

# HERALDIC GLASS AT BRUERN ABBEY IN 1574: AN INTERPRETATION OF THE RECORD IN RICHARD LEE'S *GATHERINGS OF OXFORDSHIRE*.

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## Abstract

*Eighteen coats of arms were recorded in 1574 in the residence which grew out of the surviving buildings of the Cistercian abbey of Bruern. They represent an interesting and now lost collection with links to a surprising number of notable events from the Tudor era. The majority were pre-Reformation, and seemingly of multiple dates, ranging back potentially as far as the thirteenth century. Some of the bearers were buried in the abbey, and it is suggested that the arms were probably brought together from various locations within the monastic buildings.*

Bruern was a Cistercian abbey in the forest of Wychwood, Oxfordshire, founded in 1147 by Nicholas Bassett as a daughter house of Waverley in Surrey. It was suppressed as a religious house in 1536 at which time its bells were removed, the lead was removed from some of its buildings, and its lands were leased, initially to Sir John Bridges (d.1557) and his brother, Thomas Bridges (d.1559).<sup>1</sup> As was often the case following the dissolution of the monasteries a part of the abbey was converted into a gentleman's residence. The buildings selected for such a purpose varied, but popular choices would have been the guest house, or the abbot's residence.

In 1574–5 Richard Lee, Portcullis Pursuivant (1571–85), while conducting a visitation of the county of Oxford as deputy of Robert Cooke, Clarenceux King of Arms, made detailed records of the heraldry that he found in churches, houses, and other buildings. One of the houses visited was Bruern Abbey, or 'Mr Bridges' House', as he called it. Lee's observations in the form of tricked arms (**Figures 1 and 2**) came into the possession of the Oxfordshire antiquary Anthony à Wood (d.1695) who in c.1668–81 made his own annotated copy in blazon. Both manuscripts are now in the Bodleian Library.<sup>2</sup> Lee's tricks were published in blazon, with some inaccuracies, by William H Turner in 1871 in *The Visitations of the County of Oxford* using Wood's notes.<sup>3</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> VCH Oxford vol. 19 p.299.

<sup>2</sup> Lee's manuscript 'The Gatherings of Oxfordsher, Anno 1574' is MS Wood D14, and Wood's own notes are MS Wood E14.

<sup>3</sup> William Henry Turner, *The Visitations of the county of Oxford*, Harl. Soc. vol. 5 (London, 1871, hereinafter **Turner**), 1–118, Bruern at pp.19–20.

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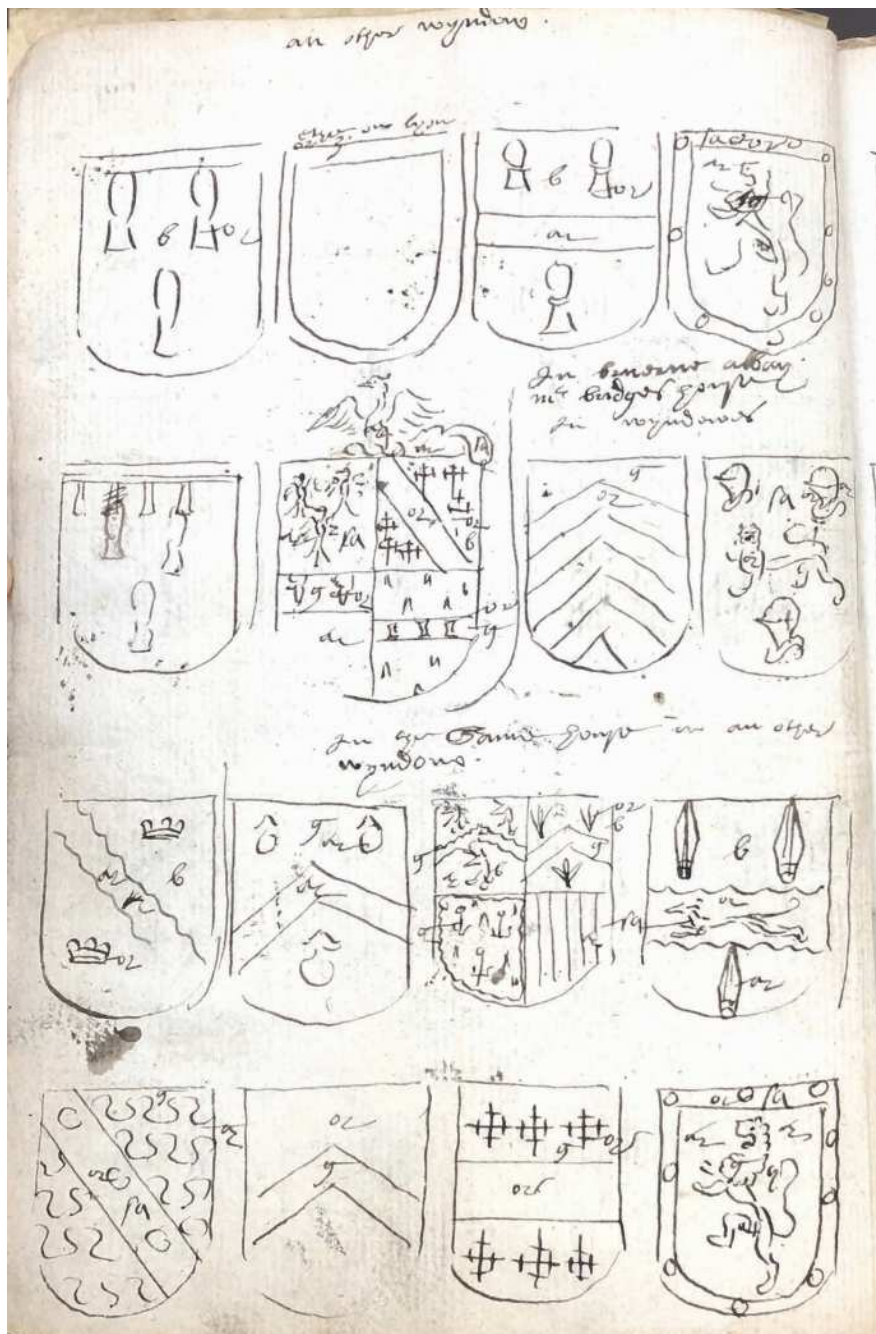


Figure 1: Bodleian. MS Wood D14 f.16v. The first 6 shields are recorded from Churchill church, the remainder from Bruern (Numbers 1–10 in this paper)  
Photograph by Richard d'Apice.

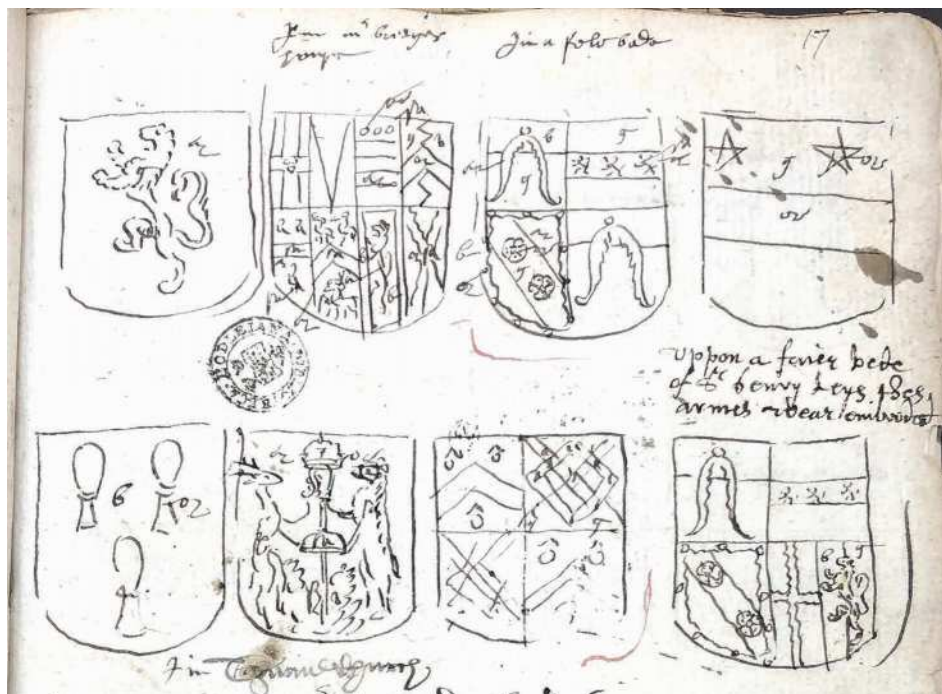


Figure 2: Bodleian MS Wood D14 f.17r concluding the shields recorded at Bruern (numbers 11–18). Photograph by Richard d'Apice.

