

HERALDRY IN BATH ABBEY

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The cleaning of the stonework of Bath Abbey in the 1990s has given an interior which not only delights visitors to the City but produced gasps of astonishment from Bathonians who knew the building well. The smoke of centuries of candles and the succeeding gas lighting that existed until well after World War II had so blackened the vaulting and upper walls that, in spite of the excellent daytime lighting through the huge clear-glass upper windows, details of some of the many heraldic shields could not be identified even with binoculars.¹ These painted shields, over one hundred in number, are an important source of information on individuals, families, the Abbey and the City of Bath. It is with their interpretation and relevance that this account is concerned.

Reading Heraldic Displays

For those not familiar with the interpretation of heraldic displays some basic explanations at the start may be helpful. In England an heraldic pattern is legitimate only if officially granted by the College of Arms.² Once granted it descends by all male lines automatically (there are some differences in Scottish practice). Having the same name does not entitle you to use arms unless you can prove descent from the grantee. The terms *shield*, *arms*, *coat of arms*, are all used to describe the pattern on a shield. The word *crest* refers to a form of badge or device which is placed above the shield or on top of the helmet – to use it for the shield pattern is a common error.

A married man can indicate his state by dividing his shield vertically down the middle, putting his own arms on the left and his wife's father's arms on the right. These arms are then described as *impaled*. Office holders, eg bishops, can use this method to link their official position with their family arms. If a father has no sons to succeed him, his daughters all become heraldic heiresses. Their husbands, instead of impaling, can put the wife's family arms on a small shield covering the centre of their own. This has the charming name of an *inescutcheon of pretence*. Only in such cases do sons of a marriage inherit the right to combine their mother's family arms with their father's. They do this by *quartering* the shield, showing the paternal arms in the first and fourth quarters and the maternal arms in second and third quarters. If the shields already combine families, or if there is further inheritance in a later generation,

the duplication can be dispensed with for up to four coats of arms. Beyond this the shields may be divided into more compartments though these are still referred to as *quarterings*. Where desirable for a balanced arrangement the last quartering can be a repeat of the first and main family coat. For the sake of clarity there is no compulsion to show additional inherited arms but pride can be a powerful factor.

The shape of shield has varied with period or artistic preference but has no heraldic significance. A shield has been felt inappropriate for women and a lozenge is used but this has an awkward shape for coats of arms which are so often on a triangular pattern of two objects above and one below, that fit a shield so well. A spinster's lozenge shows her father's arms; a widow's shows the same impaled arms that her husband bore on his shield. A wife had no occasion for heraldic display separately from her husband. Modern heraldry has had to come to terms with granting arms to women in their own right and may soon need to lay down clear general rules if it is to survive.

Finally, the words *left* and *right* are used in this article to indicate the sides of an heraldic display as viewed by the onlooker. In heraldic textbooks or descriptions (*blazon*) the Latin equivalents sinister and dexter are used but they refer, confusingly, to the sides in relation to the man behind the shield.

The Building of the Present Abbey

The Norman church had become very ruinous before the end of the fifteenth century. It was 'so utterly neglected, that, to employ the strong expression of Bishop King, it became ruined to the foundations – *imo funditus dirutam* – in consequence of the monks expending their large income in pleasurable indulgences, instead of appropriating some part thereof to the necessary reparations of the fabric'.³ Oliver King was translated from the bishopric of Exeter to Bath and Wells in 1495 and was enthroned in March 1496. He was politician as well as prelate and held, among other offices, that of French Secretary to Edward IV and Henry VII. He was sent by the latter to conclude a treaty of peace with Charles VIII of France. The legend of his dream is well known: a vision of the Holy Trinity and angels ascending and descending by ladders with a voice saying 'Let an olive establish the crown and a king restore the church'. The new bishop ordered a reduction in the expenses of the Prior and 16 monks, with all possible funds put towards a smaller building which was erected on the nave of the Norman structure, leaving the choir available for services.

In one of the Bath Abbey 2000 lectures the Very Rev. Patrick Mitchell, Dean of London, called attention to Oliver King's career from boy at Eton College, student at King's College Cambridge, to Canon of Windsor, where he saw three chapels in the course of construction which must have influenced the architectural style of the new abbey at Bath.⁴ He liberally supported the building but responsibility for the execution of the work lay with the Prior and Convent. Prior Cantlow died in 1499 and the Convent appointed William Birde (or Bird) as his successor. The Bishop objected to the nomination but finally gave way. Birde proved to be a good partner, able also to continue the task when Oliver King died, early in the project, in 1503. When Birde died in 1525 the building was still not completed and the finishing was in the hands of Prior Holloway, alias Gibbs, though the nave did not get the intended stone roof until much later.

Oliver King's successor as Bishop was Adrian de Castello, another statesman. He came to Scotland as Papal Nuncio in 1488 and the following year to England as collector of Peter's Pence. He appears to have become Henry VII's ambassador at Rome and also clerk to the papal treasury. His services to Henry were perhaps funded by the appointment in his absence to the bishopric of Hereford in 1502 and Bath and Wells in 1504. He was clearly, first and foremost, an intriguer. He left Rome in 1503 after the death by poisoning of Pope Alexander III, returning on the accession of Leo X in 1511 and, though implicated in another Vatican conspiracy, was dealt with leniently. He was deprived of his collectorship and also of the bishopric of Bath and Wells in 1518 and died about 1523, possibly murdered.⁵ He appears not to have visited England after 1502 but he may still have contributed to the restoration of the Abbey and he certainly has a central heraldic presence.

Early Heraldry in the Abbey

The heraldry relating to this first stage of the present building can now be considered. It is over pedantic to quibble with the universally used name of 'Abbey' on the ground that in the period with which we are concerned the bishop was titular head but that, under him, the monks were led by a prior so that 'Priory' is the accurate term. Since neither word strictly applies to the building in its present function we can use the two words to make a useful distinction between two heraldic shields.

