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A WILTSHIRE PASSION FOR COGNIZANCES, THE HUNGERFORD FAMILY AND ITS ALLIES.

STEPHEN SLATER FHS

Abstract

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries many of the great families of Wiltshire adopted badges based on agricultural and other utilitarian implements, some of them inherited from other houses. There is evidence for widespread usage of these devices in churches, although many examples are now lost, while others remain only as faint traces which can be difficult to discern. The earliest of the group is the Hungerford sickle. Dependent families of Troponell and Long took the ox yoke and the lock, respectively. Also considered are the padlock of Lovell, the tirret of Tocotes, the rudder of Willoughby of Broke, and the sledge of Stourton. High on the battlements of Seend church traces of the badges of Hungerford, Willoughby of Broke Beauchamp Lords St Amand and Bouchier have been found which date to the reign of Henry VII, all these families being allies and adherents of the House of Lancaster.

The Lovell Padlock

On a stone panel set high in the wall of Tisbury Church, Wiltshire, there was recently discovered, with the aid of a telephoto lens, a most curious badge, quite invisible from the ground to the naked eye. After some deliberation, a consensus view emerged that here on the stone were three fleurs de lys interspersed with three padlocks. Tisbury is the nearest town to the ruined (slighted) castle at Wardour, which for a century and more was the property of the Barons Lovell and Holland. Both the fleur de lys and padlock were badges of the Lovells, and perhaps the panel came from the castle after the building was destroyed during the English Civil War. Wardour Castle was lost to the Lovells during that period we have come to know as the Wars of the Roses; John, 8th Lord Lovell having sided with the cause of the Red Rose, his properties were seized in 1461 by King Edward IV. His son Francis sided with Richard III and was awarded by that monarch the title of Viscount Lovell (1483). Francis Lovell's Garter stall plate, considered by many one of the most beautiful, has the mantling strewn with padlocks (**Figure 1**).

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Figure 1: The Garter Stall Plate of Francis Viscount Lovell.

The Hungerford Sickle

Not long after encountering the badge at Tisbury the graffiti surveyors who brought it to light found another interesting badge in the church at Imber, in the middle of Salisbury Plain. Imber was one of the many estates owned by that great Wiltshire family of Hungerford during the later medieval period. The original power base of the family at Heytesbury is the next village southwards from Imber, and it was from there that the Hungerfords organised the care of their sheep flocks. I know of no other families, with the exceptions of Percy and Neville who took such a delight in their heraldry, particularly their liveries, badges-cognizances-devices, call them what you will.

Gaining entry into Imber Church is challenging because the village was taken over by the military in the run up to D Day, and is still in the middle of an active army range. Proudly displayed here on the arch of the porch is a stone shield of the arms of Hungerford: (*Sable*) 2 bars (*argent*) and in chief 3 roundels (*plates*). One of the survey team led me up the stairs of the church tower to a slit window which looked out over the downs. With the aid of a torch it was possible to see several crudely etched sickles, of which more later.

The Hungerfords originated in the thirteenth-century from the place of the same name just over the Wiltshire border in Berkshire, but through advantageous marriages to heiresses, came to be based at Heytesbury, and also Farleigh Castle, near Bath. The most illustrious member of the family was Walter Hungerford (d. 1449), who rose to prominence under King Henry IV, became a Knight of the Garter in 1421, and in 1426, through Writ of Summons, was created Baron Hungerford of Heytesbury and Homet (in Normandy).

Lord Walter took as his first wife Catherine, daughter and co-heir to Sir Thomas Peverell, of Cornwall, whose arms were *Azure 3 garbs argent, a chief or*. It would appear that from this time onwards Lord Walter embraced elements of the Peverell arms as his own, while the garb and sickles became the recognised emblems of Hungerford patronage throughout the West Country.

The two emblems served as both crest and badge for the Hungerfords.¹ As a badge the single sickle was worn by Hungerford retainers on their liveries of green and red.² The lovely ‘knot’ of three sickles interlaced was often employed as a badge by family members, such as appears on the entrance arch to the family chantry in Heytesbury Church. Other examples are to be found on the ceiling panels in the nave of Salisbury St. Thomas Church, where the sickles might be interlaced with garbs (**Figure 2**), a likely inspiration for the Lovell badge at Tisbury. One of the finest examples of such a combined device is to be found surrounded by the Garter band in the cloister of the Palace of Westminster. (**Figure 3**) Sir Walter Hungerford KG was Speaker of the Commons in 1414, and made a large benefaction to the College of St Stephen at Westminster.³ Fifteenth-century Hungerford seals provide us with some

¹ Siddons *Badges* vol 2 pt 2 pp.164–5.