numbering of the shields adopted in this paper is that supplied by Turner, which in turn follows the order of Lee's tricks

In 1593, the leasehold title of Bruern passed to Sir Anthony Cope of Hanwell Castle, Oxfordshire and, in 1614, the freehold title to the land was purchased by Sir William Cope (later 2nd baronet of Hanwell). In about 1713 the 'fine old hous' was demolished by Sir Jonathan Cope (d.1765), 1st baronet of Brewerne, and the present house was built.<sup>4</sup>

Lee's record of eighteen coats of arms is all that remains of the heraldry of that vanished house, apart from two carved medieval shields which have been incorporated into the entrance to the current buildings. His record includes arms which belong to the Elizabethan owners of the house, and others which must have been in the monastery. Lee makes explicit reference to three windows, one of which was in an upstairs bedroom, and he also described heraldic hangings on a bed. It is possible that some of the glass panels were saved from diverse parts of the monastery, including the abbot's lodgings, where the most exalted of the abbey's visitors would have been housed.

We will now consider these shields in roughly chronological order. The distribution of the arms was that nos 1–3 were in one downstairs window and nos 4–11 in another.

<sup>4</sup> Joy Timms, 'A Brief History of Bruern Abbey and the Great Fire at Bruern Abbey' *Wychwoods History*, vol. 27 (2012) p. 48. The interior of the new house was destroyed by fire in 1764, see VCH Oxford vol. 19 pp.301–2.

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Figure 3: left, Cornwall (no.10); centre, medieval floor tile with arms of Cornwall from Cleeve Abbey, Somerset; right, Lyons (no.11). All artwork in this paper is by John Gaylor. Central photograph taken by Paul A. Fox.

These must have been in the principal rooms. No.12 was somewhere on its own, perhaps on a staircase, while nos 13–17 were in the upstairs solar bedroom,<sup>5</sup> with no. 18 on the bed itself.

### The Pre-Reformation arms:

**Cornwall** (Number 10), *Argent a lion rampant gules in border sable, bezanty* (**Figure 3ab**).

This is one of the earliest shields, and belongs to Richard Plantagenet, earl of Cornwall and king of the Romans (d.1272), or his son Edmund (d. 1298), earl of Cornwall. Edmund was Regent of England 1286–89 while Edward I was in Gascony recovering his duchy. As well as being in the glass, the Cornwall arms still exist carved on the left gate pier of the house. On the right gate pier are the royal arms of England from the period 1340–c.1400: *Quarterly 1 & 4, Semy de lis, 2 & 3. Three lions passant guardant in pale* (**Figure 4**). The gate piers have matching gothic tracery and appear to be contemporary with each other. The presence of the Cornwall arms in the original abbey can be readily explained.

The successive earls of Cornwall, Richard and Edmund, were the abbey's overlords as the possessors of three knights' fees linked to the abbey and its granges in Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire.<sup>6</sup> That the king of the Romans was granted the abbey by the crown is not too surprising given that he had a benign interest in the Cistercian order, and founded his own abbey at Hailes in Gloucestershire, where both he and his son were buried. Following the death of Edmund his extensive interests reverted to the crown,<sup>7</sup> which thus became patrons of the abbey, which explains why in 1346 the Black Prince was able to demand a supply of carts from the abbey, doubtless in lieu of its feudal obligations.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Turner was unable to decipher 'in a solar bede'

<sup>6</sup> CIPM vol. 3 no.604 p.480.

<sup>7</sup> CoA no.236 (2019) pp.136–7.

<sup>8</sup> TNA SC 1/54/80.



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Figure 4: Gateposts from Bruern Abbey with arms dating from the later fourteenth century. Left, Cornwall; right, royal arms of England.

### **Lyons**, or Cornwall? (Number 11), *Argent a lion rampant gules* (Figure 3c).

From the same window as the last, these arms were borne by the Lyons family of Warkworth in Northamptonshire which terminated in female heirs in 1385.<sup>9</sup> A descendant of that house, Sir John Chetwode (d.1412) adopted the arms but his own line again quickly terminated in female heirs.<sup>10</sup> The possibility must be considered that the arms are just another shield of Cornwall which had already become damaged in the abbey's demolition before it was relocated, and in the process lost its border. In either case the arms are probably medieval.

### **Stafford** (Number 8), *Or a chevron gules* (Figure 5a).

The last earl of Stafford to use these plain arms (without quartering) was Humphrey Stafford, first duke of Buckingham, who died at the battle of Northampton in 1460.<sup>11</sup> The Staffords had a family connection with Bruern in that Edmund, first earl of Stafford (d.1308) was married to Margaret Basset, daughter of Ralph lord Basset of Drayton, and thus all the subsequent earls were kinsmen of the founder. As the Staffords would have been well familiar with their family pedigree, on some visit one of the earls perhaps decided it would be fitting to have his arms there. The arms of the great noble families can still be seen high up in the clerestory windows of many medieval churches, and in most instances there is no documentary evidence concerning the connection which must have existed before such arms were put up. Sometimes it would have been a direct request of the bearer, while at other times the parish clergy might have installed them to mark a generous donation, in the hope of encouraging future support.

<sup>9</sup> DBA vol. 1 p.125.

<sup>10</sup> L.S. Woodger 'Sir John Chetwode (d.1412)' Hist. Parl.; pedigree in Peter Whalley (ed.), *The history and antiquities of Northamptonshire compiled from the manuscript collections of the late learned antiquary John Bridges*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1791) vol. 1 p.217.

<sup>11</sup> J.H. and R.V. Pinches, *The royal heraldry of England* (London, 1974) pp.70–72.

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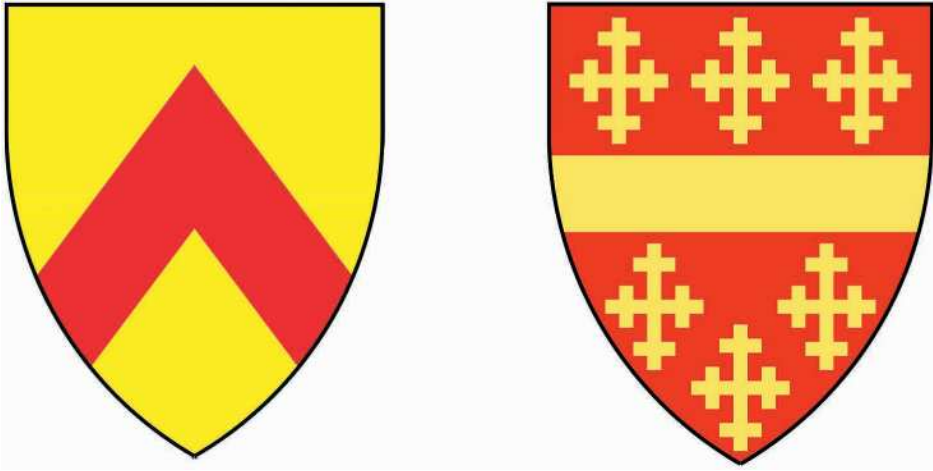


Figure 5: left, Stafford (no.8); right, Beauchamp of Warwick (no.9).