The Priory shield (fig.1) shows the sword associated with St Paul and the two keys associated with St Peter set diagonally on a red background, the two keys lying from top left to bottom right. This shield is seen in a number of places but most prominently in the choir vault. The present Abbey shield

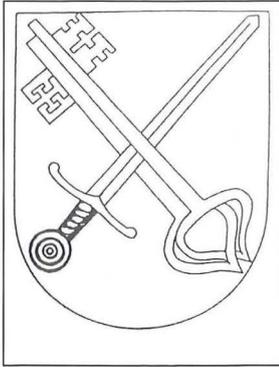


Fig.1 Bath Priory

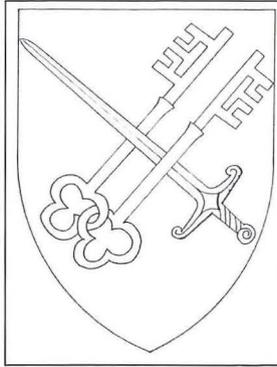


Fig.2 Bath Abbey

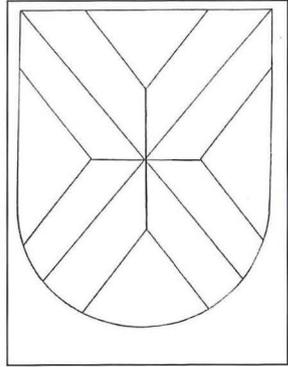


Fig.3 Bath & Wells

for the same building but different function reverses the diagonals of keys and sword and has a blue background (fig.2). This shield is also seen on items such as modern furnishings, headings for notices and the gowns of stewards. The arms of the diocese (fig.3) show a diagonal cross (*saltire*) on a blue field. This cross is divided along the diagonals into gold (or yellow) and silver (or white) in an attractive windmill pattern. In earlier centuries two keys, a sword and sometimes a crozier were often added, as may be seen in a number of shields in the Abbey. The origin of this practice may have been that the saltire stood for Wells where the bishop was based (except for a short period) and that the additional emblems served here to mark him as also bishop in Bath. We use the saltire alone today.

Bishop King's arms (fig.4) show three scallop shells on an heraldic chevron which points upwards, (unlike those on British service uniforms). These shells were common among pilgrims at the shrine of St James of Compostella and

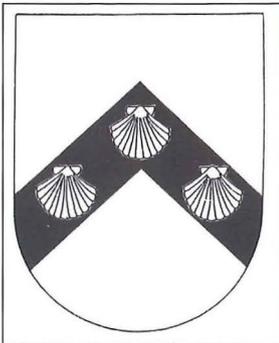


Fig.4 Bishop King

acquired a wider heraldic connotation for religious people. Priests did not marry and their arms, therefore, were not inherited. King's shield is seen in the chancel north aisle vaulting and on the south side of the east window next to Prior Birde but also, less obviously, on the outside of the building, over the north entrance door in the west front. A small pilgrim-like figure is shown just above Oliver King's arms and below his rebus of a crowned olive tree. There is a much later statue of the Bishop's patron, Henry VII, over the central west door displaying his Royal Arms.⁶

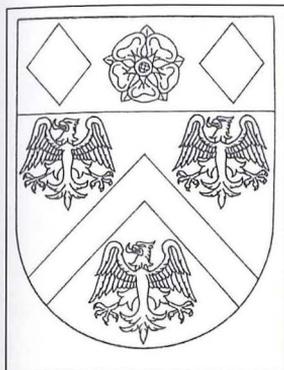


Fig.5 Prior Birde



Fig.6 Bishop Fox

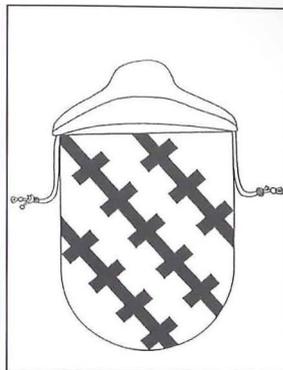


Fig.7 Bishop de Castello

Prior Birde has his shield (fig.5) carved on the inside of his chantry and it also appears in the choir north aisle and on the south side of the east window. Naturally the motif of birds is in allusion to his name. Such punning with names is common in heraldry though the connection is not always as obvious as here. King's predecessor as bishop was Richard Fox (or Foxe) who, after only two years at Bath and Wells, went to Durham and thence to Winchester in 1501 and did not die until 1528, so the appearance of his shield in the chancel south aisle may easily represent financial help or support during the period of the absent Castello. The heraldry of Fox's shield (fig.6) is another religious motif – a female bird on a nest of chicks pecking its breast and known as a '*pelican in her piety*', though unlike the bird that the name now denotes. The legend was that the male bird killed the chicks and that three days later the female brought them back to life with blood pecked from her breast. The pelican was thus a strong Christian symbol. Some displays have the female bird pecking her breast but without nest and chicks and she is then blazoned as '*vulning herself*'. In either case drops of blood are often visible coming from the breast but no spots of red can be seen in this example.

Bishop Adrian de Castello, in spite of what has already been said about him, has pride of place as the central shield in the choir vault (fig.7). The castellated bands suggest his name. The making of the three shields into a special feature in the 1990s was the result of finding vestiges of earlier painting in the vaulting surrounding the shields, so they and their surrounds were newly repainted and not simply cleaned like the other shields. The shield to the east with its massive crown has the Royal Arms of James I (fig.8), king when the repairs after the Dissolution were finally completed



Fig.8 King James I

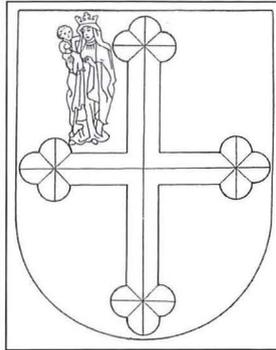


Fig.9 Glastonbury Abbey

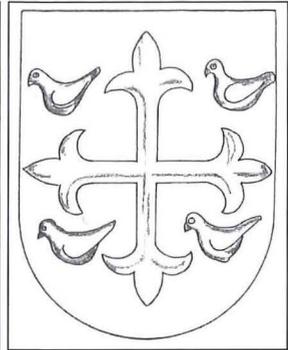


Fig.10 King Edgar

around 1620. Two further shields of this time should be mentioned. In the lower row on the north side of the east window is a shield for the monastery at Glastonbury (fig.9) a large central cross and, in the top left corner, an image of the Virgin and Child. Next to it is a shield with a cross and four *martlets* representing King Edgar (fig.10) who, in 973, was crowned the first King of All England on this site.⁷ Edgar lived well before the days of systematised heraldry but for such early heroes shields were devised from known or reputed emblems. The martlet is a legless swallow – a legend that will be more appropriately described below in connection with a nineteenth century shield. Edgar's shield can also be seen elsewhere, for example in the choir north aisle.