² Siddons *Badges* vol 3 p.121.

³ J. S. Roskell and Charles Kightly, ‘Sir Walter Hungerford (1378–1449)’ in J.S. Roskell, L. Clark and C. Rawcliffe, *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1386–1421* (1993); William Dugdale, *The Baronage of England* (2 vols London 1675–76) vol 2 pp 204–5.

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Figure 2: Hungerford roof boss Salisbury St Thomas.

of the finest examples of their kind, and in their designs much is made of the sickle badge and crest. That of Lord Walter has the FitzJohn arms between 2 sickles, and a crest of a garb between two sickles. During his father's lifetime Walter's son, Sir Robert (later 2nd baron) bore a label over the shield for difference, and the sickles supporting the arms are actually differenced by a tiny ermine spots (**Figure 4**)

The Hungerford liveries of green and red are taken from the arms first used by the family *Per pale indented gules and vert a chevron or*. It was long claimed by the family that the arms were in fact those of the family of Heytesbury, an early Hungerford having married Maud, the heiress of the former family, yet there is scant evidence that there ever was such a family or marriage, and if so that they ever used arms. They appear to be the original Hungerford arms. In the fourteenth-century a Walter de Hungerford married Elizabeth, daughter and heir of Sir Adam FitzJohn of Cherhill, on the Wiltshire Downs, and it is through this marriage that the Hungerfords inherited the FitzJohn arms *Sable 2 bars argent in chief 3 plates* (as on Imber Church), often quartering them with the 'Heytesbury arms' (earlier examples of the quartered

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Figure 3: Hungerford sickles and garbs from the cloister of the Palace of Westminster c.1520.

shields have Heytesbury 1 and 4; FitzJohn 2 and 3, while later examples show the reverse). The Hungerford liveries were used for altar frontals and even in decorations of those churches that received their patronage, including Wellow, just over the Somerset border (close to the family castle at Farleigh) and Salisbury St. Thomas. Both have roof beams striped in red, green and gold. In the latter case the colour scheme was repainted in one bay of the nave roof during restorations 20 years ago.

Perhaps the most remarkable manifestations of the badge can be glimpsed in Salisbury Cathedral, where the family endowed two chantries. The chapel founded by Lord Walter was later rebuilt as a family pew for the Earls of Radnor, and contains an extraordinary structure, called by many ‘the cage’, surely one of the finest examples of medieval wrought ironwork to survive. Lord Walter’s tomb slab now lies on the north side of the nave. Although denuded of its brasses for husband and wife, it is quite exceptional in having multiple indentations for brass sickles all around (**Figure 5**). In the wills of the Hungerfords much mention was made of items endowed to

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Figure 4: Seal of Sir Robert Hungerford.

their chantries such as vestments, altar frontals and plate, adorned with knots of sickles, red and green cloth and the arms of the Hungerfords and near kindred such as Courtenay, Botreaux and Beaumont.⁴

One of the most delightful applications of the sickle knots and garbs is on the Courtenay mattlepiece in Exeter's Bishop's Palace. Bishop Peter Courtenay's (d.1492) parents were Sir Philip Courtenay of Powderham Castle and Elizabeth, daughter of Walter, 1st Baron Hungerford. The splendid carvings include three shields of arms, sickle knots, garbs and the dolphin badge of the Courtenays. (**Figure 6**)

⁴ Extracts of wills made by Canon C.E. Jackson in Cartulary of the Hungerford estates, Wilts & Swindon History Centre MS 490/1470. Lord Walter Hungerford bequeathed to Sir John Fortescue his great cup marked with sickles. For his gift of altar frontals decorated with sickles see Roskell & Kightly, op cit. Margaret Margaret Lady Hungerford and Botreaux, in her will of 1476 bequeathed a pair of vestments of red and green cloth with arms of Hungerford and Botreaux in the cross, and also a chasuble with clouds and knots of sickles.

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Figure 5: Tomb of the first Lord Hungerford and his wife, Salisbury Cathedral.



Figure 6: Courtenay impaling Hungerford on the fireplace of the Bishop's Palace Exeter.