### **Beauchamp** (Number 9), *Gules a fess between six crosslets bottonny or* (**Figure 5b**).

The last Beauchamp earl of Warwick who might have used the plain arms of his ancestors was Henry Beauchamp (d.1446) created duke of Warwick in 1445, the next earl, Richard Neville the ‘kingmaker’, who being of a different house only used the arms as a quartering. In 1402 the abbot of Bruern owed fealty to Thomas Beauchamp, earl of Warwick for half a knight’s fee at Sezincote in Gloucestershire.<sup>12</sup> According to Leland the earls of Warwick were hereditary stewards of the Wychwood Forest, and they also held land in the vicinity of Bruern at Shipton, see Unton below.<sup>13</sup>

### **St Owen** (Number 1), *Gules three chevrons or* (**Figure 6a**).

This family held land in both Herefordshire and Sussex from an early period. The last certain member of the knightly family was Patrick St Owen who was said to be age 40 in 1402, when he transiently inherited the family estates, but they were transferred to Thomas Downton as the son of his brother’s heiress in 1410.<sup>14</sup> Patrick was bailiff of Dover in 1402.<sup>15</sup> William de St Owen made a gift to Osney Abbey in Oxfordshire in the thirteenth century.<sup>16</sup> If Lee mistook the colour of the chevrons, and they were in fact argent, these might be the arms of Fettiplace.<sup>17</sup> The mother of Ann Hungerford, wife

<sup>12</sup> CIPM vol. 19 no.522. That same year the abbot granted the manor of Sezincote to John Greville and his wife Sibyl in a document said to have some fine seals attached, Kent Archives U269/7190.

<sup>13</sup> Lucy Tomlin Smith (ed.), *The itinerary of John Leland*, 5 vols (London, 1908) vol. 5 pp.73–4.

<sup>14</sup> Frederic William Weaver, *The Visitation of Herefordshire made by Robert Cooke in 1569* (Exeter, 1886) p.94; VCH Sussex vol. 6 pt. 1 pp.10–21; DBA vol. 1 p.519.

<sup>15</sup> S.P.H. Statham, *Dover charters and other documents in the possession of the Corporation of Dover* (London, 1902) p.143.

<sup>16</sup> VCH Oxford vol. 12 pp.166–72.

<sup>17</sup> DBA vol. 1 p.519. Fettiplace usually had two chevrons, but a three chevron variant is attested.

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of Henry Bridges who owned Bruern Abbey, was Margaret Fettiplace.<sup>18</sup> (See no.13 for Bridges impaling Hungerford and no.6 for Unton below).

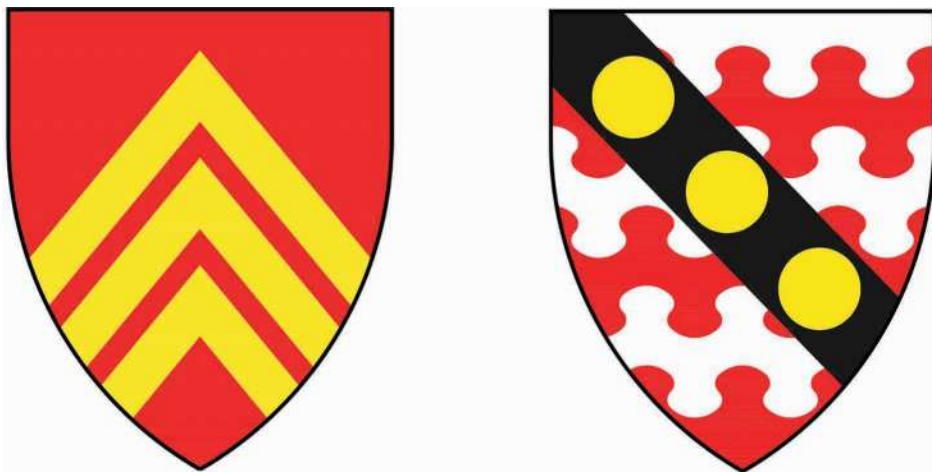


Figure 6: left, St Owen (no.1); right, Golafre (no.7).

**Golafre** of Blakesley and Sarsden (Number 7), *Barry nebuly argent and gules, on a bend sable three bezants* (**Figure 6b**).

These arms appear on the tomb of Sir John Golafre (d. 1442) in St Nicholas' Church in Fyfield, Oxfordshire (formerly in Berkshire, and not to be confused with Fifield which is close to Bruern) about 20 miles south east of Bruern. He was a grandson of Sir John Golafre whose principal estates included Sarsden, which lies very close to Bruern, and Fyfield. As early as c.1250 Thomas Golafre witnessed a Bruern Abbey charter, and his descendant Sir John Golafre (d.1363) did likewise in 1360.<sup>19</sup> The chapter house at Bruern Abbey was the family's habitual place of burial in this early period until Sir John broke the pattern with burial at Fyfield in 1363. After Sarsden passed to an heiress in 1428 the family's involvement with the vicinity of Bruern came to an end. We might well imagine the Golafre arms to have been placed in the chapter house glass in the fourteenth century.<sup>20</sup>

**Bracy?** (Number 14), *Gules a fess and in chief two mullets or* (**Figure 7a**).

No family is known to have borne the above arms, but Bracy at different times bore both *Gules a fess argent and in chief two mullets or*, and *Gules a fess or and in chief two mullets argent*, so it must be considered as very probable that these arms belonged

<sup>18</sup> Sir John Maclean and W.C.Heane, *The Visitation of the county of Gloucester 1623*, Harl. Soc. vol. 21 (London, 1885) p.89. If the arms are for Fettiplace, a post reformation date may be indicated.

<sup>19</sup> Lancashire Archives: RCHY/3/4/5 and 3/4/13.

<sup>20</sup> Leland took an interest in this family but made no record of Bruern Abbey during his travels in 1535–43 other than commenting on their burials there, for a pedigree see Whalley, Baker's Northants, op.cit., vol. 2 p.22.

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to them, and that perhaps the tinctures were wrongly recorded by Lee.<sup>21</sup> They were a Worcestershire family who held, amongst other manors, Madresfield in that county, and their arms were derived from those of their ancestors the family of Poher (-or Power) who bore *Gules a fess and in chief two mullets argent*.<sup>22</sup> The Bracy knightly family

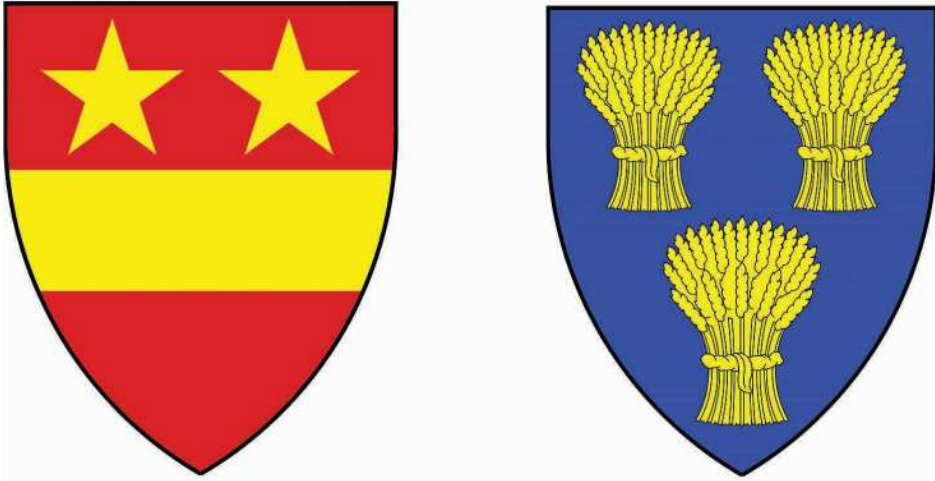


Figure 7: left, Bracy (no.14); right, Nowers (no.15).