At the Dissolution the Abbey was surrendered to Henry VIII's commissioners.⁸ The church was offered to the City for the sum of 500 marks but 'in the words of Fuller, the townspeople, fearing if they bought it so cheape to be thought to cozin the King, so that the purchase might come under the compasse of the concealed lands, refused the proffer'.⁹ The glass, iron, bells and lead were sold to merchants, and nothing but the skeleton of the church was left standing. The shell of the church with the buildings in the precinct, lands at Bathwick, Holloway, Lyncombe and Widcombe and the advowson of the latter, were sold to Humphrey Colles. Colles immediately sold the site of the precinct with the partially roofless church to Matthew Colthurst, M.P. for Bath, whose son Edmund made, in 1572, a gift of the ruin to the Mayor and citizens of Bath for a parish church. In 1569 the main landed estates were sold by Colles and ultimately passed to the Duke of Kingston, and from him to his nephew Earl Manvers who has a later place in this account.¹⁰

The Post-Dissolution years

The sale of the roof lead had serious consequences, particularly for the nave where there had not been stone vaulting, and also created problems in the south transept which will be described later. The work of restoration was not completed until about 1620 but a manuscript once in the possession of the Abbey describes the stages with details of benefactors that have proved helpful in identifying the heraldic legacy of this period.¹¹

This document reveals three distinct stages in the restoration and it is not surprising that details of benefactors are more numerous the nearer we come to its compilation. The first stage began when Letters Patent were obtained in 1574 from Queen Elizabeth, authorising collections for seven years in every part of the Kingdom to enable work to proceed. It makes no mention of Peter Chapman, son of a clothier, referred to by Leland as a member of the important Bath family of that name. Britton, however, states that after an army career Peter Chapman began the work by repairing the east end of the north aisle (still known as the Chapman aisle) in about 1572 and that the Queen's support came soon afterwards.¹² The Chapman shield (fig.11) can be seen at the top of a column on the north side of the choir and also over a window in the south transept, though there are differences in colour. The first stage of the work was limited to the east end, the north transept and part of the south transept. Named benefactors are only two: Thomas Ratcliffe, 3rd Earl of Sussex, K.G., Lord Chamberlain to Elizabeth I, 'at whose charge was glazed the uppermost of the high windows on the north side of the choir' and Walter Calcutt of Williamscot who gave £10 towards glazing windows. The shield of Thomas, Earl of Sussex, appears in the Benefactors' window in the north aisle of the nave. A shield on the south side of the west window

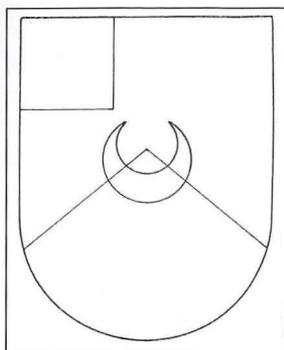


Fig.11 Chapman family

must surely be for Edmund Colthurst (fig.12) – its main feature is three colts – though it does not agree exactly with other officially recorded arms for Colthurst, one of which adds three trefoils on the band across the shield and another has only two colts.¹³

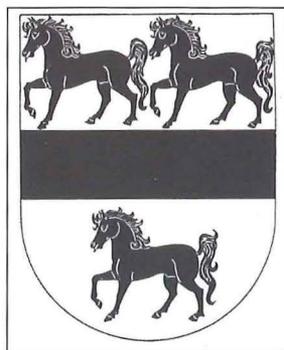


Fig.12 Edmund Colthurst

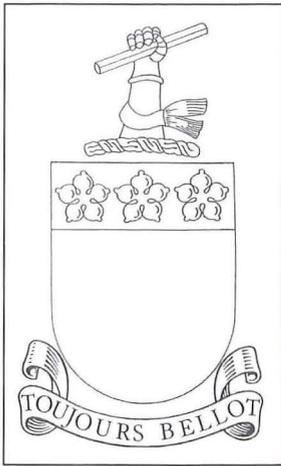


Fig.13 Thomas Bellot

In the second stage of repairs the south aisle was 'raised most from the ground, and covered as it is now, and the tower also now lofted with lead as it now is, with the clock set in it; and the bells to go; as they both now do.' The south end of the south transept was badly damaged by the collapse of the end wall when the support of the cloisters was removed. It was buttressed in 1576 and the date can still be seen on one of the buttresses. The plan of Bath in the corner of John Speed's map, dated 1610, shows the transept still gaping open, though buttressed, and the nave unroofed. The transept was repaired but not fully in stone vaulting until the nineteenth century. For this second stage the chief benefactor was Thomas Bellot, steward and executor to William Cecil, Lord Burghley, chief minister to Queen Elizabeth. Bellot seems to have given generously on his own account up to his death in 1611 and also for Cecil (the shield over the entrance to Bellot's Hospital shows the Cecil arms). Named contributions from Bellot at this stage are £60 to repair the east window and £30 towards the great bell. His arms are seen in glass at the top of the Benefactors' Window and, with more difficulty, above the end window of the south transept where there is a punning French motto '*Toujours Bellot*' – always handsome (fig.13). More than 30 other benefactors to this stage of restoration are named. Among them is Richard Hall, yeoman, of Wiltshire whose £5 is commemorated by his shield on the ceiling of the clergy vestry, not open to the public. John Still, Bishop of Bath and Wells 1593-1608, gave £20 and his shield is on the north side of the west window (fig.14).

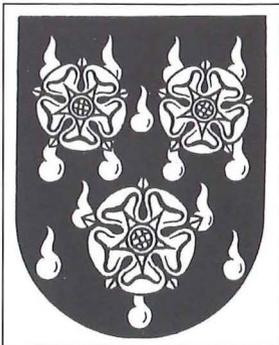


Fig.14 Bishop Still

The third stage of restoration involved the church from the tower westward. The principal benefactor was Bishop Montagu who succeeded John Still in 1608. He gave £1000 and great energy to get repairs finished and persuaded others to contribute. Progress was rapid. Montagu became Bishop of Winchester in 1616 but his interest in Bath continued, though the restoration was not completed when he died only two years later. Perhaps the end of the repair programme may be marked by the west doors which were a memorial to the bishop and one of his four brothers. The

Montagu heraldry in the Abbey is impressive. Through inheritance the Montagu family had quartered their arms with those of Monthermer. The Montagu arms show a row of lozenges which might be seen as a row of mountain peaks and suggest *mont aguille*, *mons acutus* or *mont acute*! The west doors were given by Sir Henry Montagu, Lord Chief Justice and the fourth brother, in memory of the bishop and the brother who had already died. The lowest shield shows the family arms quartering Montagu with Monthermer. Above on the left the shield shows the diocese of Winchester impaling the Montagu quartered arms and shows James Montagu in his final office as Bishop of Winchester. The Winchester diocesan arms can easily be confused with those of Bath Abbey when uncoloured but the bishop had no connection with the former priory and no special office in the Bath church, although as bishop his arms are properly seen in the nave vault, impaled with those of the Bath and Wells Diocese (fig.15). On the west doors the small annulet at the centre of Bishop Montagu's arms is a cadency mark for a fifth son. The Montagu arms on the right have a different cadency mark – a crescent marking a second son, the brother who had died. Fig.15 shows the annulet near the top.

