the dead, was of paramount importance to the emerging funeral trade at the end of the sixteenth century. Important as this role was, even Garter King of Arms would have been obliged to admit that the English heraldic funeral was, as with much else of the College's traditions, based on the elaborate and complex funerary rites perfected by the French Court in the late thirteenth century.

Although an attempt was made by the College in 1568 to centralise the records kept by its various officers, their archives are weak in material prior to 1597. The post-1597

records, however, include eighteen volumes of funeral certificates of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, from which can be gleaned information relating to the heraldic achievements provided for each funeral (Figure 1). In addition, these certificates contain genealogical notes on the deceased's family, details of the 'official' mourners present at the funeral and of the Officers of Arms who were in attendance.

The rules and regulations set down by the College regarding the amount of funerary heraldic pomp and ceremony had profound financial implications on the estate of the deceased. At least nine heraldic items were provided by the College for the funeral of a knight bachelor: standard, penon, helm and crest, coat-of-arms, the four lesser penons and the targe. In 1848 the antiquary John Gough Nichols provided a complete description of the ten accessories employed at the funerals of those of noble rank:¹

The Banner was originally oblong in form, that is, about twice the depth of its width, thus corresponding to the early fashion of the

¹ J. G. Nichols (ed.), *The Diary of Henry Machyn* (London: Camden Society, 1848), pp. xxvi-xxxii.

THE COAT OF ARMS

shield; but latterly it grew to be nearly square. It displayed the armorial coat of its owner, spread entirely over its surface.

The Standard was originally an ensign too large to be borne by a man into battle... graduated according to the owner's rank, from the duke's standard of seven yards and a half in length, to the knight's of only four. Standards differed from banners, not only in form, but in not bearing the arms of their masters. Every standard and guydon was to have in the chief (that is, next the staff) the cross of Saint George; next, the beast (the modern supporter) or crest, with his devise or word (his motto); and to be split at the end. The standards borne at funerals ... were made after this model. Standards became more frequent in use than banners.

The Guydon resembled the standard, but was only two and a half or three yards in length; and it was allowed to esquires, or lieutenants. Its derivation was the French *guide-homme*; but the word was corrupted to *guydon*, *gytton*, and *greton*.

The Penon displayed at funerals (at which we do not meet with *guydons*) also resembled the standard in form, but was of a less size, and was rounded, instead of slit, at the end. It was also entirely different in its charges; as it bore the arms of the party, like the banner. This being the case, it was not superseded where a standard appeared, but always accompanied it, unless there were banners and bannerols.

The Bannerols were banners of increased width, made to display *impalements*, representing the alliances of the ancestors of the deceased ... and they are sometimes mentioned as banners or bannerols of marriages.

Pensels, the diminutive of *penon*, or *penicillus*, were very small, like the vanes which sometimes terminate the pinnacles of pointed architecture, or the ironwork of the same period. They were supplied in large quantities ... The queen of Spain's herse took no less than thirty-six dozen of *pensels*.²

The Helmet is still seen lingering in some country churches; it is seldom found to be more than a fictitious helmet, made for the purpose to which it is applied. In early times a knight's real helmet was offered; but such have now almost entirely disappeared, having proved too tempting objects of antiquarian curiosity or cupidity. The Mantles, which used to be made of black velvet and the Crest, have now generally perished from decay [see **Figure 2**].

² *Diary of Henry Machyn*, p. 90: '1555. The xvij day of Juin was the hersse fenyssyd at Powlles a-boyffe the qwyer with ix prenepalles garnyshyd goodlest that ever was sene, and all the prenepalles covered with blake velvett, and the mageste of taffata and the frynge; and all the qwyre and a-boyffe and the sydes and onder and the body of the chyrche one he hangyd with blake and armes, and with xxxvj dosen of pensells.' The deceased was Jane, the elder sister of Queen Catherine of Aragon, and consequently aunt of Queen Mary. It was not unusual for such requiems to be held for those related to the English Crown.

THE HERALDIC FUNERAL

The Target was a shield of the arms of the defunct, the successor of the knight's real shield.

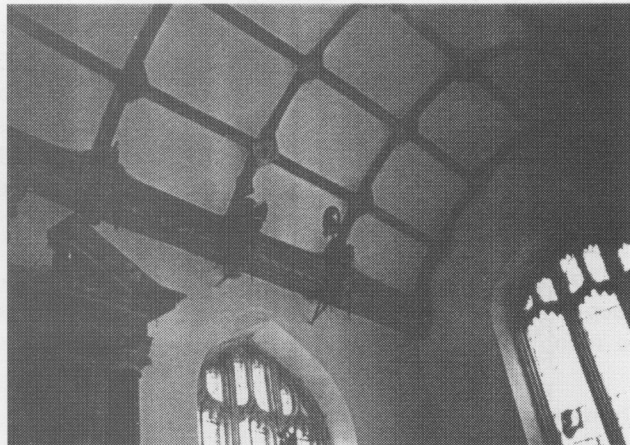
The Sword was generally of the same description as the helmet, made rather for show than for use.³

The lowest description of heraldic ensign allotted for Funerals was the Scocheon. Mere gentlemen had no penon; but as many scocheons as were desired ... But the funerals of the higher ranks were also provided with scocheons, in addition to their other insignia, and that sometimes profusely ... These scocheons were the prototypes of our modern hatchments. Originally made of some perishable material, and fastened up in the churches, they were required to be painted on panel, in order to last longer; and from these small achievements on panel (still to be found in some country churches) they have grown into the large and unwielding frames of canvas now spread on the front of modern mansions,⁴ or stretched out on the roof of the chancel or aisle, the walls of which scarcely offer sufficient space for their accommodation.

It will be observed that peculiar rests of iron were made for the reception of these trophies, which were inserted in the wall of the church. Suspended on these, they were left to testify to the worldly grandeur of the defunct so long as their fragile materials might endure.

Nichols' account is particularly useful as the items are described according to the order of their position in the procession, though he omits mention of the rowelled spurs and the gauntlets, with their own attendant heralds, coming immediately behind the bannerols and in front of the crested helm. The mid-sixteenth-century reg-

*Figure 2: Seventeenth-century funerary helmets of the Luttrell family displayed in St Decuman's church, Watchett, Somerset.
Author's photograph.*



³ The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, has a representative selection of funerary swords from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. In the City Hall, Exeter, Devon, is a mid-sixteenth century mourning sword amongst the city regalia.

⁴ For an example see figure 6 below.

THE COAT OF ARMS

ulations governing a heraldic funeral for a knight stipulated the positioning of the standard in the procession behind the clerk in Holy Orders, while the penon and targe followed the 'executors of the defunct', with the King of Arms strategically positioned between the targe and the coffin.

The fees and perquisites, the *droits et largesse*, received by the heralds for attending funerals of the nobility comprised a substantial element of their emoluments. The *droits*, as explained in a College memorandum of c.1500, seem to have consisted of the right to retain the hangings provided for the catafalque in those instances where a catafalque was required: 'Item, all the blake cloth within the railles and upon the railis and the foresaid railles with the cloth of majeste shud be ther fee.'⁵ The increase in the granting of arms during the second half of the sixteenth century resulted in more requests for the College's attendance at funerals; consequently a system was evolved in order to give equal rights of attendance to the heralds. The situation was resolved in 1564/5 when the various officers would attend funerals in rotation. Each was responsible for lodging a certificate with the college, signed by the executors and the chief mourners, recording the details of the deceased's date of death, the place of burial, their marriage and the subsequent issue of the union. But the rotation system had a serious flaw, in as much as a provincial King of Arms could find himself officiating at the funeral of a royal duke while Garter King of Arms was attending the much lesser obsequies of an armigerous gentleman's widow. Further discussion in 1588 led the Earl Marshal to set a table of precedent. Garter King of Arms was to marshal the funerals of Knights of the Garter, peers temporal and the heirs apparent of dukes, marquises and earls, those of their wives, and of the archbishops of Canterbury and York and the bishop of Winchester, while Clarenceux and Norroy were to marshal the funerals of other noble and gentle persons within their respective provinces. Furthermore, each was to take with him his pursuivants, or junior officers.