ended with an heiress sometime after 1433. She was Joan Bracy, married to Thomas Lygon, and the Lygon family retained their own arms *Argent two lions passant gules*, so if the identification is correct the window must have been inserted no later than the early fifteenth century.<sup>23</sup>

### **Nowers** (Number 15), *Azure three garbs or* (Figure 7b).

Readers might be surprised to find these familiar arms of the county of Chester attributed to Nowers, but there can be no doubt that at Bruern the latter was intended, as Lee himself recorded them from the nearby church of Churchill in a solidly Nowers family context. More specifically they were once in the Churchill glass in four different versions; undifferenced, and differenced with a label of three points argent, with a label of five points gules, and with a fess argent. From Tackley church Lee recorded the latter version labelled for Sir George Nowers, knight (d.1425).<sup>24</sup> Again differenced with a fess argent the arms are carved on the military coat of Sir George on his extant tomb in Christ Church cathedral, Oxford. It was in the later fourteenth century that the royal family revived the usage of the arms *Azure three garbs or* to represent its palatine county of Chester. When

<sup>21</sup> DBA vol. 3 pp. 347–8.

<sup>22</sup> Sydney H Grazebrook, *The heraldry of Worcestershire*, 2 vols (London, 1873) vol. 1 pp.74–5.

<sup>23</sup> W.P.W.Phillimore, *The visitation of the County of Worcester 1569*, Harl. Soc. vol.28 (London, 1888) p.90; VCH Worcs vol. 4 pp.118–22.

<sup>24</sup> Tuner, op.cit. pp.53–5.; DBA vol. 3 p.418.



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the Nowers family became aware of this fact it would have been necessary to add the fess to their arms. It might be supposed that the person for whom *Azure three garbs or* was placed in the glass of both Churchill church and Bruern Abbey was Sir George's father or grandfather Sir John Nowers, who held the manor of Churchill in 1354.<sup>25</sup>

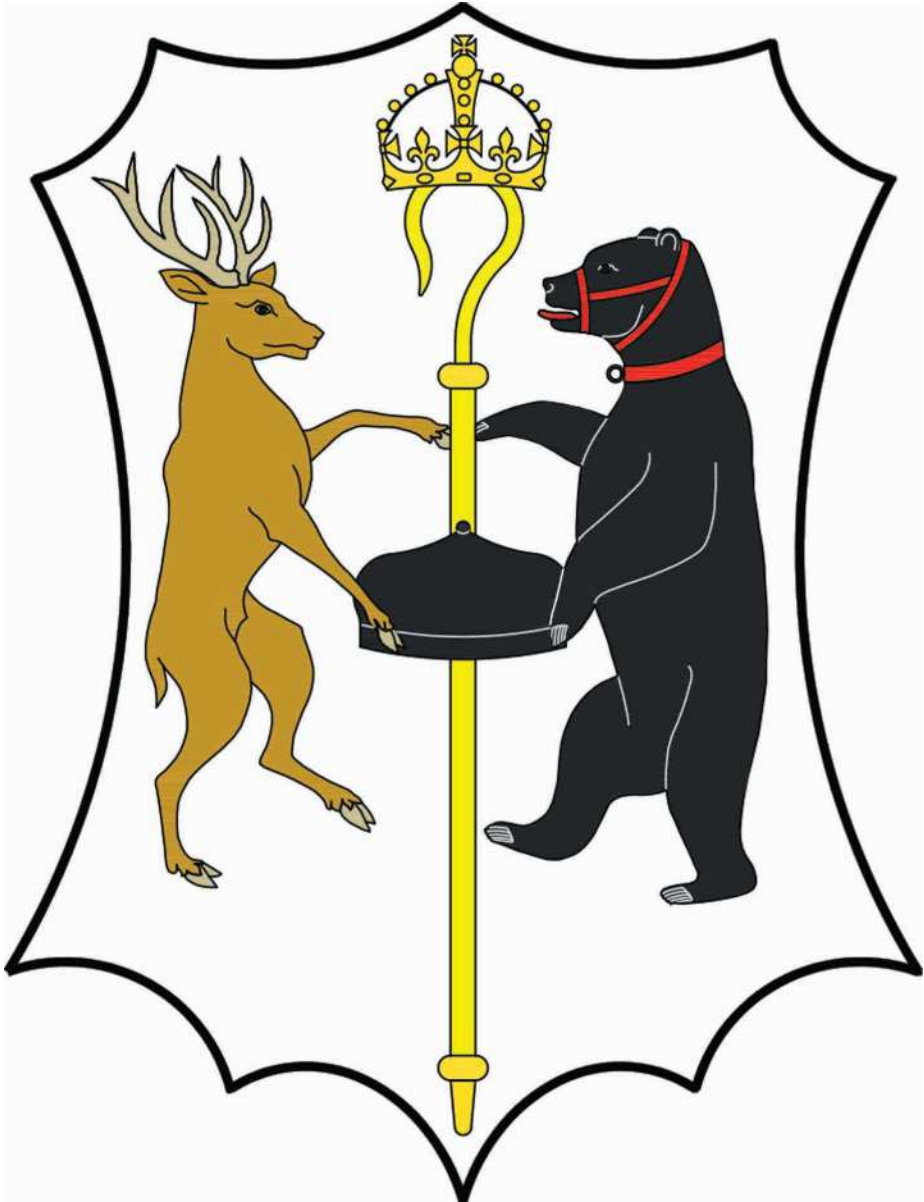


Figure 8: Personal rebus of Abbot Robert King (no.16).

<sup>25</sup> TNA CP 25/1/190/20 no.78.

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**King (Number 16),** *Argent, a stag rampant proper, facing a bear rampant sable muzzled, each resting one foot on a doctor's cap sable, the other foot supporting a pastoral staff on the top of which is a royal crown or (Figure 8).*<sup>26</sup>

This shield recorded from the collar at Bruern is charged with both an abbot's staff and a doctor's cap, and of all the abbots of Bruern only Dr Robert King (d.1557), who ruled from 1515 to 1527, was a doctor of theology. It takes the form of a personal rebus with the roe deer and the bear spelling the Christian name Roe-bert and the crown standing for King.<sup>27</sup> These elements have secondary meanings in the context of Bruern. The crown alludes to the abbey's royal patronage. The bear reminds us of the Beauchamp earls of Warwick who had earlier supported the abbey, although their male line was no longer extant. John Dudley on becoming earl of Warwick in 1547 (the previous countess in her own right, Margaret Pole, having been gruesomely executed in 1541 for Catholic intrigue) adopted the bear of the Beauchamp earls as one of his supporters. The stag might be an allusion to the royal forest of Wychwood. Fallow deer were still abundant in the area in Leland's day (1535–43).<sup>28</sup> The central feature of the shield, the doctor's cap, is given further emphasis in being carried by the two supporters. The shape is that of a *pileus rotundus*, the habitual attire of the late medieval university doctor.<sup>29</sup> Something similar is still worn by those holding doctorates in France. It later evolved into a quadrangular form in universities, and into the clerical biretta.

Dr King (d.1557) was a singular individual as an abbot who chose to ally himself with those who wished to dissolve the monasteries, and yet who spoke strongly against the Protestantism of Thomas Cranmer during the trial of that prelate in Oxford in 1555. He was probably ordained deacon in Oxford in 1496, before he was professed as a monk. As the second son of William King, a yeoman of Thame, he had no family arms. He was awarded his Oxford B.A. in 1507 while a monk at the Cistercian abbey of Rewley. After becoming abbot of Bruern in 1515 he was awarded a doctorate in theology in March 1519. He was transferred to the abbacy of Thame in 1527 because a safe pair of hands was needed there by his friend the bishop of Lincoln.<sup>30</sup> Some of his building works at the Thame abbot's lodgings are still extant. Most of his interiors are now lost, but the parlour survives, and is decorated with carvings of the arms of some of his friends. No arms for himself can be identified there, but the entrance porch has on one side the arms of the abbey, *Argent on a chief sable the heads of two pastoral staves argent*, while on the other side the shield has been lost.<sup>31</sup> His family circle included those with an interest in the dissolution of the monasteries, including a rather tenuous connection with

<sup>26</sup> The authors considered, and discounted the possibility that the crown was in fact a Papal triple tiara as blazoned by Wood in MS Wood E14.