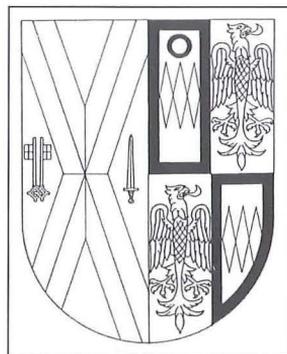


Fig.15 Bishop Montagu

Above on the left the shield shows the diocese of Winchester impaling the Montagu quartered arms and shows James Montagu in his final office as Bishop of Winchester. The Winchester diocesan arms can easily be confused with those of Bath Abbey when uncoloured but the bishop had no connection with the former priory and no special office in the Bath church, although as bishop his arms are properly seen in the nave vault, impaled with those of the Bath and Wells Diocese (fig.15). On the west doors the small annulet at the centre of Bishop Montagu's arms is a cadency mark for a fifth son. The Montagu arms on the right have a different cadency mark – a crescent marking a second son, the brother who had died. Fig.15 shows the annulet near the top.

It was appropriate that Bishop Montagu should have been buried in Bath where he had done so much, especially as his remaining life at Winchester had been so short. His tomb inside the Abbey is a splendid heraldic display of 20 shields and badges. At the top he is shown as Bishop of Bath and Wells at one end and as Bishop of Winchester at the other, and his shield, quarterings and badges are everywhere. Binoculars will show that one of the shields in the nave vault bears the quartered Montagu/Monthermer arms and another shows the Bath and Wells saltire impaling Montagu. The detail is tiny but the difference mark here is not an annulet but a martlet, indicating a fourth son. This is an understandable error for it was the fourth son who gave the doors, but he was not bishop. Among the shields above the nave windows the Montagu lozenges may be seen on the north side and the Monthermer eagle on the south, together with another shield on the north side showing the family's griffin head crest.

What of the other donors whose gifts enabled Bishop Montagu to do so much? Bellot was prominent still, and there were many high-ranking peers. A number were recorded heraldically in stained glass that was damaged in World War II, but the restored remains were reassembled in a single window

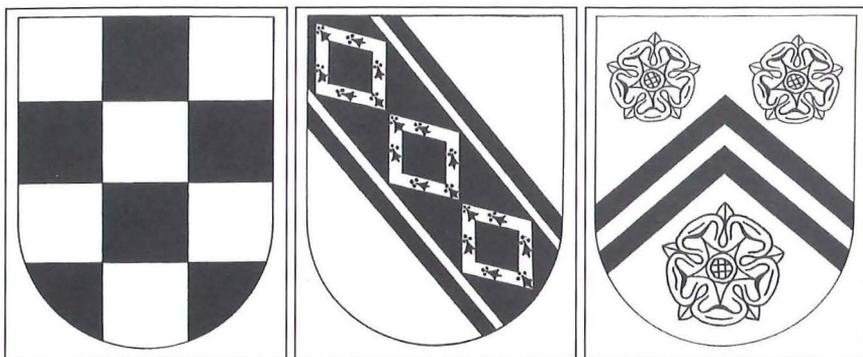


Fig.16 William St Barbe Fig.17 Dr George Rives Fig.18 New College, Oxford

in the north aisle already referred to as the Benefactors' Window. Some uncertain quarterings have had to remain blank but the shields are named to assist identification. If you turn with your back to this window, high up on the south side may be seen the shield of John May of Charterhouse still, perhaps, in its original place. He paid for 'the glazing of four upper windows on the south side'. The gifts recorded are far more detailed for this third stage, presumably because the record was being compiled at that time. These gifts were mainly either money or undertakings to glaze a particular window. One donor of special interest is William St Barbe, 'Prebender of Hereford, at whose charge was glazed the fourth window westward, on the north side of the body of the church'. In the Kemble restoration in the nineteenth century, to which we come below, this window was chosen by Harriet St Barbe for a memorial to her husband and she replaced the plain glass with a fine heraldic display of her late husband and of some of his and her ancestors. The basic St Barbe shield (fig.16) is a simple check of black and white squares but the implements and quarterings enable the particular individuals to be identified.

A few benefactors assisted construction by giving trees. Even for estates near Bath there must have been transport problems. One such gift with an heraldic connotation is detailed enough to be worth quoting in full.

George Rives, Doctor of Divinity, and Warden (with the fellows) of New College in Oxford, gave a goodlie oake that grewe uppon their mannor of Cullerne, which yielded well neare 5 tunne of prime good timber, besides the topp and armes. The said Dr George Rives gave besides, of his own free gift, 5*l.* [i.e. £5].

The shield of Rives (fig.17) can be seen on the north side of the west window (upper row, second from left). In the matching row on the south side are the arms of New College (fig.18).

The Arms of the City of Bath

The shield in use today (fig.19) has in its lower half a red battlemented wall and in the upper half two wavy bands on a blue ground representing water. This could be taken to represent either the River Avon outside the walls or the spa waters within. Over the whole is a sword, point upward. It seems more likely that the sword here stands for the Roman occupation than for St Paul but sometimes, in the past, the sword has been given a small key on the blade, perhaps to link saints Peter and Paul to whom the Abbey is jointly dedicated. But this is inappropriate in both size and number – St Peter has two keys. Modern displays have no key but you may find examples outside the Abbey – on the base of some street lamps, for example.

Heralds tried to control the use of arms through visitations round the country to record pedigrees and check the use of illegal displays. There was a visitation to Bath in 1623 when the heralds appended to one of their records, by way of a footnote, a drawing and description of the arms of the City. Contrary to the usual practice, this shows the wall at the top of the shield and the water below.(fig.20) This was not in any way a grant or confirmation but the shield received publicity in a Chapman genealogy now in the possession of the City. There are several clear examples from the sixteenth century to show the use of the accepted arms before and after 1623. This version does however have some support in a fifteenth century margin sketch which is in the shape of a shield but might be no more than a sketch of the spa bath.¹⁴ The controversy as to which version was official surfaced again in the 1880s with Major Davis to the fore. There was no opposition from the heralds who were willing to make a new grant of the design with water at the top but the City objected to a 'new'

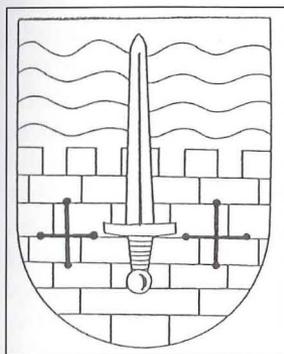


Fig.19 City of Bath:
traditional version

grant for an ancient city. The supporters used were a lion and a bear which had even less authority than the shield. The matter was left in abeyance, but in preparation for celebrating, in 1973, the 1000th anniversary of Edgar's coronation, a splendid compromise was reached. Application was made for an