The Troponell ox yoke

Lesser families connected with the Hungerfords included Thomas Tropenell (d.1488) of Great Chalfield, near Melksham, and Tropenell's neighbour, Robert Long (d.1447), of South Wraxall. Both men appear together in numerous documents regarding Hungerford legal affairs. That Troponell was held in high esteem is shown through the gift to him by Robert, 2nd baron Hungerford, of a silver cup embossed with the Hungerford arms.⁵ With moneys built up in the main through Hungerford patronage, both Tropenell and Long were able to build mansions which are still wondrous to modern eyes for their opulence and detail. Furthermore, both men were

⁵ J.T Driver, 'A perilous and covetous man', *Wiltshire Archaeological and Nat History Magazine*, volume 93, (2000) pp. 82-89.

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keen to emulate their social superiors in the frequent usage of the personal badge or cognizance.

Thomas Tropenell took as his badge a double ox yoke, which in the manner of Italian 'impresse' was usually accompanied by the motto "*Le Joug Tyra Belement*" (The Yoke Draws-Pulls Well). Today, some four centuries and more since Tropenell's death, visitors to Great Chalfield can view on the roof beams of the great hall, numerous ox yokes and that motto. Tropenell's tomb in nearby Corsham Church was similarly bedecked by brass yokes and mottoes. My personal favourite example of the Tropenell badge comes from the cast of a boss once carved in the roof of the Bishop's Palace at Wells. Here we have three interlaced yokes in a way quite resembling the Hungerford sickle knots. Surely this was Tropenell complimenting the device of his masters, the Hungerford barons (**Figure 7**)



Figure 7: The knotted yoke badge of Thomas Troponell from the Bishop's Palace Wells.



Figure 8: The Lock of Long, South Wraxall church.

The Lock of Long

Three miles north of Chalfield is the magnificent manor of the Long family, another who owed their early fortunes to the Hungerfords. Family tradition related that the Long badge of the ‘marshal’s lock’ was inherited through marriage from the Cernes who had held office in the King’s Marshalsea, hence marshal’s lock.⁶ Sir Thomas Long (d.1510) acquired in marriage the office of supplying the Third Rod of the Marshalsea, an office previously held by the Cernes.⁷ In form the badge comprises a simple barrel lock, as appears numerous times on the earliest Long tombs in the churches of South Wraxall and Draycott Cerne, near Chippenham. The Cernes were also buried at Draycott Cerne. In the Long chapel at South Wraxall later generations of the family decorated the windows with a modern depiction of the locks (**Figure 8**).

The Tirret of Tocotes

Wiltshire is a county of badges, and amongst the most spectacular of its many fine examples is a display in the chapel attached to the south side of the parish church at Bromham, north of Devizes. The chapel was founded by Sir Roger Tocotes and his stepson, Richard Beauchamp, Lord St Amand, licensed by Henry VII in the first year of his reign and completed by 1491. The exterior and interior of the chapel

⁶ John Edward Jackson, *Wiltshire topographical collections of John Aubrey* (Wilts Arch Soc, Devizes 1862) pp.228–34.

⁷ Siddons *Badges* vol 2 pt 2 p.179.

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Figure 9: The Tocotes Swivel, Bromham Church.

are a riot of heraldry, with repeat depictions of the arms of the founders and near relations. The roof panels bear many shields which are interspersed with the ‘tirret’ or swivel which was the badge of Sir Roger Tocotes. The device appears as two irregular triangles attached by a central shaft (**Figure 9**), in similar form to a Percy badge. Its origins have been the subject of conjecture, but it might represent a variant of the mascles which appear in the arms of the Braybrookes.⁸ Sir Roger Tocotes’ wife (Lord Richard’s mother) was Elizabeth Braybrooke. Elsewhere in the chapel the ass’s head badge of the Beauchamps, Lords St Amand makes its appearance, sometimes allied to the roaches of the de Roches, yet another closely connected family (**Figure 10**). The Roches were also allied through marriage to the Tropenells of Chalfield.

The Ship’s Rudder of Willoughby

Robert 1st Lord Willoughby of Broke (d 1502) was one of Henry Tudor’s staunchest adherents, he gained the Garter and in 1491 the grateful Henry VII advanced Robert to the peerage as Baron Wiloughby de Broke. Robert inherited the rudder badge from the Paveleys, together with their Wiltshire estates, and they in turn acquired it from the Cheyneys. We are lucky to have the notes of two worthies who made their way to

⁸ *Siddons Badges* vol 2 pt 2 p.289.