<sup>27</sup> With thanks to Dr Michael Carter for deducing the Christian name element. He informs us that Robert Chamber at Holm Cultram Abbey also used the bear to represent –bert.

<sup>28</sup> Smith, Leland's itinerary op. cit., vol. 5 p.73.

<sup>29</sup> Seamus Addison Hargrave 'The Church and the Trencher: An examination into how England's changing theology and church have influenced the evolution and design of the square cap causing its use as academic attire', *Transactions of the Burgon Society* vol. 14 (2014).

<sup>30</sup> Nicholas Doggett 'Robert King (d.1557)', New DNB.

<sup>31</sup> W.Godfrey 'The abbot's parlour, Thame Park', *Archaeol J* vol 86 (1929) pp.59–68.



*Figure 9:* The memorial window to Robert King in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. Drawing in aquatint made by Abraham van Linge in 1808. British Library King George III Topographical Collection. ©British Library Board.

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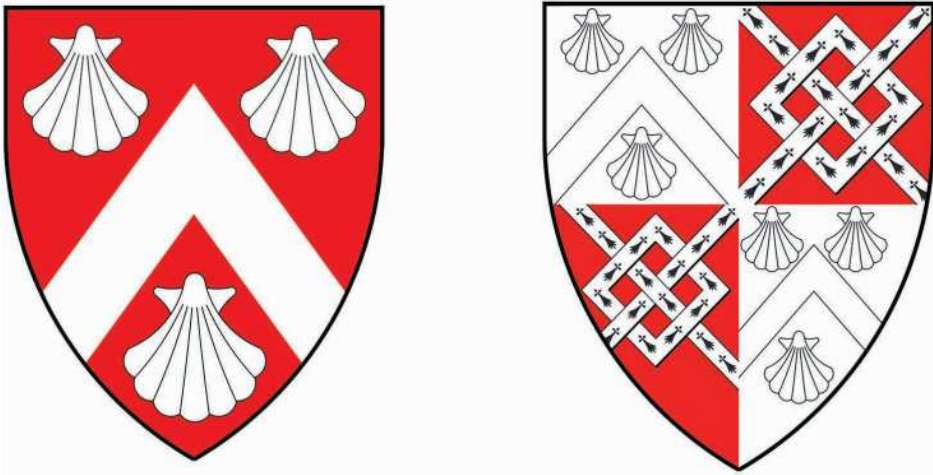


Figure 10: left, Milborne (no.4); right, Milborne quartering Eynford (no.17), the Milborne quarters were not tricked by Lee.

Thomas Cromwell himself. It was indeed on Cromwell's direction that he was elected concurrently as abbot of Osney in 1537 so that he could prepare both Thame and Osney for dissolution, which occurred on consecutive days in 1539. He had been suffragan bishop of Lincoln since 1527, and in 1542 was appointed to the new see of Osney and Thame. The seal created for Osney cathedral has some rather puzzling heraldry on the obverse with the impaled arms dexter, *A cross between four roundels* and sinister, *two bends*, the latter being the old arms of Osney Abbey, *Or two bends azure*. The reverse has Henry VIII enthroned, the chapter being anxious to demonstrate its loyalties to their increasingly despotic monarch.<sup>32</sup> The diocese of Osney was short lived, and by 1545 Dr King had become bishop of Oxford, with his cathedral moved to what had been St Frideswide's Priory. The dean and chapter of Oxford initially kept these impaled arms.<sup>33</sup>

A window in Oxford cathedral (**Figure 9**) has what purports to have been the personal arms of Robert King as the sinister half of two impalements, one with the later arms of the diocese of Oxford (*Sable a fess argent, in chief three female heads veiled and crowned, in base an ox crossing a ford*) and the other with the old arms of Osney, representing his two bishoprics. These arms, *Quarterly 1 & 4, Sable a lion rampant crowned between three crosslets or; 2 & 3 Gules three lions passant in pale argent in border engrailed or* are considered to have been attributed to him at a later date. Another tradition states him to have borne *Or on a chevron engrailed sable three escallops or*.<sup>34</sup> There is no hard evidence to support either attribution. Only one side of his episcopal seal is known and unfortunately it is non heraldic.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> TNA E41/446.

<sup>33</sup> TNA E322/189.

<sup>34</sup> William Bedford, *The Blazon of Episcopacy*, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1897) p.97.

<sup>35</sup> TNA E41/446, E322/189.



**Milborne** (Number 4), *Gules a chevron between three escallops argent*<sup>36</sup> and Milborne quartering **Eynsford** (Number 17), *Gules a fret ermine* (**Figure 10**).

Lee did not bother to trick the arms of Milborne at no.17 because he had already done so for no.4. Sir John de Eynsford (d.1396) of Westbury-on-Severn in Gloucestershire, who sealed with the fretty arms, left an only daughter and heiress Elizabeth Eynsford (d.1412) who was married to Peter de Milborne and had issue.<sup>37</sup> Sir John's cousin, another Sir John de Eynsford (d.1417) married Margaret Bellers who was a wealthy widow, and being childless he settled property on Peter's son John Milborne (d.1436), who left an infant son, Simon Milborne (d.1522).<sup>38</sup> Simon was the last of his male line, his property on death being divided between the families of his ten daughters.

**Compton** (Number 2), *Sable a lion passant guardant or between three closed helmets argent* (**Figure 11a**).

These are Tudor arms belonging to Sir William Compton (d.1528) a hugely wealthy courtier of Henry VIII who from 1511 held various Oxfordshire manors, including Burford and Wychwood, close to Bruern. He owed his influence over the king and thus his wealth to his position as groom of the stool between 1510 and 1526.<sup>39</sup> The lion was added to the family arms as an augmentation by Henry VIII by letters patent in 1512, and exemplified by Thomas Wriothesley, Garter, later the same year.<sup>40</sup> He was laid to rest at Compton Wynates in Warwickshire where his ancestors had long owned a manor.<sup>41</sup> That he was a generous benefactor of the Cistercians is confirmed by the presence of his arms on a roof boss from the cloister of Hailes Abbey.<sup>42</sup>

**Horne** of Sarsden in Oxfordshire (Number 5), dexter, in chief, *Argent a chevron engrailed between three unicorns heads erased azure*; [Horne]; in base, *Ermine three fleurs-de-lis within a border engrailed gules* [Fabian], impaling sinister, in chief, *Azure a chevron gules between three pheons or* [Spicer], in base *Paly of six argent and sable* [Delaforde] (**Figure 11b**).

What appears to be a quarterly coat is in fact two quarterly shields impaled by dimidiation, as has been described by Sir Colin Cole, who worked on the Horne family grouping of shields from Sarsden House with Hugh Stanford London.<sup>43</sup> The dexter impalement is the dexter half of the quartered coat of John Horne (d.1526) of Sarsden, son of Robert Horne the elder and the heiress Joan Fabian. The sinister impalement is the sinister half of the arms of his wife Elizabeth Delaforde (Delaforde quartering Spicer), thus her paternal arms

<sup>36</sup> DBA vol. 2 p.333.

<sup>37</sup> Paul A.Fox, *Great Cloister, a lost Canterbury tale* (Oxford, 2020) p.296.

<sup>38</sup> VCH Gloucs vol. 10 pp.85–93.

<sup>39</sup> G.W.Bernard, 'Sir William Compton (c.1482–1528)', *New DNB*.