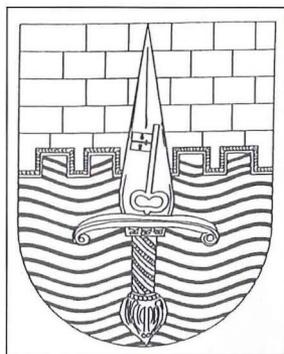


Fig.20 City of Bath:
1623 Visitation version

official grant of supporters, crest and motto and for a city badge. The grant gives details for a crest of two hands holding up Edgar's crown, and for lion and bear supporters decorated on their shoulders with the Abbey's sword and keys (with wards in the shape of B for Bath). The motto is *Aquae Sulis*, an old name of the City from the pre-Roman deity associated with the springs. The grant concluded with a mention of the arms with which these additions were to be associated and simply describes the ancient arms on which all parties were agreed!¹⁵ The 1623 shield is now simply an historical error but it can be seen in the nave vaulting. Among the Montagu shields are both the 1623 and the accepted arms. But do these stone carved shields date from the Montagu building or from the stone roof of the nineteenth century? When seen close up the style does look more seventeenth than nineteenth century. A more modern example of the City arms is in the vaulting of the crossing under the tower. Another curiosity is that the wall in the arms is occasionally white, as in one of the top corners of the east window. Could this error have been a reference to the colour of Bath stone? The arms are actually so blazoned in *Civic Heraldry* by a respected heraldic authority, C.W.Scott-Giles.¹⁶ After this digression linked to two shields in the nave roof we now return to developments after the Montagu restoration.

Later Developments

It is not surprising that this great reconstruction was followed by two centuries without major alterations. The only addition of heraldic interest is the tomb, in the south transept, of the wife of Sir William Waller, the Civil War general. His own position, resting on an elbow and looking down on his wife's effigy, suggests that he intended to be buried here when the time came but he married a second

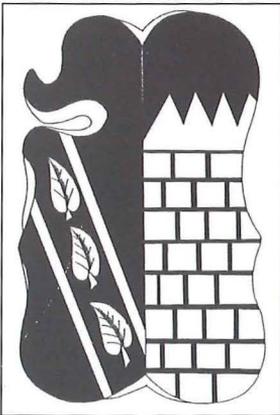


Fig.21 Waller/Reynell family

wife and is buried elsewhere. His first wife came from the Reynell family whose shield is basically black and white masonry – suggesting the wall that might have been an even better allusion to the name of Waller than the three walnut leaves that his shield bears. These two simple shields are seen on the monument, but its central shield shows many other quarterings inherited by Waller and Reynell families over the centuries. Waller and Reynell are impaled to show the marriage and all the Waller quarterings are on the left and the Reynell quarterings on the right. A simple impalement of the basic Waller and Reynell shields can be seen on one of the shields on the south side of the west window (fig.21).

The next major work was not until the 1830s, under G.P.Manners, when various pinnacles and parapets were added to the roof and the interior was filled with seats and galleries and there was a large new pulpit.¹⁷ A far greater upheaval followed the appointment of Charles Kemble as Rector in 1860. A report by Sir George Gilbert Scott led to a major restoration which included replacing the roof of the nave and its aisles with stone vaulting to match the choir and transepts. Internal changes were made for liturgical reasons and the screen between nave and choir was removed. All the memorial tablets that had been placed on it, and also on the nave columns, were removed, and by careful jig-saw work and a little cutting were fitted on to the outer walls below the windows where they are now seen so densely packed. It is not surprising that there were a few errors – at least two heraldic shields have been separated from the tablets to which they belong. There were also new pews and some excellent heraldic carving on some of them. The work was well planned in three stages so that if funds were not sufficient some parts would be completed and others delayed rather than having to leave many aspects unfinished. Kemble was by far the greatest contributor to the funds, with his mother and uncle also giving very generously, but a wide range of mainly local people gave money in small amounts from a few pounds to the tens and hundreds from major landowners and gentry. The annual reports of the committee overseeing progress show long lists of names and many of these persons gave regularly year by year.¹⁸

Victorian heraldry was not strictly controlled and no longer provided an easily recognised division of society. Those aspiring to heraldic recognition of their rise in wealth and status did not always apply to the College of Arms and often assumed entitlement to arms granted to a family of the same surname. Two quotations from Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* illustrate this:-

'Captain Osborne, indeed! Any relation to the L Osbornes?'

'We bear the same arms,' George said, as was indeed the fact; Osborne having consulted with a herald in Long Acre, and picked the L arms out of the peerage, when he set up his carriage, fifteen years before.

The great red seal was emblazoned with the sham coat of arms which Osborne had assumed from the peerage, with '*Pax in Bello*' for a motto – that of the ducal house with which the vain old man tried to imagine himself connected.¹⁹

To identify some shields from the nineteenth century is therefore not easy. After the Kemble restoration, however, R.E.M.Peach, a contemporary writer, published a plan with names attached to most of the coats of arms²⁰ which has been helpful and time-saving to the present authors. The following cases



Fig.22 Kemble family

provide a few examples of identification problems with heraldry in the Abbey. The arms and crest for the family of Kemble (fig.22) are recorded in Papworth and Burke²¹ and occur in several places in the Abbey, though some show variations from the recorded colours.

Most examples show

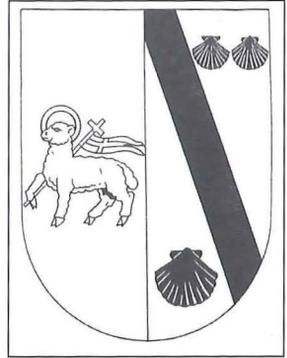


Fig.23 Frederick Shum

the Kemble arms impaling arms for Charles Kemble's wife, Charlotte Cattley, which are not recorded by the authorities noted. Examples of Kemble's arms include a shield over the chancel arch and another in stained glass in a north aisle window. On the south side of the west window is a lozenge with Kemble impaling different arms that have also not been identified but the lozenge indicates a woman, and the display, authentic or not, can only be for the Rector's widowed mother who, second only to her son, was a large benefactor. Above the west window is a quartered shield for S.B.Brooke of Malmesbury, uncle of Charles Kemble, who was another generous donor. As an example of the links between families that heraldry can illustrate, the design in the second and third quarters of this shield can be seen again in the Benefactors' Window in the lozenge of the seventeenth century Baroness Hudson, who was a Carey. Charles Kemble's great-great-grandfather married a Carey heiress.