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Figure 10: Centre, shield with two asses' heads and a roach (fish), Bromham Church.

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the great mansion at Broke, when much of it was still standing. Only one partial wing still exists which is devoid of any decoration. John Leland probably visited in 1542, recording that the window glass was full of rudders. He speculated on a possible link with the Admiralty. Almost a century later the local antiquarian John Aubrey paid a visit. He confirmed that the windows were mostly “semee with rudder of a ship Or”, and detailed the many arms still to be seen in the main apartments of the old mansion. He mistakenly believed that Robert Lord Willoughby of Broke was an admiral under Henry VII.

Although, tragically, the wonderful heraldic scheme at Broke has long since vanished, there remains some hint of what Robert Lord Willoughby’s heraldic schemes would have looked like in the church of Berwick St. John, where between 1485 and 1506 the rector was his younger brother Edward Willoughby, later also the Dean of Exeter. The choir of the church was much decorated with heraldry, not only of the Willoughbys but also of allied families, including the garb and sickles of Hungerford (**Figure 11**). Several little painted rudders which must have once covered



Figure 11: Hungerford Crest, Berwick St John.

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Figure 12: Willoughby Rudder, Berwick St John.

many of the panels on the roof (**Figure 12**) have luckily survived the nineteenth-century refurbishment of the church. Prior to this, in 1882 parts the ceiling were strewn with Tudor roses.⁹ Another happy survival is a splendid painted shield of the Willoughby quarters (**Figure 13**).

Robert Lord Willoughby's tomb is in Callington Church, Cornwall, whereupon the arms just mentioned make a fine appearance, as do numerous rudders and Tudor roses (**Figure 14**), recalling the ceiling pattern back at Berwick. That of his son Robert, 2nd Lord Willoughby of Broke (d.1521) can be found just over into Devon at

⁹ *Handbook for Travelers in Wiltshire, Dorsetshire and Somersetshire* (John Murray, London 1882) p.141.

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Figure 13: Willoughby of Broke quarterings, Berwick St John. There are four quarterings, three of them with sub-quarterings. 1: the Ufford cross quartering the Willoughby (Bek) cross moline, differenced with a crescent for Willoughby of Broke; 2: the cross of Latimer, Robert first lord Willoughby of Broke's father being de jure Lord Latimer. 3: the saltire of Champernowne quartering the horseshoes of Ferrers and the eagle of Bigbury, for the first Lord Willoughby's wife, the heiress Blanche Champernowne. 4: the fusils of Cheney of Broke quartering the chevron of Stafford of Southwick for the first Lord Willoughby's mother Anne Cheyney, the heiress of Broke in Wilts. The original arms of Willoughby, *or fretty azure*, do not appear, the arms of the great ancestral family of Bek being used instead.

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Bere Ferrers, hard by the Tavy river, where in the church is a series of delightful pew ends making much of Willoughby and Ferrers heraldry, one having the rudders and horseshoes of the Ferrers interlinked.

On the south side of the nave of the magnificent former priory church at Edington. is the tomb attributed to Sir Ralph Cheney (d.1401) who married Joan, a co-heir of Sir John Paveley, lord of the manor of Westbury. Through the Paveleys Sir John inherited



Figure 14: Rudder on the tomb of Walter, first Lord Hungerford, Callington Church.

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Figure 15: The Sledge of Stourton in Stourton Church.

the mansion of Broke House, near Westbury, and it is thought that he also inherited the Paveley badge of a ship's rudder, a device which appears twice on his tomb. Anne Cheyney, one of the coheirs of Sir Edmund Cheyney of Broke, married Sir John Willoughby c.1445, and through her the Cheney estate passed to the Willoughbys.