Even so, this was a complex system to operate. It is unlikely that Clarenceux King of Arms and his retinue would attend the funeral of, say, a baron in Norwich one week and then travel to Cornwall a few day's later to be present at the obsequies of an elderly widow of a knight's younger son. Nonetheless, funeral certificates were expected, whether or not a herald had been able to attend. A list of fees due to the College for the entering of such certificates was issued by the Earl Marshall in 1618:⁶

For a duke, duchess or archbishop	£45.00.00
For a marquess or marchioness	£40.00.00
For an earl or countess	£35.00.00
For a viscount or viscountess	£30.00.00
For a bishop, baron or baroness	£25.00.00
For a knight	£10.00.00
For an esquire	£6.13.04
For a gentleman	£2.00.00

⁵ Quoted by Sir Anthony Wagner, *Heralds of England* (London 1967), p. 107.

⁶ CA Chapter book 2/334.

THE HERALDIC FUNERAL

When it was necessary for the body to be taken any distance from the place of death to the designated place of burial, the College of Arms had to make separate arrangements for the transport of the achievements. An eyewitness account of the funeral of Archbishop William Juxon in July 1663 records how, because of the inclement weather, only the minimum of trappings were displayed during the journey from London to Oxford. Arriving in Oxford, the cortège approached the Divinity School, whose upper floor had already been hung with mourning to receive the encoffined body for its two-day lying-in-state. On arrival, 'all the boxes that contained the streamers, scutcheons, and other matters belonging to his body were brought in' and, once the funeral was over, 'The mourning and the escutcheons remained in the chapel.'⁷ This was the first archiepiscopal funeral to be marshalled by the College of Arms since the Restoration. Garter King of Arms was present, together with Lancaster Herald, Windsor Herald (Elias Ashmole, the antiquary), and York Herald.

It was possible to by-pass the College and go direct to the herald-painters to provide the necessary standard, bannerol, penons, pensils and escutcheons. The College was aware of this, and occasionally negotiated inclusive prices to cover the cost of their attendance and the provision of the achievements, though the revised fixed fee of £75 imposed in 1624 often proved too expensive for some families.⁸ In any case, the families of the deceased had other arrangements to finance. For example, the College of Arms was not responsible for the hygienic treatment of the deceased,⁹ the provision of the coffin, its linings and the grave clothes.

One such supplier was Henry Machyn (born c.1495-1498), of Trinity the Little, Queenhithe, London. According to his biographer, John Nichols, Machyn 'has been taken by some for a herald, or at least a painter employed by the heralds. In the absence of any direct proof of his occupation, I rather think that his business was in that department of the trade of a merchant-taylor which we now call an undertaker or furnisher of funerals. The banners, &c. which he provided were probably painted by men who worked as journeymen under his supervision ... His parish ... is shown to have been that of Trinity the Little, by Queenhithe; and in Trinity-lane adjoining was the Painter-Stainers' hall, in the vicinity of which would live many of the workmen with whom he had so much to do.'¹⁰

The diary kept by Machyn during the period 26 August 1550 to 27 July 1563 is little more than a record of the principal funerals he had been contracted to furnish. He was in attendance on 7 September 1554 when, 'was bered in saint Bothulff with-owt Bysshope-gate chyrche, good master James Suttun sqwyre, and clarke of the gren cloth unto kyng Henry viiith, and unto kyng Edward the vith, and unto quen Mare, and so buried with a cot armur, and a penon of armes, and ii dosen of

⁷ Andrew Clark (ed.), *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood, Antiquary, of Oxford, 1632-1695*, vol. 1 (Oxford Hist. Soc. pubns. vol. 19, Oxford 1891), pp. 478-83: entry for 7 July 1663.

⁸ CA Chapter book 1/2.

⁹ A degree of 'embalming' was frequently carried out on the remains, such as evisceration, to guard against putrefaction during the waiting period between death and the funeral.

¹⁰ *Diary of Henry Machyn*, p. xi.

schochyons, and ii whyt branchys and xii stayff torchys, and money mornars, and the compene of Clarkes; and vi of ys servantes bare hym in blake cotes, and thr dyd pryche master doctur Smyth at ys masse.'¹¹ Tantalisingly, Machyn omits to give any costs, and neither does he record the names of his sub-contractors.

At the Restoration, the College looked forward to a renaissance as far as the organisation of heraldic funerals was concerned. This was not to be, and the number of funerals ordered from them declined, so that by December 1660 they were forced radically to reduce their standard attendance fee by £63 to 'twelve pounds apiece and not under'.¹² Not even this was sufficient to tempt back the nobility and gentry, as the private funeral furnisher was now in a position to provide all that was customary, at less cost and at a greater speed than the College could manage. In a last desperate bid, the College made a final reduction in November 1699 when it was agreed that no funeral should be served under the sum of £10, beside the usual transportation fee of twelpence per mile, out and home again, for each officer in attendance. But these revisions had come too late, and the College of Arms lost out to the trade. In 1682 John Gibbon, appointed Bluemantle Herald in 1671, wrote: 'It was my hard hap to become a member of the Heralds Office, when the Ceremony of Funerals began to be in the Wane ... In eleven years time I have had but five turns'.¹³

To ascertain why the College of Arms lost its monopoly to perform the funerals of the nobility, focus needs to be directed towards the lucrative perquisites—droits—the College had been enjoying from royal funerals since at least the third quarter of the sixteenth century. As a division of the royal household, the College's acceptance of the black cloth from the Great Wardrobe for providing mourning apparel at state funerals was a legitimate action on the part of the Lord Chamberlain. So was the payment of the heralds' attendance fees, and meeting the bills for the supply of the various and varied items of funerary heraldry supplied by the College. More questionable was the College's presumed right to retain the items of funeral furniture provided at the expense of the Lord Chamberlain's Office. It was not unknown for the heralds' servants to have stripped Westminster Abbey of the funerary furnishings within hours of a state funeral having been completed. Machyn records how, on 23 August 1557, 'was the hers of the kyng (of Denmark) at Powelles¹⁴ taken down by master Garter, and serten of the lord tressorers servandes, and waxchanders and carpynters'.¹⁵ Wagner relates the following disgraceful incident: 'After James I's funeral in 1625 the heralds divided among them 601 yards of velvet, 68 yards of tissue,¹⁶ being one of the palls, 56¼ yards of purple satin, the lining of the pall, 32 black velvet chairs without elbows, 32 velvet cushions used on the chairs, 21 stools, taffeta that lined the roof of the hearse, the timber of the hearse, escutcheons and 'pencils'... Other items they sold and divided the proceeds; among them a desk, a table, black velvet cushions, a great black velvet chair, pile velvet, three things like andirons, a great chair with elbows, and a purple velvet cushion with gold fringe and great tassels of gold.'¹⁷

¹¹ *Diary of Henry Machyn*, p. 68.

¹² CA Chapter Book 1/59.

¹³ *Ibid.* 2/60f.

¹⁴ St Paul's Cathedral.

¹⁵ *Diary of Henry Machyn*, p. 148.

¹⁶ Fine silk cloth.

¹⁷ Wagner, *op. cit.* pp. 113f.

THE HERALDIC FUNERAL

However, the removal of these particular items was delayed for some nine months, '... partly by reason of the contagious sickness of the plague immediately happening thereon and partly because some of the velvets as one of the palls and other things used about the representation¹⁸ rested in the hands of Mr Ireland Keeper of the Monuments at Westminster Abbey, who withheld them till now upon the pretence that he had not the robes delivered to him from the Wardrobe for adorning his Majesty's Effigy, to be set up in the press provided for it'.¹⁹ On this occasion the heralds lost out to a Mr Grimes, who had stolen the plain holland pall from the chariot outside the Abbey while the funeral service was in progress. These droits vexed the Dean and Chapter, who believed theirs to be the stronger claim, the furniture and fabrics already being on their premises. Tension was not slackened until 1758 when the two parties agreed to share the proceeds, though Dean Taylor endeavoured to renege on some of the issues after the funeral of George II in 1760 and stepped down only when the College threatened to take legal action.