The second case concerns Frederick Shum. The Brothers Schumm had come to Bath from Germany in the eighteenth century and had anglicised their name. They were Methodists but Frederick had probably moved away from nonconformity. He was a prominent citizen and a trustee of St John's Hospital. It is most improbable that he was entitled to arms, German or English. The shield that Peach names as his shows the "lamb and flag" emblem of St John the Baptist, which is used by the Hospital, impaling a shield recorded for Cotterell, though as yet no record has been found that he married into this Bath family. The shield (fig.23) is in the nave south aisle. A third example is George Moger who was Mayor of Bath 1865-6. Correspondence with a descendant, Cdr George Moger of Exmouth, has made all clear. The Mogers were not entitled to arms but the Mayor's mother was a Slade whose mother was a Glover, both being heiresses in families having arms. The arms of Glover and Slade could have been added as quarterings to Moger arms but as he

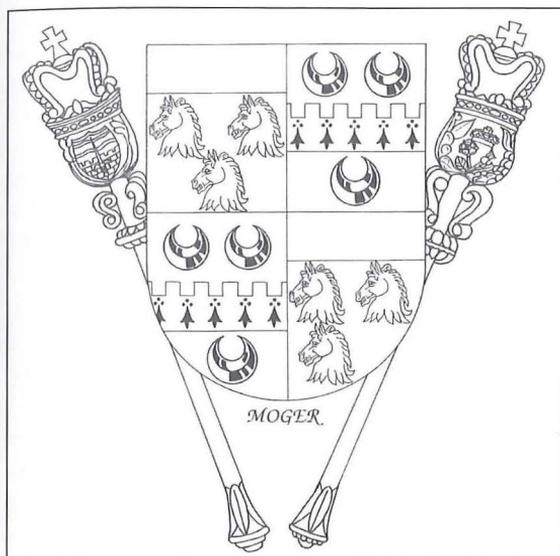


Fig.24 (left) Moger family

Fig.25 (above) Allen family

had none the Mayor simply, but incorrectly, quartered the Glover and Slade arms on their own. His display is near the east end of the nave north aisle and is a particularly fine one (fig.24) with the shield backed by two beautifully carved maces showing the City arms. The College of Arms confirmed that no arms were registered for the name of Moger. It was willing to make a grant but Cdr Moger declined the offer.

Lastly, Ralph Allen does not seem to have made any pretence to a coat of arms, though his biographer records that he used a Cornish chough unofficially as a crest.²² However, his brother Philip's monument in Batheaston Church shows a coat of arms that Burke assigns to an Allen family of Pembrokeshire and to which the Bath family's humble background would have no likely entitlement. Philip's descendant, Major Ralph Shuttleworth Allen, was an MP (not for Bath) and a generous donor of £500 to the Abbey in 1868 and he is represented by the same shield in the nave north aisle (fig.25).

After these examples of Victorian heraldry problems we can now consider the heraldic legacy of the Kemble restoration in wider detail. The shields in the vaulting of the two nave aisles date from this time as do some of the shields at the sides of the east and west windows and a few elsewhere. The benefactors fall into several categories: those in official city positions during the 1864-73 period as mayors or members of parliament; important local families able to support the work generously; and local people working hard for the restoration project. Such persons account for most of the shields.



Fig.26 Long family

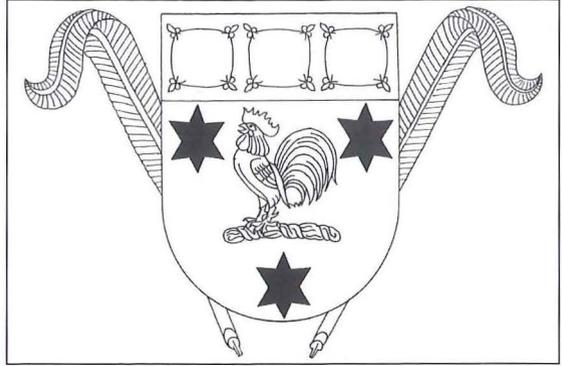


Fig.27 Stoddart family

The Victorian period is regarded as a poor one for heraldic art, showing a lack of vigour in the representation of beasts and a lack of artistic balance in shields as a whole, but those in the Abbey, in spite of sometimes showing these faults, are in general well executed and a few, such as Moger and his maces, have good overall design. In the eastern part of the nave south aisle joint secretaries of the Restoration Committee, Long (fig.26) and Stoddart (fig.27), and the treasurer Gill (fig.28) have shields. Behind and below the Stoddart shield are two quill pens and the nibs have their tips coloured red and blue as if just inked. Below Gill's shield is a carved purse and chain.

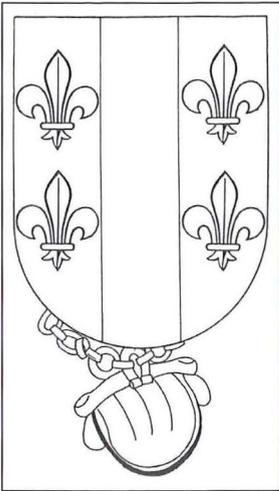


Fig.28 Gill family

Fuller details of the names associated with the Kemble restoration are available elsewhere.²³ The following paragraphs will provide a few examples of the range of people commemorated.

Among the mayors, Jerom Murch (seven times mayor) is a similar case to Shum. He was an unlikely person to have family arms but he shows an unrecorded coat impaling arms for his wife (née Taylor), which match one recorded for a Taylor family. Murch has his shield in the nave south aisle and also at the north side of the east window where the impaled arms are uneasily distorted on a shield of mediaeval elongated shape (fig.29). Among Bath's MPs the names of Lord Grey de Wilton and Viscount Chelsea stand out with their courtesy titles as eldest sons of peers. Viscount Chelsea was elected in 1873. He succeeded his father as Earl Cadogan in the same

year and at a further election Lord Grey became one of Bath's MPs until 1875 when he succeeded to the earldom of Wilton. These two have shields alongside Murch beside the east window.

Earl Manvers was an important local landowner, whose descent from the Duke of Kingston's sister had brought him the former Abbey estates. His shield (see the north side of the west window) was deliberately chosen to be similar to the Duke's, with the main charge of a lion, but the background of 5-petalled *cinquefoils* is replaced by 5-pointed stars (*molets*) (figs 30,31). The Gore-Langtons of Newton Park arose from a marriage of two Bristol merchant families. They reached a

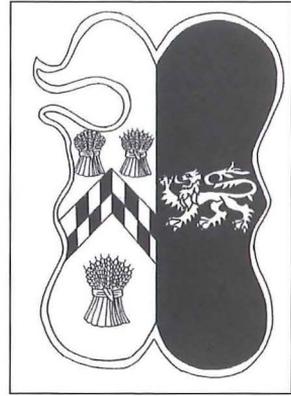


Fig.29 Murch family

social peak with marriage to a daughter of the Duke of Buckingham in 1846 and subsequent inheritance of the title of Earl Temple, but they fell in fortune a century later. Their proud impalement with the Duke's many-quartered shield is on the south side of the west window.²⁴ The Dukes of Cleveland were inheritors of the Pulteney estates in Bathwick. Three brothers were duke in turn in 1864; the 5th Duke died in January without issue and his next brother succeeded as 6th Duke but died in September, also without a son to succeed. The youngest brother became 7th Duke and when he died in 1891 the title became extinct.²⁵ The Duchess of the 6th Duke was a benefactor and her arms, on a lozenge, in the nave north aisle illustrate well the unsuitable nature of that shape for arms, especially when quartered.

