The Coat of Arms

Annual Journal of the Heraldry Society

Series 4 Volume 8 Number 242 2025

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

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e-mail: honsecheraldrysociety@googlemail.com

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e-mail: memsec@theheraldrysociety.com

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coatofarms@theheraldrysociety.com

Printed in Exeter by Short Run Press Ltd..

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ISSN 0010-003X

Cover illustration: submission drawing from the Maharajah of Rewah 1876, source *Taylor* supplement f. 15v, courtesy of the Kings, Heralds and Pursuivants of Arms, see pp. 160-1.

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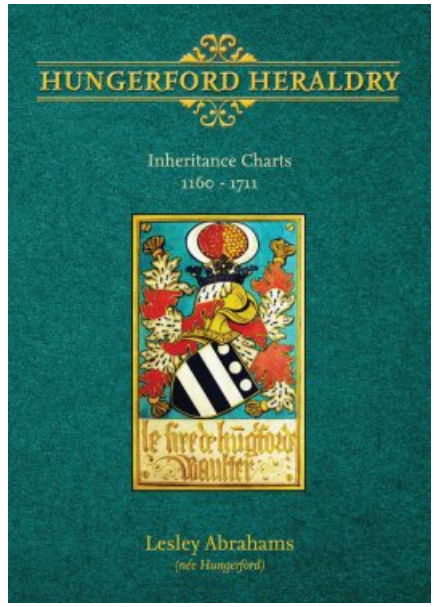

Lesley Abrahams, *Hungerford heraldry. Inheritance charts 1160-1711*, New South Wales, 2021. xii+216 pp. Many colour illustrations.
Paperback ISBN 978-09806764-1-9. AU$75.

In 1779 Jacob Pleydell-Bouverie, 2nd Earl of Radnor, commissioned the creation of an elaborate heraldic family pew adjacent to the chancel of Salisbury Cathedral by re-ornamenting the iron cage of the chantry (**Figure 1)** which had been created for his female line ancestor Walter, 1st Lord Hungerford, K.G. (1378–1449). This reviewer was introduced both to this impressive edifice, and to Abrahams' book, by Stephen Slater, who kindly offered his estimable services as a cathedral guide. The earl ordered an elaborate new canopy to cap the cage, upon which craftsmen under the direction of Joshua Edmondson, Mowbray Herald Extraordinary, installed 46 shields, all of them impalements, representing the various noble representatives of the Hungerford clan. A further fifteen shields on the lower level have the simple arms of Hungerford within a Garter band, alternating with the sickle badge of Hungerford. A second heraldic scheme on the ceiling of the pew-chantry vaunts the second earl of Radnor's descent from Walter, 1st Lord Hungerford in a series of 32 shields which is expressly a family tree, its shields linked by carved cording (**Figure 2**). It is necessary to gain privileged access to the pew in order to study the fine ceiling. Unfortunately, the multiplicity of the bars makes the interior somewhat oppressive; the earls seated in their lofty splendour might on occasion have felt a little like prisoners at the assizes awaiting sentencing.

The majority of the arms both within and without the bars being quartered and impaled, Abrahams makes the edifice accessible by splitting it into a long series of heraldic pedigrees, all of them beautifully illustrated. She begins with the Hungerford pedigrees (pp. 22–31) followed by the Pleydell–Bouverie pedigree (pp. 32–35). As the canopy is almost entirely composed of impaled arms Abrahams has presented each one with reference to the heraldic pedigree of the spouse of the member of the Hungerford

Figure 1: the Pleydell-Bouverie chantry. Photograph by Paul A. Fox.

Figure 2: the ceiling of the Pleydell-Bouvrie or Radnor chantry.
Photograph by Paul A. Fox

family concerned, an elegant solution. Unfortunately, she chose not to present the shields in the order in which they appear, the series commencing with shields 11,19, 7, and 31.[1] It would have been far more sensible to have followed the logic of the monument by presenting the shields in strict sequence from 1 to 46. As a consequence of the chosen arrangement, it is made very difficult for the reader to investigate the rationale behind the ordering of the shields. Difficult, but not impossible, and with some effort it was possible for the reviewer to derive the following conclusions:

The central canopy shield (number nine) on the side of the pew which faces away from the cathedral chancel is that of Sir Walter Hungerford (d. 1355), flanked by his two sons Sir Thomas Hungerford (d. 1397) Speaker of the House of Commons, and Walter, 1st Lord Hungerford (d. 1449), whose arms appear a second time impaling those of his second wife, the mother of his children. This side of the monument has only male members of the Hungerford family with their wives, while the opposite side which faces into the chancel is solely for Hungerford daughters and their husbands. The short sides of the canopy are a mixture of Hungerford sons and daughters. There is relatively little ordering of these shields, although some fathers do occur next to sons, while some Hungerford daughters who were sisters have been placed together.

A particularly pleasing aspect of the book is the inclusion of illustrations of tombs

1 NB The shields are presented in alphabetical order of the spouse's surname. *Ed.*

and arms from other locations. The book reprints the 1885 discussions on the possible origins of the two principal versions of the Hungerford arms, *Sable two bars and in chief three roundels argent*, and *Per pale indented gules and vert a chevron or*. These have been recently reappraised by the reviewer in his book *Great Cloister*.[2] While the former arms derive from a FitzJohn marriage alliance, the latter are much more enigmatic. They were adopted by Sir Thomas Hungerford (d. 1397) who was the steward of William Montagu, Earl of Salisbury (d. 1397), and it is speculated that the arms were likely based on the livery colours of Montagu (*Great Cloister*, pp. 407–10). They are certainly not the arms of Heytesbury.

There are three instances of attributed arms in the book, one of them the six horseshoe arms of 'Henri de Ferrieres, Battle of Hastings, 1066', another the three toads arms of William Lord Botreaux (d. 1462), and a third *Or three eagles displayed purpure*, ascribed to Sir Henry Rodney (d. 1135). The arms are not described as being attributed, and the author thus rather creates the false impression that heraldry existed at the time of Hastings. The first two examples are not actually present on the Salisbury monument. The Ferrers arms *Argent six horseshoes sable 3, 2, and 1* were adopted by Darley Abbey in Derbyshire and retrospectively applied to the founder Robert II de Ferrers, Earl of Derby (*Great Cloister* pp. 303–5). The Botreaux toads were certainly never used by William Lord Botreaux, and appear to have been confabulated into being by William Camden (*Great Cloister*, pp. 142–3). The Rodney eagles are genuine arms, but cannot be shown to have been used prior to the fourteenth century, and thus to place them in the 1130s is an absurdity.

The volume is rounded off with an overly comprehensive index which would have served rather better had it been more selective. To give but two examples, it is not clear the utility of listing the 30 instances in which the fur ermine is mentioned; while from a table of regnal years each monarch has been placed in the index. Despite its limitations this is a book which will please those with a passion for historic heraldry. It is to be hoped that the author might produce a new edition with a more sensible re-ordering of the shields for the benefit of those which wish to more easily comprehend this impressive piece of heraldic architecture, perhaps as an e-book.

Paul A. Fox

2 Paul A. Fox, *Great Cloister: A Lost Canterbury Tale.* Oxford: Archaeopress, 2020.