None of the foregoing reflected well on the College. From the date of James I's funeral the nobility gradually turned away from the College of Arms, looking more towards the assistance of the herald-painters to furnish their funerals, where less pomp and a more accurate costing could be obtained, without the fear of droits. The College endeavoured to limit the herald-painters in their performance of heraldic funerals, and managed to secure an agreement from the Painters' Company in 1686 that forced their members to cease issuing bogus emblazons for funerals. Not all liv-erymen conformed to this agreement, for in 1687 the College successfully prosecuted two painter-stainers, Henry Howell and Richard Wallis, for painting false arms and marshalling a funeral.²⁰

In November 1689 William Russell, herald-painter, painter-stainer and funeral furnisher, suggested to the College that he would be willing to pay £20 each to any heralds attending in an official capacity at his armigerous funerals, an increase of two-thirds above that charged by the College of Arms. In putting themselves at Russell's disposal the heralds would be guaranteed a generous fee and without having to resort to droits. Russell, for his part, could guarantee his clients that he not only had the imprimatur of the College, but also there would be no hidden extras. It was an ingenious proposal, certain to establish Russell in the position of a society funeral furnisher. Whether this was adopted by the College is not recorded; in any event, no heralds attended the funeral of the Honourable Thomas Howard, performed by Russell at St Giles, Ashted, Surrey, on 13 April 1702.²¹

By 1700 the organisation of funerals by the College of Arms was almost at an end, and even Garter King of Arms had to admit that their heyday was over, with Clarenceux complaining that he had only attended three funerals in an official capacity in the whole of 1696. An attempt made in 1699 to recommence prosecutions against erring herald-painters, painter-stainers and funeral furnishers, was a dismal

¹⁸ The funeral effigy.

¹⁹ CA Partition book, 1/346v.

²⁰ G. D. Squibb, *Reports of Heraldic Cases in the Court of Chivalry 1623-1732* (Harl. Soc. pubns. 107, London 1956), pp. 88-89.

²¹ A. Jackson (ed.), *Ashted: A Village Transformed* (Leatherhead 1977), p. 76.

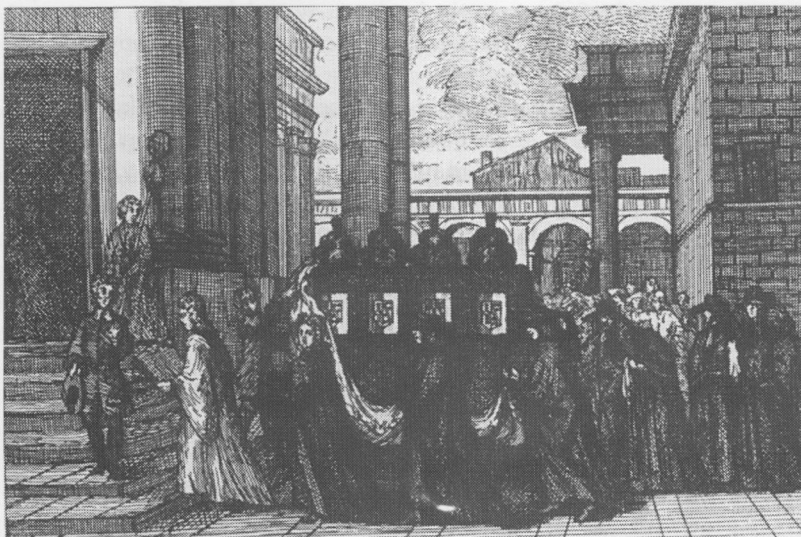


Figure 3: Funeral ticket by Hogarth for Henry Drew, undertaker, Westminster, c.1720.

failure,²² as was their intervention in 1722 to obstruct the grant of a new charter to the Upholders' Company, to which the undertakers and funeral furnishers had attached themselves.²³

The end came in 1717. A disagreement between the Earl Marshal and the Lord Chamberlain over the heralds' right to attend at the baptism of the infant Prince William, resulted in the Lord Chamberlain being told that in future he and his successors would decide when a royal occasion was to be deemed 'public'. Consequently, it was the tendency to make all royal functions, including funerals, 'private', and thus within the Lord Chamberlain's control. The royal household made its intent abundantly clear in 1751 when the Lord Chamberlain was instructed to secure the services of a Mr Harcourt, funeral furnisher, to attend to the obsequies of Frederick, Prince of Wales. This appears to be the first occasion at which an undertaker was used to provide a royal funeral.

While the funeral furnishers endeavoured to emulate the gaudy spectacle of a funeral marshalled by the College of Arms, they were unable to devise a substitute for the colourful embroidered tabards with their royal arms, and the vibrant hues of the standard and bannerols. All that survived from this elaborate and ancient ritual were the escutcheons on the pall (visible in **Figure 3**) and the arms displayed on the hatchment. By far the greatest loss was that moment when the scarlet velvet upholstered coffin with its gilt metal furniture, gently rocking on the shoulders of the bearers, descended into the dynastic vault as the king of arms pronounced in a stentorian voice the style and titles of the deceased. The funeral furnishers knew that they could not compete with this; equally the College of Arms were aware they could not match the keen prices being charged by the trade.

²² Squibb, *op. cit.* pp. 76-9.

²³ CA Chapter book 1/262, 264, 273v, 274v.

II: Funerary heraldry, hatchments and achievements

A heraldic funeral was one which was marshalled by the College of Arms and attended by a king of arms and his pursuivants. In addition to their role of granting patents of arms, and invigilating the same, the College served as 'master of ceremonies' for the funerals of the monarchy, the nobility and, indeed, to all those entitled to bear arms. Consequently, the engagement of their services could be an expensive undertaking.²⁴

This requirement on the part of the College to be represented at the funeral of an armigerous person, together with the length of time needed to provide the required funerary achievements, frequently led to delays between the death and the burial. Norroy King of Arms, his pursuivants and heralds had the monopoly of attending all such funerals north of the River Trent, and Clarenceux King of Arms, with his pursuivants and heralds, those south of the River Trent. With their other duties at Court and at the College, it is easy to understand the difficulty they experienced in finding an opening in what was by any account a busy calendar.

It has to be borne in mind that there was no compulsion laid on the armigerous for them to involve the College in any of the obsequial proceedings. It seems doubtful that the heralds had any part in the funeral of Sir Thomas Cumberworth at St Margaret's, Somersby, Lincolnshire, in 1418 who expressed a desire 'To be bur. in the north yle of the parych kyrke of Sommerby. I will that my body ly still my mowth opyn unhild xxiii owoys and after laid on bere wtowtyn anything ther opon to cover't bot a shert and a blak cloth wt a white crosse of cloth of gold.'²⁵

In the City of London the heraldic funeral processions in the second half of the sixteenth century were particularly colourful affairs. It was expected that the estate of the deceased would finance not only the attendance fee requested by the College of Arms but also the cost of the funerary heraldry, mourning suits for as many poor persons as matched the deceased's age at the time of their death,²⁶ a substantial cash gift to the church where the funeral took place, and a banquet for everyone who attended the funeral. This explains such observations by Machyn in 1558 when recording the funeral of Lady Rich at St Mary's, Saffron Walden, Essex: 'The xvi day of December was cared in a charett from sant Baythelmuw the greet unto Essex to be bered, with baners and banerolles abowt her, my lade Ryche, and so to the plasse wher she dwelyd. The xviii day of Desember was (buried) my lade Ryche, the wyff of the lord Ryche, with a herse of v prynsepalles and viii dosen penselles and a viii dozen skochyons and a grett baner of my lordes and my lades armes and iiii baner rolles, and iiii baner of santtes; and grett whytt branchys and vi dosen of torchys; and xxiiii pore men had gownes; and the morow masse and a grett dener, and ii haroldes and mony morners.'²⁷

²⁴ S. Friar, *Companion to the English Parish Church* (Godalming 1996), pp. 209f.; idem, *Heraldry for the Local Historian and Genealogist* (London 1997), pp. 142-49.