<sup>40</sup> William Dugdale, *The antiquities of Warwickshire* (London, 1656) pp.423–4; W. Harry Rylands, *Grantees of Arms etc* (London, 1915) p. 59.

<sup>41</sup> VCH Warwicks vol. 5 pp.60–7.

<sup>42</sup> DBA vol. 1 p.229.

<sup>43</sup> N&Q vol. 196 (1951) pp. 442–5, 463–8.

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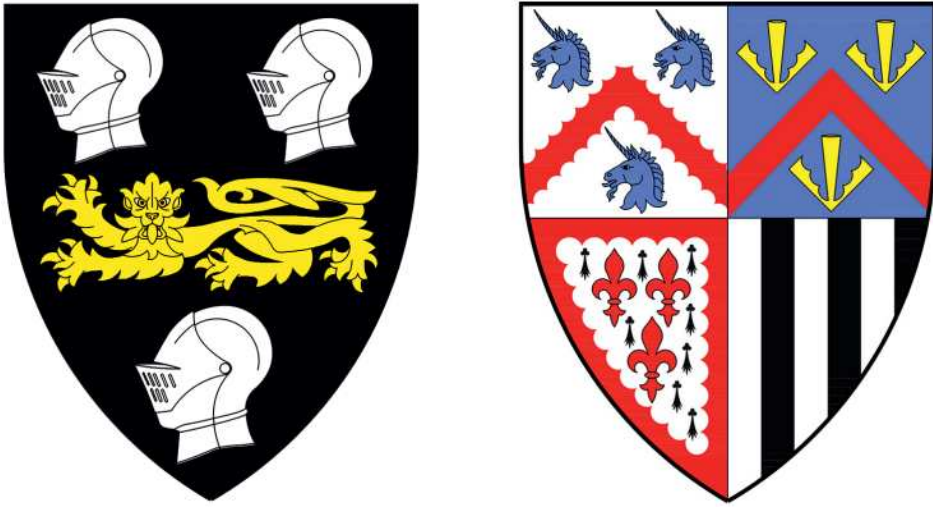


Figure 11: left, Compton (no.2); right, Horne (no.5).

are in base. She was descended from the heiress Agnes Spicer who has a canting coat: spica=arrow.

Of particular note is the fact that Robert Horne the elder acquired Sarsden on his marriage to Agnes, the adopted daughter of John Golafre (no. 7) who held the manor in 1428. In the will of John Horne of Sarsden which was proved in 1526 he asks to be buried in the side aisle of the abbey church at Bruern, and for his wife Elizabeth on her decease (to whom he sensibly, but not very romantically, left 500 sheep) to be buried beside him.<sup>44</sup> Unfortunately the dissolution of the monasteries prevented such a posthumous reunion. John bequeathed to the abbot, who was then Robert King, 40 shillings, and a further 4 nobles were to go to the abbey. It was not uncommon in this period for executors to place arms of the deceased in the glass in the vicinity of the tomb. The last Horne to be squire at Sarsden was John's son Edmund Horne (d.1553).

**King?** (Number 3), *Azure a bend engrailed argent between two crowns or* (**Figure 12a**). We have seen the device of Dr Robert King who left to become abbot of Thame in 1527(No.16). Arms of clerics frequently went unrecorded unless they were old family arms, or else went on to be adopted by kinsmen. These particular arms with the two crowns would have been appropriate for a man with the surname King. In 1533 Richard King alias Hanney (d.1557), another Oxford graduate, became the last abbot of Bruern, and surrendered the monastery on 13th October 1536 in exchange for a pension.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup> TNA PROB 11/12, available online at [www.churchillheritage.co.uk](http://www.churchillheritage.co.uk).

<sup>45</sup> David M. Smith, *The heads of religious houses in England and Wales* vol. 3 1377–1540 (Cambridge, 2008) pp.272–3.

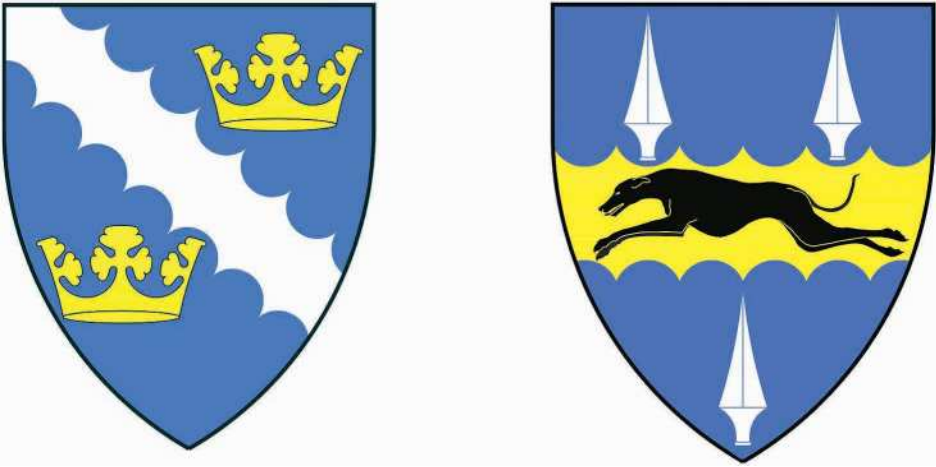


Figure 12: left King? (no.3); right, Unton (no.6).

### The post-Reformation arms

**Unton** of Langley, Oxfordshire (Number 6), *Azure on a fess engrailed or a greyhound courant sable between three spearheads argent* (**Figure 12b**).

The arms were granted to Sir Thomas Unton (d.1533) whose marriage to Sibyl, daughter an heiress of William Fettiplace of Stokenchurch in Oxfordshire introduced his family into the county.<sup>46</sup> His arms are present on their tomb at Faringdon in Berkshire as Unton quartering Fettiplace (*Gules two chevrons argent, charged on the upper chevron with an ermine spot*). A link with the vicinity of Bruern came in 1555 when Sir Thomas' grandson Sir Edward Unton (d.1582) married Anne, countess of Warwick and thus acquired the manor of Shipton-under-Wychwood as part of the land portfolio of the Warwick earldom. This manor is situated less than 2 miles from Bruern Abbey. In 1566 the countess lost her sanity, and was placed for her safety at Shipton, which her son Sir Henry Unton may have rebuilt for her in the 1560s.<sup>47</sup> Sir Edward's father in his will of 1547 refers to his cousins Horne, Fettiplace and Bridges, all families linked to Bruern.<sup>48</sup> Sir Edward himself was acquainted with Sir Henry Lee ( see below), from whom he purchased a lease in Shipton, and it seems likely that it is through this connection that the Unton arms were at Bruern Abbey.<sup>49</sup>

**Bridges**, impaling **Hungerford** of Down Ampney (Number 12), Dexter, *Quarterly 1, Or on a cross sable a leopard's face or* [Bridges]; 2, *Or a pile gules* [Chandos]; 3, *Argent a fess between three martlets sable* [Berkeley of Coberley]; 4, *Argent chevron between three rams passant sable* [Sydenham]. Sinister, *Quarterly 1, Sable two bars argent in*

<sup>46</sup> John Gough Nichols, *The Unton inventories* ( London, 1841) p.xvii, xx-xxi

<sup>47</sup> VCH Oxford vol. 19 pp.43–4.

<sup>48</sup> Nichols, op. cit. p. xxxiii.

<sup>49</sup> Nichols, op. cit. p. xlii.