The Sledge of Stourton

The Stourhead estate, seven miles north west from Berwick, was home to the Stourtons for more than five centuries, claiming descent from a Saxon noble, Botulph de Stourton, a man of giant stature. According to one version of a family legend Botulph created such a carnage among a Norman force attacking his estate that his attendants had to carry away the wall of corpses on sledges or drays.¹⁰ The Stourton badge was the dray, which in heraldic representation appears as a simple wooden sledge.¹¹ John Aubrey on his seventeenth-century travels recorded that the windows of Stourton Church bore little drays, now long since destroyed.¹² The sole survival of the little dray within the church is on the north side of the tomb of Edward, 6th Baron Stourton (d.1535). (**Figure 15**). Badly eroded drays also appear in the church at Little Langford, 20 miles east of Stourton. Between Stourton and Langford lies the village

¹⁰ Charles Botolph Joseph, *History of the Noble House of Stourton* (London 1899) pp.32–4.

¹¹ Siddons *Badges* vol 2 pt 2 p.280.

¹² Jackson, *op cit* pp 397–9; Joseph, *op cit*, p.143.

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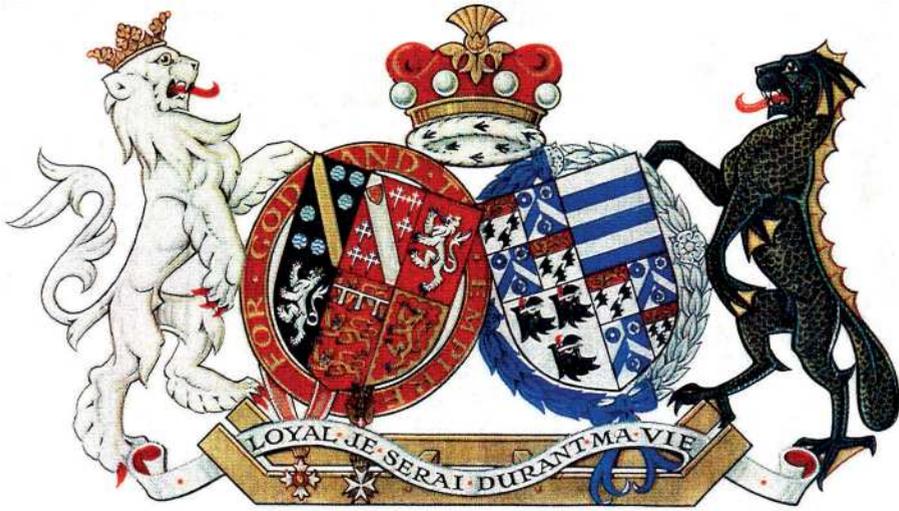


Figure 16: Arms of Charles, 23rd Baron Stourton.

of Teffont Magna, where faint graffiti have been recorded from the porch wall. To the left of the entrance door is a late medieval ship, while to the right, crudely executed, is the Stourton dray.¹³

The dray continued to be used on the liveries of the servants of the Lords Stourton into the twentieth century. Illustrated (Figure 16) is an example provided by Charles, 26th Lord Stourton, which depicts the impaled arms of Lord Stourton and his wife corralled inside a dray.

A noteworthy assemblage of badges

Send Church sits atop of a ridge which looks south towards the former Hungerford lands on Salisbury Plain. The north isle of this church was rebuilt in the 1490s by the wool merchant John Stokys (d.1498), whose monumental brass here is still extant. He was instrumental in gaining donations from the local aristocracy, whose badges appear high on the battlements which crest the exterior of the north aisle roof. These include the Hungerford sickle knot, the Willoughby rudder, possibly the ass's head of the Beauchamps, Lords St Amand (very crudely carved, and now very eroded) and the Bouchier knot (Figure 17). The four heads of these families were all Lancastrian sympathisers and supporters of King Henry VII, who might plausibly have fought together at the Battle of Bosworth.

Sir Walter Hungerford of Heytesbury (d. 1516), and Sir Thomas Bouchier of Horsley, Sussex (d.1512?) were both sent to the Tower of London by Richard III in 1485, shortly before the battle. As Richard marched north to intercept the forces of Henry Tudor, he ordered his friend, Sir Robert Brackenbury, Constable of the

¹³ Lynette Nelson and Audrey McBain, *The bounding spring: a history of Teffont in Wiltshire* (Salisbury 2003).