²⁵ W. St J. Hope and E. G. C. F. Atchley, *English Liturgical Colours* (London 1918), p. 118.

²⁶ From the financial point of view, there was much to be recommended for dying young.

²⁷ *Diary of Henry Machyn*, p. 184.

THE COAT OF ARMS

After the founding of Christ's Hospital in 1552, the boys and girls of the school paraded at the funerals of distinguished Londoners and took part in the funeral dinner. Social and civic rank dictated the order of the procession, the city council and its officers taking precedence over a livery company and its members. Female relatives could attend, but taking second place to the men of similar rank. Clarenceux King of Arms walked immediately in front of the coffin, thus leaving the more important position in the procession—that behind the coffin—to the chief mourner. Stowe's observations on the order observed by the Lord Mayor and Aldermen when attending a funeral are repeated by J. G. Nichols: 'The Aldermen are to weare their violet gownes, except such as have, of their friends' allowance, blacke gownes or mourning. When an Alderman dieth, master Swordbearer is to have a blacke gowne, and three and thirty shillings and fourepence in money. And if the Alderman deceased doe give to the Lord Maior mourning, the master Swordbearer is to have mourning also, or forty shillings in money as the value thereof, and so to carry the Sword in blacke before the Lord Maior. Master Chamberlain is not to weare his tippet but when the Lord Maior or Aldermen do weare their scarlet or violet.'²⁸

The style and length of the cloaks of the chief mourner and his supporters was determined by the College of Arms, according to rank, with the chief mourner's train distinguishing him from his four associates. The six yeomen carrying the coffin, and the four pallbearers, wore hooded cloaks with tippets. So too did Clarenceux, his heralds and pursuivants, with the addition of their colourful embroidered tabards. The bearer of the penon, those carrying the coat of arms and the targe, as well as the bearers of the four lesser penons, would also have been wearing hooded cloaks with tippets.

The number of bannerols carried alongside the coffin depended on the rank of the deceased, so while a knight was restricted to four, a duke might have a dozen. A well-connected ducal family could have supported twelve bannerols, the number carried at Elizabeth I's funeral in 1603 at Westminster Abbey. The College of Arms provided four bannerols in 1586 for the funeral of Sir Philip Sydney at St Paul's Cathedral, and these appear in a contemporary engraving by T. de Bray.²⁹

Once inside the church, the service was interrupted between the Gospel and the Creed by the Offering, when 'mass penny', or largesse, was presented to the priest by the chief mourner on behalf of the deceased. Approaching the altar privately, the Chief Mourner offered his own donation, then, with his supporters, he offered the deceased's gift. Then came the heralds, followed by the other mourners. The format of the ceremony at the joint funeral of Sir Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury, and his son, Sir Thomas Neville, at Bisham Abbey, Berkshire, on 15 February 1462, remained the norm until the Commonwealth:

After the Gospel ... when the Earl of Warwick had offered the mass penny to the offertory, the King of Arms, proceeding to the offertory before the Earl of Worcester, delivered the coat of arms to (the bishop)

²⁸ *Diary of Henry Machyn*, p. xxiv.

²⁹ V&A (Dept. of Prints and Drawings); reproduced in J. Litten, *The English Way of Death* (London 1991), illn. 88.

THE HERALDIC FUNERAL

with due reverence. The Bishop then delivered it back to the Earl of Warwick, in token that it belonged to him and the heir, and he gave it back to the King of Arms, who then stood on the right side with it. In the same way the shield was borne by a King of Arms before Lord Montague, handed over to the heir and then back to the King of Arms. The sword and the helmet and crest were similarly dealt with by the heralds ... The other nobles made their offerings and then the King of Arms and heralds bore the coat of arms, shield, helmet and crest to the tomb and there laid the coat of arms in the midst, the helmet and crest at the head, the shield below the sword, hanging the banner on the right side of the head, and the standard on the same side at the foot [cf **Plate 8**]. This done they took off their coats of arms, but in token that the coat of arms of the deceased was handed over by his heir the Earl's herald stood before the hearse wearing it for the rest of the mass until the burial.³⁰

The materials of which these items were made is recorded by Machyn in two conveniently detailed diary accounts for 3 September 1562: '... be-gane to make rede for the good lade contes of Bedford a greett baner or armes and vi grett baner-rolles and ... skotchyons of armes of sylke, and paper-ryalle vii doshen skochyons of armes. The same tyme be-gane to make for my lord Mordant in Bedforshyre furst a standard and a gret baner of armes, and banar-rolles and vi skotchyons of armes of sylke and of bokeram (blank) dosen, and of paper (blank) dosen skochyons, and a targett, sword, helme, and crest, mantylls and (blank) dosen of sylke, and a cotte armur, and grett skotchyons of armes for the herse of past papur, and goodly bordurs round about the herse.'³¹

The fees charged in the first quarter of the seventeenth century by the College of Arms to attend a funeral have been noted, and to these were added the cost of any funerary achievements ordered from them and the hire of the pall. These palls were usually of rich black Genoese or Utrecht velvet, 10ft x 6ft, decorated with nine 'scotcheons'.³² These escutcheons were provided by herald-painters and were little more than painted canvas rectangles, 12in x 10in, displaying the deceased's armorial bearings, attached to the pall by tacking stitches to allow for their removal after the funeral, thus allowing the pall to be used on subsequent occasions. A pristine painted canvas escutcheon from the pall of Mrs Mary Corsellis (d. 1759), whose funeral took place at St Mary's, Layer Marney, Essex, is amongst the Holman papers in the Essex Record Office (**Figure 4**).³³

For a full heraldic funeral, items of armour were required, usually a helm, sword, gauntlets and rowelled spurs. The helm was particularly curious, in so much as it was crowned with a carved wooden representation of the deceased's crest, properly emblazoned. Until the late sixteenth century most families relinquished items

³⁰ Wagner, *op. cit.* p. 107.

³¹ *Diary of Henry Machyn*, p. xxiv.

³² Litten, *op. cit.* p. 175. Larger palls were also available, such as that provided by the College in 1588 for the funeral of Sir Philip Sydney.

³³ Essex RO, T/P 195/7.

THE COAT OF ARMS

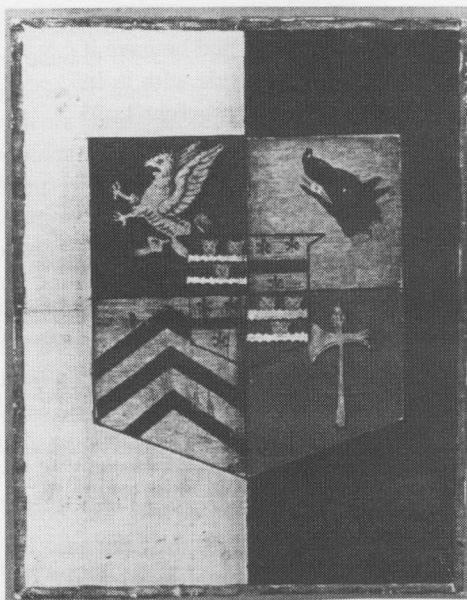


Figure 4: Painted canvas escutcheon from the pall of Mrs Mary Corsellis (d. 1759). Holman papers, Essex Record Office.

belonging to the deceased, and a few early tilt-helms and close-helms given over for this purpose survive in some churches and cathedrals.³⁴ The crested helm of Sir John St John (d. 1594) at St Mary's, Lydiard Tregoz, Wiltshire, and that above the tomb of Sir Roger Manwood (d. 1631) in St Stephen's, Canterbury, appear to be genuine. During the seventeenth century families were less willing to release such items, always assuming that they had them to release, and reproduction pieces, together with sectional armour, which is to say helms made up of non-matching components, became the norm. In a glass shade-case on the east wall of the Kemeys Tynte pew at St Edward, Goathurst, Somerset, is a reproduction seventeenth-century crested helm made in 1633 for the funeral of Sir Nicholas Halswell, together with reproduction sword and

gauntlets.³⁵ At St Decuman's, Watchet, are two late seventeenth-century helms in an early sixteenth-century style, each with gilt metal crests³⁶ of the Wyndham family of those of the Luttrells in (figure 2). St Mary the Virgin, Great Bardfield, Essex, owns two late seventeenth-century helms, in the sixteenth-century style, fabricated from thin sheet iron, crudely painted at some time in the nineteenth century. By the mid-eighteenth century there was little pretence in fabricating metal helms, and at St Decuman's, Watchet, are two carved wooden helms in the sixteenth-century style, each with a carved wooden crest.