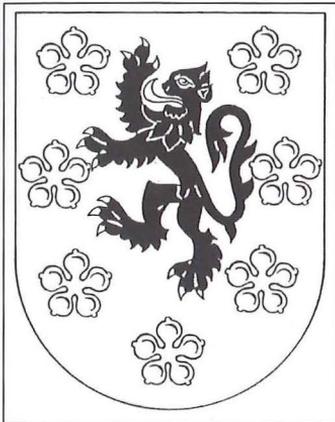


Fig.30 Duke of Kingston

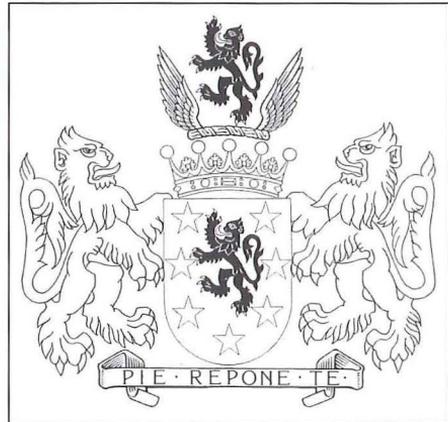


Fig.31 Earl Manvers

Nearby the very simple shield of Boyle, two plain colours separated by an embattled diagonal, stands for the Earl of Cork and Orrery who was Lord Lieutenant of Somerset from 1864-1904. It may also provide a reminder of his ancestor who designed General Wade's house in Abbey Church Yard. Other local gentry of this period with shields in the Abbey are Miles of Leigh Court, west of Bristol, and Skrine of Warleigh, near Bathford.

The Kemble restoration saw a change of bishop for the Diocese of Bath and Wells. Robert John Eden (1799-1870) may have chosen the Church as a career suitable for a third son and thirteenth child of a baron but at the age of 50 he inherited the title as 3rd Baron Auckland. He was bishop from 1854 to 1869 and his shield is the most easterly of those in the nave south aisle. His successor was Arthur, Lord Hervey (1808-94), fourth son of the Marquis of Bristol and his shield is at the east end of the choir south aisle. The shield is held by two angels with clearly visible toed feet and supported from below by a more earthy Atlas figure – a most unusual display (fig.32).

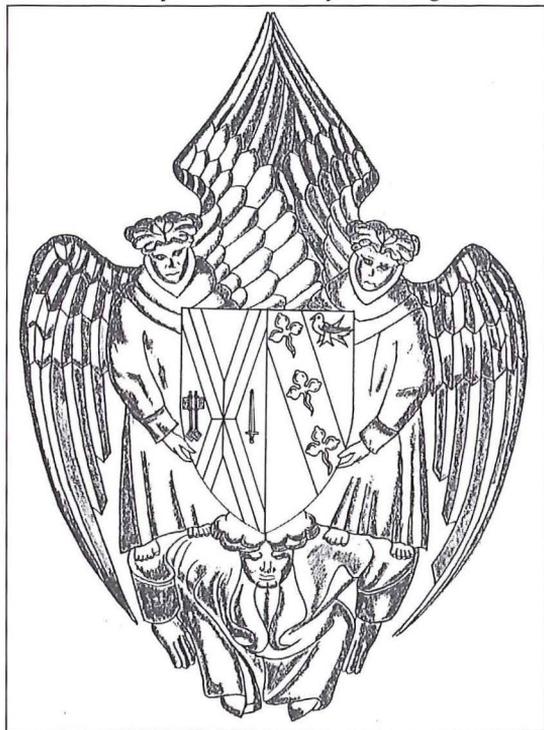


Fig.32 Bishop Arthur Hervey

But notice the small bird on the shield. It is a martlet, the difference mark for a fourth son (as already mentioned in connection with the Montagu family). The martlet should be without feet, from the legend that swallows had no feet, for they were never seen to land on the ground. This martlet was given feet and although painted out with red the error was not rendered totally invisible. As John Aubrey wrote of another trivial matter, 'how these curiosities would be quite forgott, did not such idle fellows as I am putt them downe!'²⁶

The wood carvings on the end of the pews that completed the Kemble restoration provide a further heraldic display. These shields are beautifully carved in low relief and though uncoloured are hatched according to a convention developed for use with black and white printing and etching. Silver (white) is shown plain, gold (yellow) is stippled with dots, blue is marked by shading with horizontal lines, red with vertical lines and black with both. Diagonal lines from top left indicate green, those from the top right, purple. The original purpose of heraldry was instant recognition and it relied on a few colours easily distinguished. Except for small *charges* these carved shields can be 'read' in colour. In the choir stalls most of the ends are decorated with shields. Between the two groups of pews on the south side is a shield showing Noah's Ark – the arms of the Scottish family of Jolly who founded the Milsom Street shop. In the nave there are a few more such carvings, including Kemble and his wife, but lighting conditions are less favourable for spotting them. There are a number of other, but less notable, carved arms on screens.

The heraldry in stained glass relating to the early stages of restoration has already been mentioned and there are also shields in several nineteenth century memorial windows: two are worth describing. In the south transept, behind the Waller tomb, is a window given by a Mrs Elliott of Bath in memory of her father Robert Scott, and in gratitude for the recovery of the Prince of Wales from typhoid in 1872. The upper part is a Jesse window showing the descent of Jesus and the lower part indicates the sickness and recovery of King Hezekiah (Isaiah, Ch.38). Right at the top, but too small to be seen easily, are the badges of the 12 tribes of Israel. Such badges are part of heraldry's roots. Across the bottom of the window are five shields (not easy to see behind the tomb). They are, from left to right, Edward as Prince of Wales, showing the arms of Saxony for his father, Prince Albert, and a label for an eldest son; Diocese of Bath and Wells; Queen Victoria; City of Bath (1623 version); the Prince of Wales as husband impaling the arms of Denmark for his wife Alexandra.