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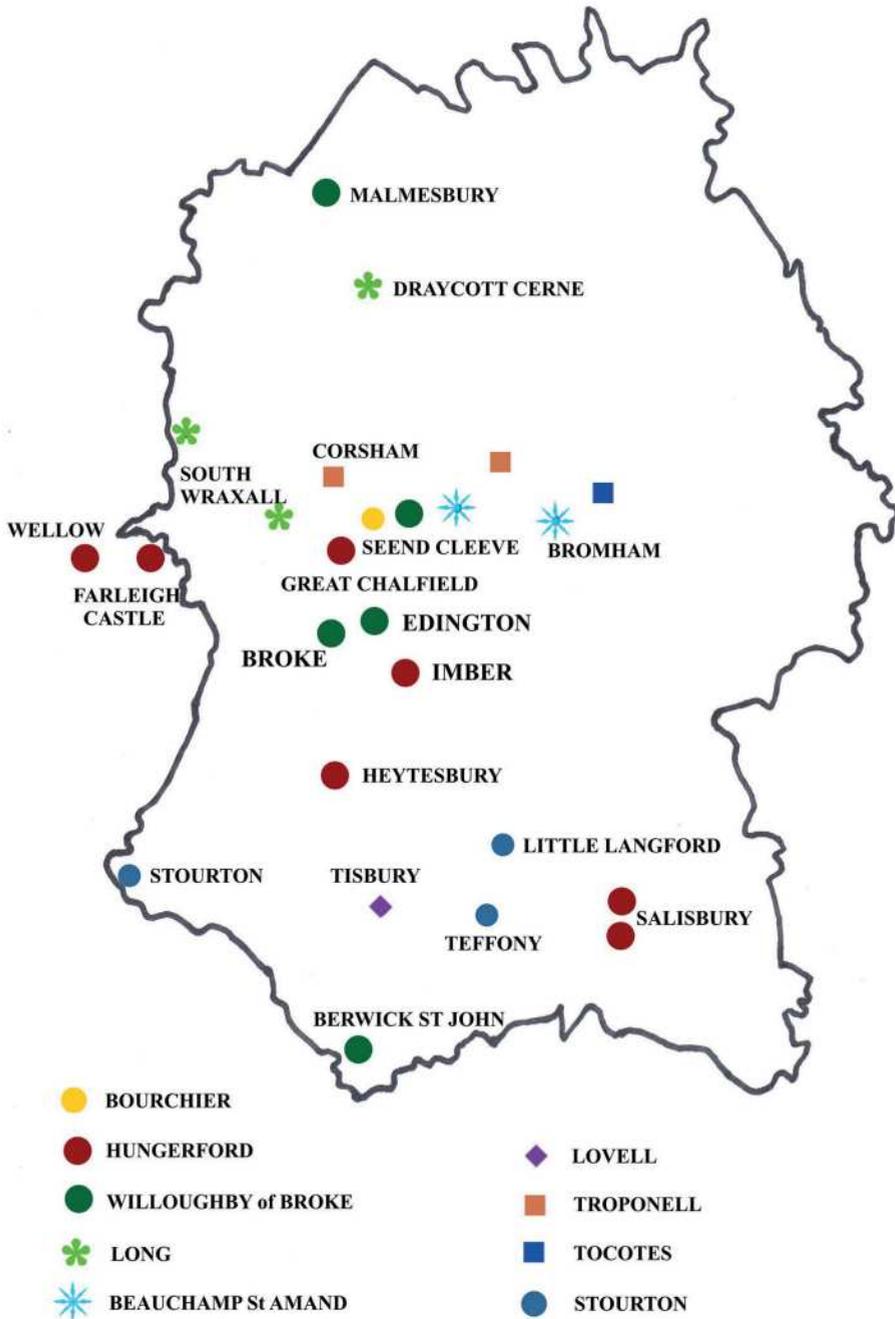


Figure 17: Examples of the Bouchier Knot from Tawstock Church, Devon. (Wikimedia)

Tower, to bring the two noblemen with him. At some point on their journey north, Hungerford and Bouchier gave Brackenbury the slip. The next time the three men met was on Bosworth Field, where, it is said Hungerford slew his former jailer.¹⁴ If he was not on the battlefield that day Sir Robert Willoughby of Broke was certainly very near, and he was aiding the new king, Henry VII, immediately after. As for the (probable) ass's head of the Beauchamps, Lords St. Amand, Richard, 6th baron was earlier involved in Buckingham's Rebellion. His location on that fateful day in 1485 is not recorded, but he was a very close neighbour to both Hungerford and Willoughby, and also like minded politically.

¹⁴ John A Wagner, *Encyclopedia of the Wars of the Roses* (Oxford 2001) p.129.

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Map of Wiltshire showing places mentioned in the text.