An account by John Aubrey of the appearance of St Mary, Lydiard Tregoz, in the 1670s shows how impressive these collections of armorials were. 'The Chancell, and the aisle of the St Johns adjoining, are adorned with about 30 penons; over the altar doe hang two banners of St George, two guidons of Ulster, and on each side a Mandilion³⁷ beautified with all their quarterings, with shield, sword, helmet, and

³⁴ C. Blair, *European Armour c.1066 to 1700* (London 1958); J Mann, *Arms and Armour in England* (London 1960).

³⁵ Two similar sets of funerary achievements—one of 1588, the other of 1612, each of helm, gauntlets and rowelled spurs—are on the chancel north wall at St Mary's, Bottesford, Leicestershire.

³⁶ Whilst the majority of crests were of carved wood there was a trend towards the end of the seventeenth century for them to be silhouetted in sheet brass.

³⁷ Tabard.

THE HERALDIC FUNERAL

crest, made in manner of a trophie, with gountletts, gilt spurs, and such like badges of Equestrian dignitie.³⁸ Now only the crested helms survive.

Considering the many banners, standards, bannerols, guydons, penons, pensels and escutcheons provided for royal funerals by the College of Arms and, after c.1690-1700, by various herald-painters, it is disappointing that so little survives. Canterbury Cathedral displays the funerary surcoat, gauntlets, shield and scabbard of Prince Edward (d. 1376). The shield, saddle and tournament helm - the latter specifically purchased - used at the funeral of Henry V (d. 1422) are now in the Undercroft Museum, Westminster Abbey. The funerary helm of Henry VI (d. 1471) is still above his tomb in St George's Chapel, Windsor,³⁹ and the Museum of London has a carved wooden escutcheon, reputedly from the hearse of Charles I (d. 1649). To compensate for this loss, a surprising number of lesser achievements survive in parish churches. St Edmund King and Martyr, Lombard Street, and St James, Garlickhythe, both in the City of London, have framed silk funerary escutcheons bearing respectively the arms of Princess Charlotte Augusta (d. 1817) and of George III (d. 1820). Unfortunately, these do not relate to the funerals themselves; rather it was practice to commission such an item as a pulpit-fall, to serve as a mark of respect during the official mourning period for the deceased. Two of the two thousand escutcheons made from 'taffity' (a type of woven silk and buckram) for the funeral of Oliver Cromwell in 1658 survive; one is in the Museum of London, and the other, stolen from the funeral car by a Westminster school-boy, Robert Uvedale, while the funeral was in progress, is at Westminster School.⁴⁰

One of the most complete sets of funerary achievements is to be found in St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, Somerset, provided for the funeral of Admiral Sir William Penn in 1670. Considering the number of restorations and re-decorations the church has undergone since that date, their survival is remarkable. The tabard, complete with tassels, is positioned above Penn's mural monument, in front of which is the breast-plate with attached leg-guards, flanked by the gauntlets. Above the tabard is the crested helm and the carved and painted wooden targe, behind which is tucked the scabbarded sword. On either side of the tabard are the rowelled spurs and, to the left, the standard and guydon, while to the right are the penon and pensel. In addition to being one of the more complete sets of funerary achievements it is also the only one to be offered up in the manner suggested by the College of Arms.⁴¹

The achievements of Sir Robert Shirley (d. 1656) are dramatically positioned above the chancel arch at Holy Trinity, Staunton Harold, Leicestershire: tabard, crested helm, gauntlets and rowelled spurs, flanked by bannerols. In the chancel south chapel at St Nicholas, Denston, Suffolk, is a tabard, crested helm and sword of a late seventeenth-century member of the Robinson family.⁴² A tabard, crested helm, sword and targe of the same date, relating to a member of the Smyth family, is in the chan-

³⁸ A. Dufty, 'The Church', in *Lydiard Park and Church, Swindon* (Thamesdown 1980), p. 21.

³⁹ This was probably supplied in 1484 when his remains were transferred in state from Chertsey Abbey.

⁴⁰ *The Times*, 5 Jan. and 11 Jan. 1999.

⁴¹ Litten, *English Way of Death*, illn. 91.

⁴² H. Munro Cautley, *Suffolk Churches* (fifth edn., Woodbridge 1982), p. 278, fig. 318.

cel at St Michael the Archangel, Theydon Mount, Essex. An extensive series of late seventeenth-century standards and banners, relating to the Earls of Dorset and the Earls De La Warr, crowd the walls of the Sackville Chapel at St Michael's, Withyham, Sussex.

Archbishops and bishops were included within the ranks of nobility but their funerary achievements were non-military; a funerary mitre took the place of the crested helm and a funerary pastoral staff replaced the sword. The College of Arms attended the funeral of Bishop Matthew Wren at Pembroke College, Cambridge, on 11 May 1667. A contemporary plan of the cortège⁴³ shows the order of the procession and records the clothes they wore. The minister, the Revd Dr Robert Mapletoft, was followed by Rouge Dragon Pursuivant (Francis Sandford) with the pastoral staff, and Norroy King of Arms (William Dugdale) with the mitre. These were not gilded wooden items supplied by the College of Arms; rather they were of pure silver (Figure 5), having been ordered by Wren a few years earlier in anticipation of his funeral.⁴⁴ Similarly, the copper-gilt mitre and pastoral staff above the tomb of Bishop George Morley (d. 1684) in Winchester Cathedral, Hampshire, may have been commissioned by Morley.⁴⁵

In 1686 the College was in attendance at the funeral of Bishop Fell at Christ Church, Oxford, for which they provided a gilt wooden mitre and a gilt wooden pastoral staff, now in the cathedral treasury.⁴⁶ Whether or not the College provided the metal mitre and pastoral staff for Bishop Ken (d. 1711) at St John's, Frome, Somerset, that now adorn Benjamin Ferrey's 1844 tomb to that prelate, remains to be established. The manufacturer of the gilt wooden mitre provided for the funeral of Bishop Peter Mews (d. 1711) at Winchester Cathedral has yet to be established. Similarly, the maker and supplier of the gilt wooden mitre and gilt wooden pastoral staff for the Rt Revd and Rt Hon Nathaniel Crewe (d. 1721), Lord Bishop of Durham and Baron of Steane, in the Crewe mortuary aisle at St Peter's, Steane, Northamptonshire, remains unknown. As a prince-bishop, Crewe was heraldically entitled to display a mitre encircled by a coronet, and this is repeated on the funerary mitre.⁴⁷



Figure 5: Funerary mitre of Bishop Matthew Wren. Silver, 1667. Pembroke College, Cambridge.

⁴³ Pembroke College Library, Cambridge.

⁴⁴ A. Grimstone, *Pembroke College, Cambridge* (Cambridge 1997), p. 62, illn. 63.

⁴⁵ F. Busby, 'Bishop Morley', *Winchester Cathedral Record* 35 (1966), illn. 35.

⁴⁶ Litten, op. cit. p. 187, colour illn. 22.