## THE COAT OF ARMS

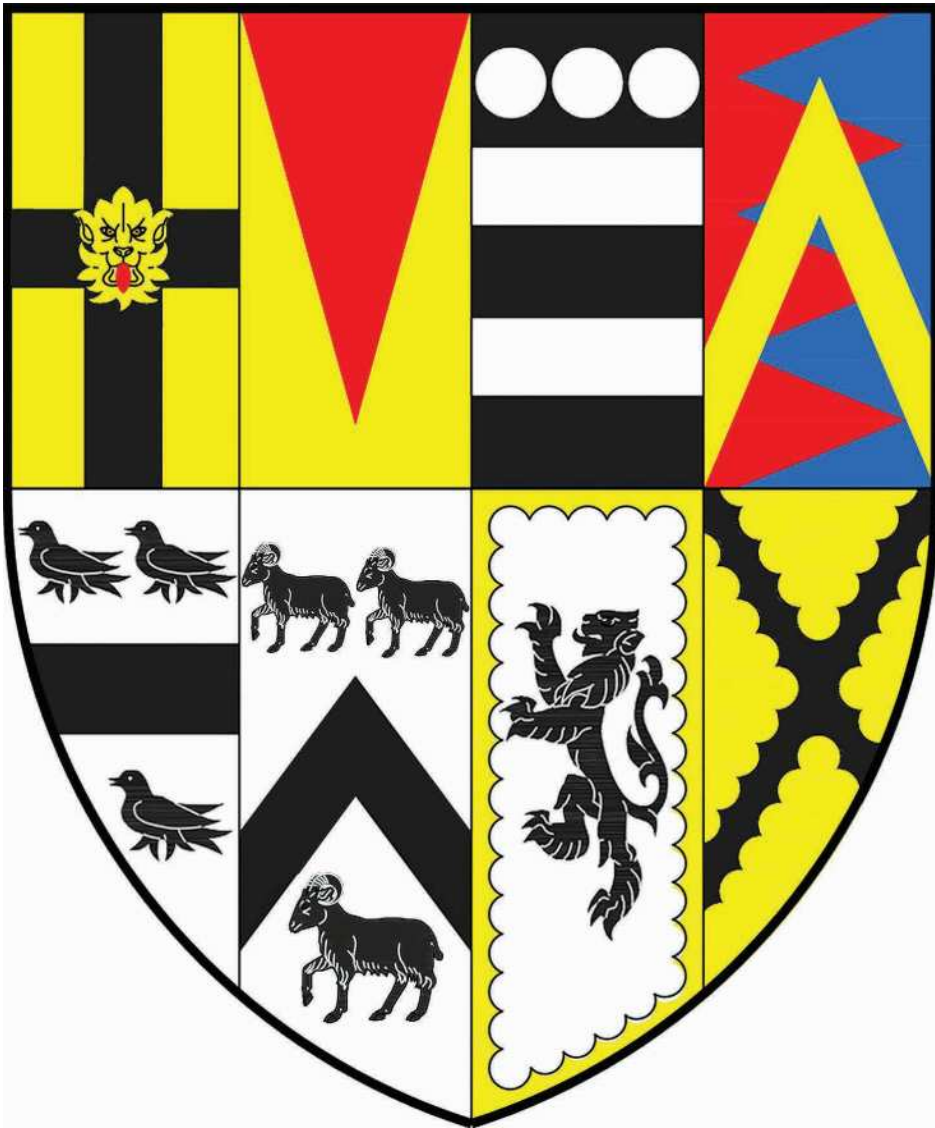


Figure 13: Bridges impaling Hungerford (no.12).

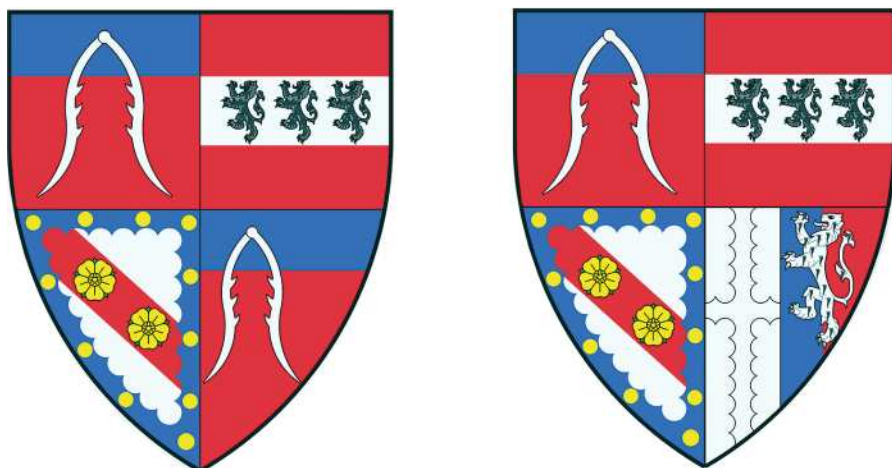
*chief three plates* [Hungerford]; 2, *Per pale indented gules and azure a chevron or* [Fitz John]; 3, *A lion rampant sable within a bordure engrailed or* [Burnell]; 4, *Or a saltire engrailed sable* [Botetourt] (**Figure 13**).

These are the arms of Henry Bridges, son of Thomas Bridges (d.1559), who owned Bruern Abbey in 1574, and his wife, Jane Sydenham.<sup>50</sup> Henry was still living in 1582, at which

<sup>50</sup> Egerton de Bruges, *Stemmata illustria* (Paris, 1825) p.99 with pedigree in appendix.



## BRUERN ABBEY



*Figure 14: Wyatt (nos. 13 and 18).*

time he still retained a legal interest in the Bruern estate<sup>51</sup>, but his principal residence was at Keynsham in Somerset. His wife Ann Hungerford belonged to a cadet of that family which held Down Ampney in Gloucestershire, and bore the Burnell and Botetourt quarterings because they were descended from the heiress Margery Burnell. The main line of the Hungerford family was twice elevated to the peerage and twice lost that status through attainder. Ann Hungerford's fourth cousin Sir Walter, lord Hungerford, fell with Thomas Cromwell, and the men were executed together in 1540.

The Bridges family were key players during the troubled times in which they lived. Their ancestor Giles Bridges (or Brugge) of Coberley in Gloucestershire was the son of Alice Berkeley of Coberley, the heiress of Sir John Chandos.<sup>52</sup> Sir John Bridges (d.1557) and his brother Thomas (d.1559), the sole owner of Bruern from 1549, were a staunch Catholics and supporters of Queen Mary. Their father was a knight of the body of Henry VIII, and Sir John himself became a knight of the body in 1533, with Thomas becoming keeper of the wardrobe. In addition to Bruern, the brothers were granted together the keeping of Cornbury and Langley Parks, near Oxford, in 1536.<sup>53</sup> Following the death of Edward VI in 1553 Lady Jane Grey wrote to Sir John, asking for his support, but he and Thomas together rallied support for Princess Mary and escorted her to London. Sir John was made lieutenant of the Tower of London in 1553 with Thomas as his deputy. The following year Queen Mary gave Sudeley castle in Gloucestershire to Sir John and elevated him to the peerage as baron Chandos of Sudeley. Thomas became keeper of the Wychwood forest. He purchased a further 1200 acres at Bruern in 1553, and acquired the estates of Keynsham Abbey in Somerset.<sup>54</sup> On 12th February 1554 Thomas organised the execution of Lady Jane Grey on Tower Hill, a role movingly, if inaccurately, portrayed in

<sup>51</sup> TNA C78/77/3A.

<sup>52</sup> GEC vol. 3 pp 126, 150–2.

<sup>53</sup> M.M. Norris 'John Bridges, first Baron Chandos (1492–1557)' New DNB.

<sup>54</sup> Roger Ashley 'Thomas Bridges (d.1559), New DNB.

## THE COAT OF ARMS

Paul Delaroche's iconic depiction of the scene in the National Gallery. Sir John played an important role in defeating the rebellion of the protestant Sir Thomas Wyatt, the younger (No. 18), who was initially forgiven his support for Lady Jane Gray. His rebellion in opposition to the Queen's Spanish marriage accelerated Lady Jane's execution and he in turn became Bridge's prisoner in the Tower, and was executed there on 11th April. Thomas Bridges went on to attend the burning of Thomas Cranmer, erstwhile archbishop of Canterbury, at Oxford in 1556. It is in the context of all this that the presence of a bed made for Sir Thomas Wyatt, and glass with the arms of Wyatt's father (No. 13) at Bruern in 1574 is quite compelling.

