

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

A NOTE ON THE ARMS OF BOXLEY ABBEY

The publication of my short article on Boxley Abbey in the last volume of *Arch. Cant.*, wherein I adorned my plan with a representation of what I thought to be the coat of arms of the house, brought me some interesting correspondence from our member, Commander Messenger, casting doubt on my heraldic accuracy and drawing my attention to *Archaeologia*, LXVI, pp. 447-568, where another of our members, the late Ralph Griffin, described in detail the vaulting bosses in the cloister of Canterbury Cathedral, and particularly to page 486 and Plate XLI, Fig. 12, of that same paper, where the arms of this abbey are depicted. These arms were at variance with those I showed and deference to the great names associated with this paper at first prompted me to make a suitable recantation. But I thought a little investigation might be profitable—not vastly so, for I am no herald, but here is a summary of what I found.

The coat I drew on my plan (Fig. 1) is that which has appeared in practically every book or pamphlet dealing with the Abbey and may be thus described

:
Argent, a sinister bend lozengy gules—on a canton of the second a crozier or pastoral staff of the field.

Some shields show “fusilly” instead of lozenges (Fig. 6). The bend might also be termed “dancetty” or “indented,” the canton might be a quarter and the charge may even be lozenges (detached) in bend.

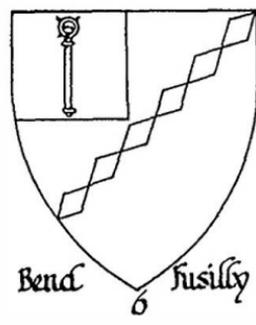
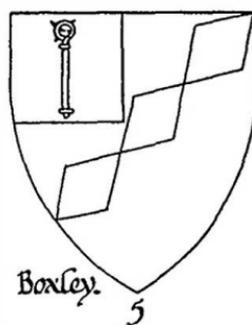
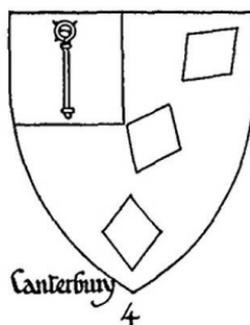
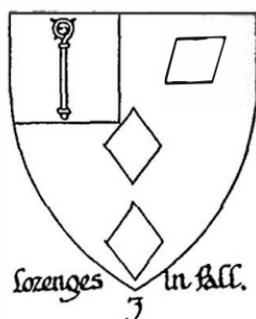
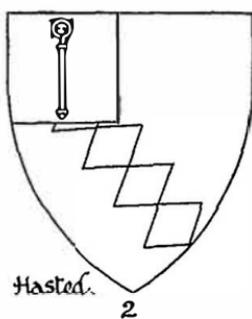
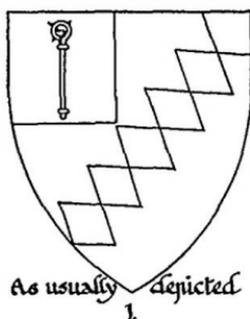
Hasted (II, p. 24) describes the arms (Fig. 2) thus :

Argent a dexter bend lozengy gules—on a canton, etc., as above,

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the only difference being the direction of the bend. He gives as his authority *Tan. Mon. Arms*, N.LXVII, which I have not had an opportunity of confirming, though on this coat the crozier is omitted, as it is on one of the carved shields still in situ (?) on the Abbey site, of which more presently. The substitution of dexter for sinister is peculiar. I have never seen a representation of these arms and suggest that there may be here an error of transcription. The shield in the cathedral cloister is quite different (Fig. 4) and is described as follows :

Four lozenges in pall. on a canton a crozier.



BOXLEY ABBEY ARMS. Colours (red & silver: see text) omitted.



No colours are given—they are immaterial to the matter under consideration. I should say myself that these arms are depicted by one less learned in the art than myself, and I venture to show (Fig. 3) what these arms should look like. Mr. Griffin gives references to MS. 262 in the library of the Society of Antiquaries (fol. 24.b.) where the colours are given, and further support for this coat is supplied by other references, which include one to a MS. copied by Hasted.

I would make my recantation now but that I am somewhat disturbed by two factors : (a) that Hasted is said to have copied a MS. where the

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arms as at Canterbury were described, yet in his history gives a coat which conforms to the traditional arrangement save that the bend is in the opposite direction. Hasted, we know, made many mistakes, so perhaps this may be regarded as another of his lapses, but factor (*b*) is a different matter. This concerns the coat shown on one of two corbels on the sides of a doorway still standing at Boxley Abbey. My recollections of these was vague and my photographs did not help a great deal, for the lower part of the shield was turned away from the camera and I thought at first that the Canterbury arms might be those shown at Boxley. I could not, therefore, speak with certainty till I had once more examined these shields, but when I was able to do so I found the shield as Fig. 5 : Three lozenges in bend sinister with a canton which was, however, blank. Possibly, owing to its small size the crozier may have been painted on this canton, but in any case the corresponding shield on the opposite jamb shows a crozier in pale. Mr. Messenger says that three lozenges are clumsy, but that does not seem to alter the fact that here on the site, where the arms must have been seen daily by the inmates, the main charge is a lozengy sinister bend. I venture to think that the number of pieces in the bend, whether three, five or seven, is immaterial. Therefore, for the time being I propose to accept the arms as I have shown them as the most likely, till some overwhelming heraldic evidence shows that I and the inmates of the Abbey and many others are wrong.

F.C.E.-E.