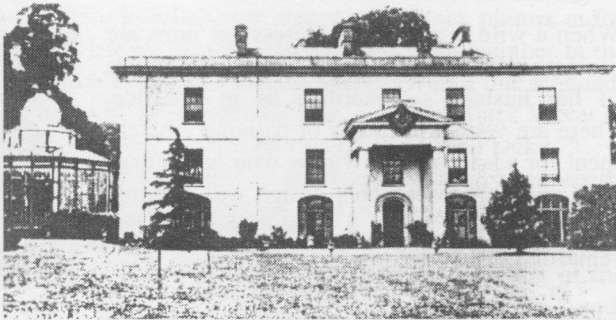
⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 188, illn. 94.

THE HERALDIC FUNERAL

The number of great heraldic funerals marshalled by the College of Arms had been in steep decline since that of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, in 1722, the last probably being that of Catherine, Duchess of Buckingham, in 1743.⁴⁸ The lesser nobility and gentry, particularly those in the shires, had relaxed their funerary associations with the College of Arms during the Commonwealth, choosing not to resume it with the Restoration. Consequently, funeral furnishers were not being asked to replicate the panoply as formerly exhibited at funerals marshalled by the College of Arms, and the amount of heraldry declined to such an extent that it became limited to the rectangular escutcheons on the pall and the hatchment. While a few post-1745 funerary helms survive, these were probably made in association with the funerary monument, as they were not used at the funeral itself.

Hatchments, or 'achievements' as described by John Holland in 1717 and Nathaniel Tearoe in 1767, originated in the Low Countries in the 1620s as derivatives of the targe, and first appeared in England in c.1627. A hatchment is a lozenge-shaped armorial panel, one ell square, of wood or canvas, within a simple matt black flat-moulded wooden frame, 6 inches wide, with an inner gilt fillet.⁴⁹ Comprising a shield of arms, often with helm, crest and mantling and, where appropriate, a peer's coronet and supporters, they were affixed to the back of the enclosed funeral car for the duration of the procession from the house to the church. They did not play any part in the funeral service itself, and were returned to the residence of the deceased after the ceremony. After suspension above the main door of the house (**Figure 6**),⁵⁰ they were taken to the church and hung on the wall adjacent to the grave. Precisely how long they remained outside the house has not been established,⁵¹ but as paintings on canvas they were both expensive and susceptible to damage by the weather. Few of them now hang above their respective graves, most having been relegated to the back of the church, usually in the tower space. Twelve seventeenth-century hatchments, to various individuals, adorn the north wall of the nave at St Mary's,

*Figure 6: a hatchment offered up above the entrance of Horsington House, Somerset, c.1880. From S. Friar, *Heraldry for the Local Historian and Genealogist* (Stroud 1997), p. 145.*



⁴⁸ *Gent. 's Mag.* 1743, p. 191.

⁴⁹ According to P. Summers, *Hatchments in Britain* (10 vols., London 1952-90), there is a total of 4,500 hatchments in English churches.

⁵⁰ A watercolour of Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, signed and dated by J. Miller 1776 (V&A, acc. no. 731-1893, 16in x 24³/₄in), depicts a herald-painter or joiner balancing on the first-floor window-ledge and about to hang a hatchment; reproduced in Litten, op. cit. colour illn. 23.

⁵¹ The common acceptance is that they were displayed during the period of mourning.

THE COAT OF ARMS

Chigwell, Essex. Eight eighteenth- and nineteenth-century hatchments, to various members of the Kemeys Tynte family, are in the tower space at St Edward's, Goathurst, Somerset. At St Michael the Archangel, Theydon Mount, the Smyths are represented by nine hatchments, three being above the chancel arch, four above the tower arch, one within the tower space and another fixed to the ceiling of the tower space. Amongst the seventeen late seventeenth- to early eighteenth-century hatchments of the Comptons in their private chapel at Compton Wynyates, Warwickshire, a fine arrangement of four large early eighteenth-century hatchments forms an impressive display on the west wall of the south aisle.⁵²

By c.1700 the hatchment had its own distinctive way of recording the sex and marital status of the deceased whom it commemorated, dictated by the treatment of the background. To better understand the following table it needs to be stated that a husband's arms appear on the viewer's dexter (left) side, and the wife's on the sinister (right) side. The method of 'reading' a hatchment is as follows;

1. Single coat of arms on a shield, with helm, mantling and crest, background all black: bachelor (**Figure 7**).
2. Single coat of arms on a lozenge, without helm, mantling and crest, background all black: spinster.
3. Impaled coat of arms on a shield, with helm, mantling and crest, dexter background black, sinister background white: husband deceased, wife surviving.
4. Impaled coat of arms on a shield, without helm, mantling and crest, dexter background white, sinister background black: wife deceased, husband surviving.
5. Impaled coat of arms on a shield, with helm, mantling and crest, background all black: widower.
6. Impaled coat of arms on a lozenge, without helm, mantling and crest, background all black: widow.

When a wife is a heraldic heiress her arms are correctly shown on a small shield at the centre of her husband's, described as in pretence. There are various methods of painting a hatchment for a widower or widow who had remarried, and a more complex design was required where a widow, being a heraldic heiress, had remarried.⁵³

In the case of a bishop, his arms would appear on the sinister side, with those of his see on the dexter. The background behind the arms of the see would be white, to signify the continuation of the office after his death. An example

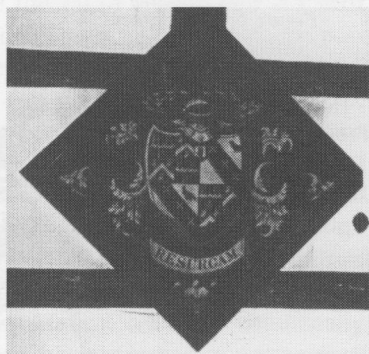


Figure 7: Hatchment of a deceased bachelor. Theydon Mount church, Essex, c.1810. Author's photograph.

⁵² Litten, op. cit. illn. 96.

⁵³ S. Friar, *Heraldry for the Local Historian and Genealogist* (Stroud 1997), pp. 144-9.

THE HERALDIC FUNERAL

of an episcopal hatchment is in the vestry at All Saints, Great Horkesley, Essex, for the Rt Revd William Ward (d. 1838), rector of Great Horkesley and Bishop of Sodor and Man.

Hatchments rarely bear the name of the deceased, the personal identification being ascertained from the arms. Often the motto is altered, its place taken by statements such as *Resurgam*, *In Cælo Quies*, or *Dread Shame!* Some of the black wooden frames were covered with ruched black crêpe, occasionally surmounted by a bow of the same material. The College of Arms exercised little control over their production, other than keeping a watchful eye on the herald-painters lest they began issuing hatchments of pretence; even so some non-armigerous families managed to confect them.

Funerary achievements were not limited to the street procession, for they also played an important part in furnishing a room in the residence of the deceased as a *chapelle ardente*. Between the mid-sixteenth and late nineteenth centuries it was the custom for the coffined remains of the nobility to 'rest' in their own homes, the walls of the room selected for the purpose hung floor to ceiling in mourning. It appears that three rooms were thus upholstered: the hallway, a small withdrawing room where visitors could be received, and the chamber where the encoffined body lay. The majority of households hired the fabrics from the funeral furnisher, though the replacement of the primary blacks after three months with white-trimmed black, for a further nine months mourning, appears to have been confined to royal and ducal households in the seventeenth century. The grey hangings recorded in 1697 in the King's Apartments at Kensington Palace were left over from the court mourning for Queen Mary.⁵⁴

An account by Sandford on the funeral of General Monck (d. 1670) pays particular attention to the hangings at Somerset House, London, where the coffined body lay in state. The *chapelle ardente* 'was hung with Velvet, floored with Bays, adorned with escutcheons, and Black Sconces, with White Tapers, and at the upper end upon a Haute-pass, a Bed of State of Black Velvet was placed with Black plumes at the Four corners of the Tester; at the head a Majesty-Escutcheons,⁵⁵ and another in the midst of the Tester. Upon the bed was placed a Coffin covered with a fine Holland-Sheet of Eight bredths, and Eight ells long, and over that, a Pall of Black Velvet of Eight breadths, and Eight yards long, and thereupon the Effigies of the Duke.'⁵⁶

When Matthew Russell, a landed proprietor of Brancepeth Castle, Brancepeth, County Durham, died in 1822 the executors selected the London funeral furnishers, Dowbiggen and Holland, to undertake the arrangements, and the Baron's Hall at the castle was converted into a *chapelle ardente*. A contemporary oil painting of the scene⁵⁷ depicts a two-bay vaulted chamber, carpeted with black felt, and hung with black cloth from floor to corbel, with an escutcheon in each bay above the cloth, the

⁵⁴ T. H. Lunsingh Scheuleer, 'Documents on the Furnishing of Kensington Palace', *Walpole Society Pubns.* 38 (1960-2), p. 24.