**Wyatt** (Numbers 13 and 18), No.13, *Quarterly 1 & 4, Gules a chief azure over all a barnacle closed argent* [Wyatt]; 2, *Gules on a fess argent three lions rampant sable*; 3, *Argent on a bend gules two roses or*; within a *bordure engrailed azure bezantée* [Bailiff] (**Figure 14a**).

These are the arms of Sir Thomas Wyatt (d.1542), a courtier who was twice imprisoned in the Tower of London. The first occasion was in 1536 when he was suspected of adultery with Queen Anne Boleyn. The second was in 1541 when he fell under suspicion in the aftermath of the execution of his friend Thomas Cromwell. On both occasions Henry VIII ordered him released. The king's fondness for Wyatt is evidenced by the fact that for some time in 1541 he kept with him at Hampton Court Wyatt's personal seal, doubtless with the above arms on it.<sup>55</sup>

No. 18 is the same arms of Wyatt with the fourth quarter replaced with the impaled arms of Haute (*Or a cross engrailed gules*) and Cawne (*Party per pale azure and gules a lion rampant ermine*), **Figure 14b**. Those of Haute were not tinctured by Lee. These were the arms of Sir Thomas Wyatt the younger (executed 1554), politician, rebel, and son of Sir Thomas Wyatt (No.13), whose heiress wife Jane Haute was descended from Cawne.<sup>56</sup> Lee recorded the arms as being embroidered on bed hangings in the same upstairs solar bedroom wherein the Wyatt arms were in the glass. Sir Thomas, as has already been related, was executed in 1554 for his rebellion against Queen Mary, he having been thwarted and executed by Sir John and Thomas Bridges, the owners of this very room. It appears that the Wyatt arms were not trophies, because it was clearly stated by Lee that Wyatt's bed belonged to Sir Henry Lee.

Sir Henry Lee (d.1611) was Queen Elizabeth's tournament champion. In 1571 the queen appointed him as lieutenant of the royal manor of Woodstock, and she twice visited him there, in 1572 and 1574. In the 1570s Lee was building a great house at Ditchling, not far east of Bruern, and it appears that in 1574 he was letting Bruern from Henry Bridges.<sup>57</sup> He was the first cousin of the executed Thomas Wyatt, his mother Margaret Wyatt being the sister of Sir Thomas Wyatt the elder. The arms of Wyatt in the Bruern glass were those of Lee's grandfather. All things considered it is rather surprising that he came to let a property from the house of Bridges. It should be mentioned at this juncture that the Queen's champion was a kinsman of the herald who was making this record,

<sup>55</sup> Colin Burrow 'Sir Thomas Wyatt (c.1503–1542)', New DNB.

<sup>56</sup> Fox 2020, op. cit., pp.186, 384–7.

<sup>57</sup> Ewan Fernie, 'Sir Henry Lee (1533–1611)', New DNB.

both families being cadets of Lee of Lee Hall in Cheshire, who bore differenced versions of the arms *Argent a fess between three crescents sable*.<sup>58</sup>

## Conclusions

To summarise what can be gleaned from Lee's record of the Bruern heraldry, of the four post-Reformation examples all can be linked to the then owners and occupiers of the house. The fourteen pre-Reformation arms might well have been installed over a long period of time, ranging potentially from as far back as the thirteenth century, through to the decades immediately preceding the dissolution. It would certainly be difficult to make a case that they were all newly made at a single point in time. We postulate that they were brought from multiple locations within the abbey to compliment glass that was already in situ in that part of the abbey at the time when it was being adapted to the requirements of a secular residence. The heraldic glass was arranged within that residence into at least four windows, one of which, 'the sollar bedroom' was by definition upstairs. The sollar would have been one of the prestige rooms of the house with a fireplace and windows, to which the owner could retire. Given that one of the shields there has been identified as belonging to the abbot Dr Robert King, it is tempting to speculate that this room was the original sollar in the abbot's lodgings. On the basis of his works at Thame, King was not a man likely to have tolerated living in austere surroundings. The remaining pre-Reformation glass is primarily that of local knights and squires, and of the high nobility who had links to the abbey. At least two of the local families had burials in the abbey, and it is highly probable that in these instances the arms were originally installed beside their tombs. We cannot rule out the possibility that they might have additionally been placed in secondary locations such as in the abbot's lodgings through friendship with the abbots.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Godfrey & Wagner pp.84–5; Sir Henry Lee's father Sir Anthony Lee was of Quarrendon in Buckinghamshire.

<sup>59</sup> The authors would like to thank John Gaylor for most generously preparing the emblazonments. He resisted any temptation to 'complete' Lee's blazons by supplying what he had 'misrecorded'. Richard d'Apice would additionally like to thank the following for their input: Adrian Ailes, Alex Maxwell Findlater, Robert Harrison, Michael Ray, Stephen Slater and David White, Somerset Herald. Paul Fox would like to thank Paul Coxon for his input on the complexities of academic attire.

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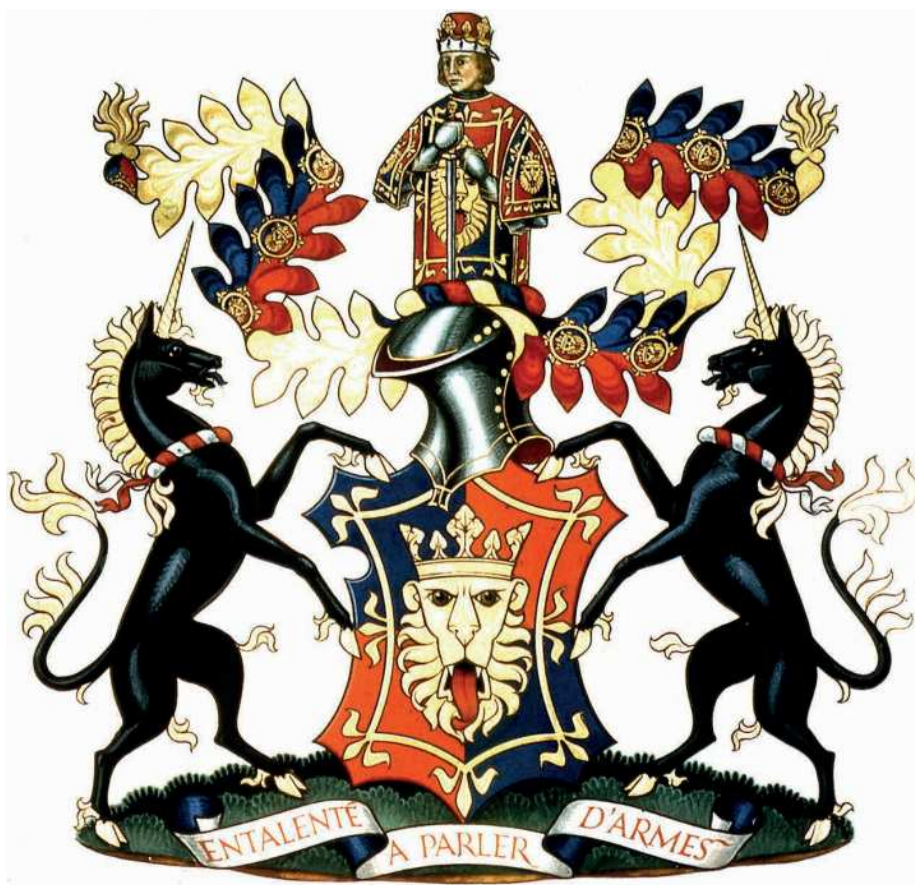
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