At the west end of the north aisle the 'Guilds Window' was presented to the Abbey by the contractors for the Kemble restoration. The four figures are, appropriately, Moses (builder of the Tabernacle), David, Solomon and Zerubbabel (builders and restorers of the Temple). Across the bottom are shields of the Livery Companies of those who did the actual work of Abbey reconstruction – Masons, Joiners, Glaziers and Plumbers.

Conclusion

The rich heraldic legacy in Bath Abbey is worth study for several reasons. Each of the distinct stages in the development of the building has shields associated with people actively concerned in the work and of the donors who made it possible. In the nineteenth century especially, the wide range of social status and financial means become clear: the shields are not restricted to the upper classes. The heraldry, when understood, supplements the history as well as embellishing the building. To a smaller extent it also draws attention to the City's history: an abbey, walled off from the rest of the city, is dissolved and its church becomes a city church under the influence of its corporation. The growth of this city as a spa is further illustrated by the tablets on the walls. The individuals concerned are mainly visitors, not residents, but the heraldry on many of the tablets, though outside the present study, shows high social status, a number making full use of the prestige of quarterings. They also illustrate Heraldry itself with its changes in artistic style. A small amount of heraldic knowledge brings disproportionately large rewards and illustrates a dictum of T.L. Peacock who wrote of 'that commanding advantage, which, in all circumstances and conditions of life, a man who knows something, however little, always possesses over one who knows nothing.'²⁷

Notes

- 1 Nimbus Conservation Ltd was responsible for the interior cleaning 1996-7.
- 2 The College of Arms is the authority in all matters of heraldry in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The officers were incorporated in 1484 and assigned a building in London in 1555. This was destroyed by the Great Fire of 1666 (but records were saved) and it was rebuilt as the present College in Queen Victoria Street.
- 3 John Britton, *The History and Antiquities of Bath Abbey Church* (Longman, 1825), pp.45-6. For a general account of the early development of the Abbey see Peter Davenport, 'Bath Abbey' (*Bath History*, Vol. II, Alan Sutton, Gloucester, 1988), pp.1-26.
- 4 Patrick Mitchell, *Bishop Oliver King and the Present Abbey (Priory) Church* (Friends of Bath Abbey, Bath, 1996).
- 5 *Dictionary of National Biography*: Adrian de Castello (also known as di Castello).
- 6 Before the union with Scotland under James I and VI in 1603 the Tudors quartered France and England (in that order). Each sovereign chose favourite supporters: here a dragon and a greyhound. The use of a lion for England and a unicorn for Scotland was introduced in 1603 and has been unchanged since. Also from 1603 the Tudor arms were quartered with Scotland and Ireland. In Scotland the supporters are reversed with the unicorn on the left. For later changes and further details see, for example, J.H. & R.V. Pinches, *The Royal Heraldry of England* (Heraldry Today, 1974).
- 7 John Haddon, *Bath* (Batsford, 1973), pp.37-8.
- 8 *Ibid.*, Ch.5.
- 9 The quotation is attributed to Fuller in a guide to the Abbey by Sir Harold Brakspeare (n.d. but many editions). Thomas Fuller's *Church History of Britain* (1655) is a likely

- source but its length and lack of indexing are daunting and a recent short search has not found the quotation. Haddon, *op.cit.* p.68, quotes without attribution.
- 10 Britton, *op.cit.* p.55, writes that these estates were sold to Fulk Morley in 1569 and descended to the Duke of Kingston and Earl Manvers. Haddon, *op.cit.* p.71, states that they were sold in 1611 to John Hall, a wealthy clothier of Bradford-on-Avon who was progenitor of a line which subsequently acquired the title of Duke of Kingston. There is heraldic support; the shield of Hall of Bradford on Avon is on the ceiling of the clergy vestry in the Abbey.
 - 11 For copies of this manuscript see Richard Warner, *History of Bath* (Cruttwell, Bath, 1801), appendix 73, and Britton, *op.cit.* appendix V. Neither the archivist of Bath Abbey nor the librarian of Wells Cathedral has any knowledge of the possible present location of the manuscript.
 - 12 Haddon, *op.cit.* p.68.
 - 13 Sir Bernard Burke, *The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales* (1884; facsimile, Burke's Peerage, 1961), p.218.
 - 14 Bath Record Office: Town Clerk's papers (unreferenced).
 - 15 F.D. Wardle, *Arms of the City of Bath* (1953). Letter of 25 May 1972 from the Town Clerk to members of the City Council concerning the proposed new grant of arms. *The City Arms of Bath*: 4-page leaflet (April 1973) issued by the City Council to illustrate and explain the new grant.
 - 16 C.W. Scott-Giles, *Civic Heraldry of England and Wales* (Dent, 1933).
 - 17 G.P. Manners (c.1789 -1866), City Architect and responsible for many buildings in the 1820-60 period. See Charles Robertson, *Bath, An Architectural Guide* (Faber & Faber, 1975), pp.139-40.
 - 18 Sir George Gilbert Scott (1811-71) was nearing the height of his career when he became involved with Bath Abbey in 1863. He worked on many cathedrals as well as being responsible for the Albert Memorial and St Pancras Station Hotel. Bath Reference Library has copies of the annual reports of the Restoration Committee bound with other material under the title 'Norman'.
 - 19 W.M.Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* (Bradbury and Evans, 1848), Chapters 29 & 34.
 - 20 R.E.M. Peach, *The History and Antiquities of Bath Abbey Church by John Britton continued to the present time by R.E.M.Peach* (Charles Hallett, Bath, 1887). Peach was author of many books about Bath in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. His work is not now held in high regard because of errors disclosed by later research.
 - 21 Burke, *op.cit.*, presents an alphabetical list of names with recorded arms. J.W. Papworth, *Ordinary of British Armorial* (1874, facsimile, Tabard Publications, 1961) provides a means of attaching names to coats of arms. It depends on the correct order of describing the details on a shield according to the rules and language of blazon.
 - 22 Benjamin Boyce, *The Benevolent Man* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1967), p.198.
 - 23 J. Ede & R.Symons, *The Heraldry in the vault of Bath Abbey: a tour* (1997), available in Bath Abbey shop.
 - 24 Graham Davis, *The Langtons at Newton Park* (printed by Fyson & Co., Bath, n.d.); The Hon. Vicary Gibbs, ed., *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom* (new edn. St Catherine Press 1910), vol.12, part 1, pp.660-1.
 - 25 Gibbs, *op.cit.*, vol.3, pp.285-6.
 - 26 John Aubrey, *Brief Lives and other selected writings* (Cresset Press, 1949), p.49.
 - 27 Henry Cole, ed., *The Works of Thomas Love Peacock* (Bentley, 1875), Vol.3, p.335.