⁵⁵ A hatchment.

⁵⁶ F. Sandford, *The Order and Ceremonies Used for and at the Solemn Interment of . . . George Duke of Albermarle* (London 1670). An ell is 45 inches, a breadth about 30 inches.

⁵⁷ In the collection of Viscount Boyne. Reproduced in Litten, *op. cit.* illn. 82.

THE COAT OF ARMS

room illuminated by four single candles set in silvered candlesticks on black torchères. In the middle of the furthest bay is a black canopy, supported by crêpe-draped staves. Plumes of black ostrich feathers sprout from each corner, and a larger plume crowns the canopy's pyramidal black velvet roof; three escutcheons appear on that part of the pelmet facing the viewer. Beneath the canopy is a fabric-covered low plinth, 1ft 6in high, supporting the upholstered coffin, flanked on either side by triple-branched silvered candlesticks, also on 1ft 6in plinths, with an escutcheon positioned at the head end of the coffin. At each corner of the canopy, as though on guard, stands a sable-clad mute with a crêpe-draped staff and high up on the west wall, above the line of the canopy, is the hatchment.

As the eighteenth century progressed, the number of in-house lyings-in-state among the landed gentry declined, and that provided for Matthew Russell may have been the last of its kind. The nobility, on the other hand, maintained the tradition well into the nineteenth century. Maria Taylor, an upholster and funeral furnisher of Coney Street, York, had men working for twenty-one days in November 1864 hanging the chapel at Castle Howard, the Howard Mausoleum at St John's, Welburn, and at Coneysthorpe church,⁵⁸ all in Yorkshire, for the obsequies of George William Frederick Howard, 7th Earl of Carlisle. Gone were the escutcheons, plumes and triple-branched candlesticks, the only item of heraldry being the hatchment:⁵⁹

Escutcheon frame covered with fine black cloth, Iron stays &c	£4.10.0d
Mr Wales account for painting ditto	£17.6.0d
Self and Men taking ditto over and fixing. Van, pair of horses and expenses	£3.8.0d

By the end of the nineteenth century the hatchment had largely disappeared, though the nobility continued to display their status by a coronet on the coffin lid (**Figure 8**).⁶⁰ This practice continues today, though hatchments have been provided for all monarchs since the death of Queen Victoria (d. 1901). A recent hatchment was provided in 1998 to Lavinia, Duchess of Norfolk (d. 1997),⁶¹ for display in the Roman Catholic cathedral at Arundel in Sussex.

The merchandise for heraldic funerals continues to be available. For my own part, Messrs Watts & Co of Westminster have made the tasselled mantling for my helm and Stuart Davies of Brighton has carved the crest. Helen Baines of Stratford-upon-Avon has made the tabard and Sharon Foley of Whitechapel will be making the banner and standard. The sword, gauntlets and spurs have been provided by an armoury in Sussex. Eventually they will all be offered up in the Anglican Chapel at London's fashionable Kensal Green Cemetery, where my burial vault is situated. For those desiring something a little less ostentatious, the hatchment only is required. Consequently, I shall be ordering one for eventual deposit in my parish church at

⁵⁸ Coneysthorpe church, built 1835, has no dedication.

⁵⁹ Castle Howard, Yorkshire: Howard family papers. The item 'escutcheon' in the first entry evidently refers to a hatchment.

⁶⁰ Faultlessly re-enacted in the 1949 Ealing Studios film, *Kind Hearts and Coronets*.

⁶¹ Illustrated in *Country Life*, 19 February 1998.

THE HERALDIC FUNERAL

King's Lynn. In the short term, these items will be stored away against the day they will be required. Until then I shall remind myself of G. K. Chesterton's words in *The Rolling English Road*: 'For there is good news yet to hear and fine things to be seen/ Before we go to Paradise by way of Kensal Green.'⁶²

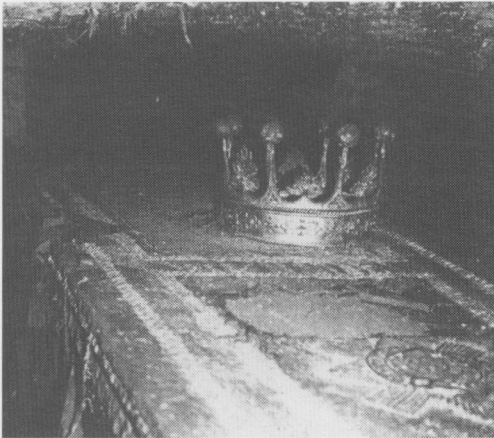


Figure 8: Coffin with coronet of the fourth Earl of Aberdeen (d. 1860). St. John's, Stanmore, Middlesex.

⁶² This article was originally delivered as a lecture to the Heraldry Society on 20 November, 2002. On the following pages, by way of further illustration, photographs are shown of a quincentenary re-enactment of the funeral of Arthur, Prince of Wales, which took place in Worcester on 3 May 2002. These photographs appear by kind courtesy of the *Worcester Evening News*.

THE COAT OF ARMS

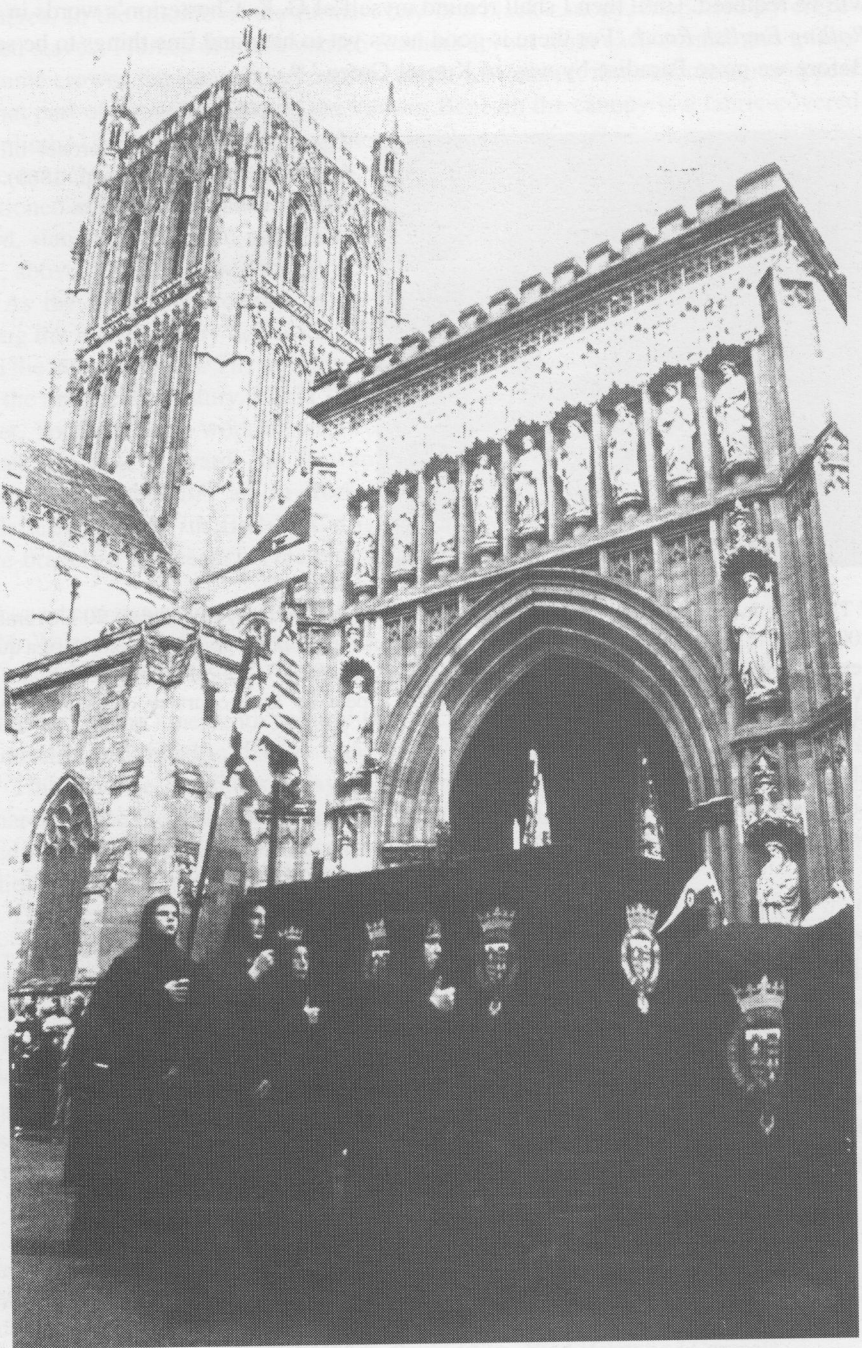


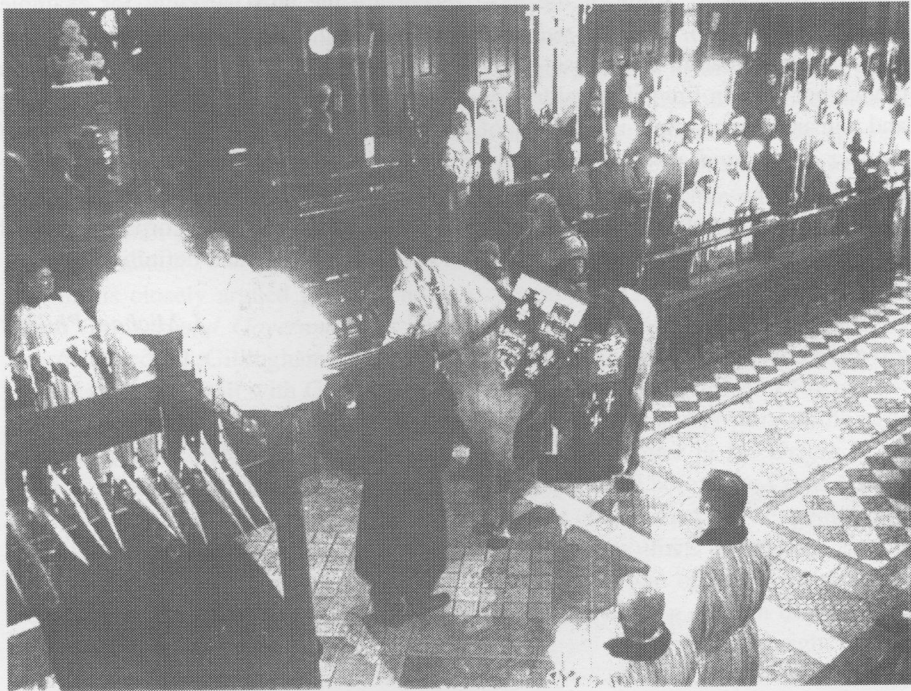
Figure 9: Prince Arthur's funeral chariot arrives at Worcester Cathedral.

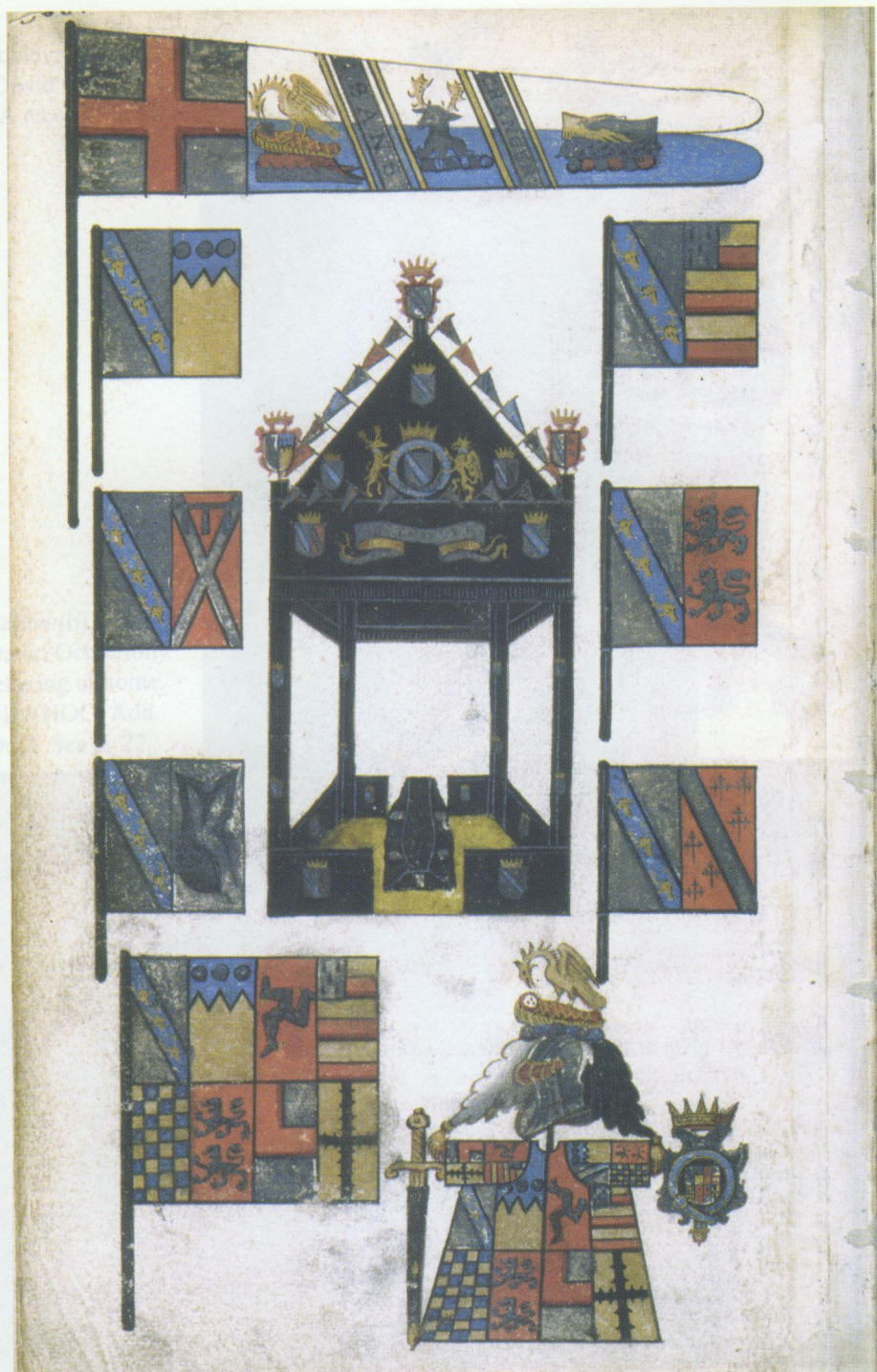
THE HERALDIC FUNERAL



Figure 10 (above): A king of arms, a herald and a pursuivant bearing items of Prince Arthur's funerary achievement.

Figure 11 (below): Prince Arthur's charger brought to the altar of the Cathedral.





Funeral hearse, standard, banners, tabard and crest of Edward, Earl of Derby (died 1572). CA Ms Vincent 151 (Vincent's Precedents), p. 366.

See p. 57.