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## **Arms of the City of Gloucester**

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## ARMS OF THE CITY OF GLOUCESTER.

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THE usage of the City of Gloucester in respect to Armorial Insignia has been very variable, and it is remarkable to what an extent the horse-shoe and nails prevailed in the charges in the earlier periods. This may have arisen from the fact that Gloucester, from the earliest time of its history, was always famous as a market for wrought iron. The iron was brought by the Severn trows from the Forest of Dean, and so superior was the quality, that Gloucesteria—or Glovernia—hardware was much sought after.<sup>1</sup> A street in Gloucester was known, in the middle ages, as *vicus fabrorum*, and as “Old Smith Street.” This street leads direct to the Severn, and is now called “Long Smith Street.” We read in Domesday Book that the City of Gloucester paid to King Edward the Confessor, thirty-six *dicras*<sup>2</sup> of iron and 100 malleable iron rods for nails of the King’s ships, and, probably, this acknowledgment was even then very ancient. It will be noticed that there is nothing here respecting horse-shoes or nails, and it is not unlikely that in the subsequent two or three centuries the payment had been somewhat modified. A seal connected with the City is remarkable for these devices. It is of silver, of the time of

<sup>1</sup> Nicholl’s Iron-making in the Forest of Dean, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> A *dicra* of iron consisted of ten bars, and a *dicra* (dicker) of leather of ten hides.—(*Bailey’s Dict.*) A *dicra* of gloves was ten pairs, a *dicra* of horse-shoes, five sets. The original, in Domesday, unmistakeably reads *dicras* implying a decimal number or quantity.

King Edward III., for the Recognizances of Debtors, and is now in the official custody of the Town Clerk. It is circular, and twenty-five lines in diameter, and is surrounded by the legend, S' EDWARDI : REG : ANGL' : AD : RECOGN : DEBITOR : APVD : GLOVCESTR. It is semee of horse-stubs, or nails, the King's bust, full-faced and crowned between two horse-shoes in fess; in base the lion of England, as in the margin.<sup>1</sup>



There are two other ancient seals also in the possession of the Town Clerk, the devices on which are not connected with horse-shoes, nails, or iron, but which, in treating of the Arms of the City, demand our notice. The first is a seal of the Bailiffs of Gloucester, circular, in diameter  $1\frac{3}{8}$  inches. It is of silver, and appendant to a chain of the same metal, furnished with a swivel and loop for attaching it to a girdle. The design is a castle with a central spire, surmounted by a cross, and flanked by two crenelated towers. In base is water, representing, it is presumed, the River Severn, and in chief are two stars of six points. Surrounding it is the legend in lombardic capitals, of which the cross on the spire forms the initial: ✠ SIGIL : BALLIVOR : GLOVCESTRIE. This seal would appear to be as early as the 13th century. (*See plate IV., fig. 1*). The second seal is like unto it, and is of about the same date. It is surrounded by the legend, also in lombardic capitals: ✠ SIGILLVM : BVRGENSIVM : DE : GILDE : MERCATORVM. There is an ancient floor tile in the Lady Chapel of the Cathedral, bearing the same device as these seals, except that there is no indication of water below the Castle or stars above it. As these devices are not upon shields, we can scarcely regard them

<sup>1</sup> A seal precisely similar, except that castles are substituted for horse-shoes, belongs to the City of Canterbury.

armorial, though the former, undoubtedly, formed the official seal of the Bailiffs of the town, until those officers were superseded by the grant of a Mayor by King Richard III., in 1484. At the same time that sovereign gave his own sword and cap to the first Mayor, and these insignia form conspicuous objects in all subsequent usage of arms for a considerable period.

The earliest example which has come to our knowledge is that on a shield found carved in oak on the fascia of the gable of an old half-timbered house in West Gate Street, of the latter half of the 15th century. This house has now been taken down and rebuilt, but the fascia is shortened and preserved in the interior of the shop in the new building. This shield is charged with a sword in bend, point upwards, and in sinister chief a horse-shoe. (*Plate IV., No. 2.*) That this device, bearing the sword of the King, beloved and honoured in Gloucester, and having reference to the ancient use of the horse-shoes, was adopted by the first Mayor, is exceedingly probable, and supported by the fact that in 1529 the arms used by the Mayor were based upon similar charges. John Cook, Alderman, in making a grant of land to the Crypt School, on the 12th May, 20 Henry viij., and Joan Cook, his widow, on 8th March, 1535, used the Seal of the Mayor for the express reason that their own seal was *quam plurimis incognitum*. The charges are semée of stub-nails, a sword in bend, point upwards, between six horse-shoes, and it is surrounded by the legend: SIGILLVM: MAIORALITATIS: VILLE: GLOVCESTRIE. (*Plate IV., No. 3.*) In the spandrils of the arch of the doorway of the Old Crypt School, built a short time afterwards, we find on one side a cinque-centc-shaped shield, bearing a merchant's mark, and on the other side a similar shield bearing a device composed of the same charges as the seal last mentioned, viz.: a sword in pale, point upwards, on the point a cap turned up ermine between, on each side a horse-shoe in chief, and three horse-stubs in base. (*Plate IV., No. 4.*) We conclude that these were the arms used by the Mayor at that date, because of the similarity of the charges to those on the previous seal, and from the cap on the sword point, which was, doubtless, the representation of the

Cap of Maintenance given to the City by King Richard III., in 1484. And this view is confirmed by the actual grant made to the City, by Christopher Barker, Garter King of Arms, on 18th October, 1538, which is thus blazoned in the Patent. Vert, on a pale gules, between two horse-shoes, each horse-shoe between three stub-nails, two in chief and one in base, all meeting with their points to the shoe, argent, a sword in a scabbard, azure, hilt, pomel, and studding, or. On the point of the sword a cap of maintenance, gules, turned up ermine. On a chief per pale, or, and purple a boar's head coupé argent; in his mouth a quince apple between two demi-roses; the dexter gules the sinister argent, both barbed vert, each issuing rays from its centre pointing to the boar's head, or. Anything heraldically more monstrous, or artistically more hideous than this blazon it is difficult to conceive, and it seems surprising that the city "bore" with the grant as long as it did. (*Plate IV., No. 5.*)

Shields of these arms are found surmounting the monument in Gloucester Cathedral of Thomas Machen, who was three times mayor of the city, and died 18th October, 1614.<sup>1</sup> On two of three enamelled heraldic plaques, belonging to A. Booth, of Gloucester, Esq., and exhibited by the writer at the Society of Antiquaries in 1876, are the same arms. Both plaques are slightly convex. On one, which is  $1\frac{3}{10}$  in. in diameter, the coat is surrounded by an ornamental border, having a translucent green enamel of the same hue as the field, except where four pairs of volutes are left, and parcel gilt. There are traces of red enamel in the cap of maintenance, and on the hilt of the sword, the scabbard being of dark blue enamel. The second plaque is of a larger size, having a diameter of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in. In this



<sup>1</sup> Fosbrooke's History of Gloucester, page 138 and plate.

case the city arms, as above, are impaled with:—gules, on a chevron argent, three escallops sable between as many roses of the second, all within a bordure engrailed ermine.<sup>1</sup> These arms have not been identified, but they were, doubtless, those of some Mayor or Alderman of Gloucester. On a monument in Haresfield Church, commemorating Blanche Oviatt, widow of Peter Oviatt, vicar, who married, secondly, D. Gardner, are somewhat similar arms:—On a chevron between three cinquefoils as many escallop shells. There are no tinctures shewn, and it will be observed that this coat bears *cinquefoils* instead of *roses*, and is destitute of the bordure.

The same arms, with the substitution of two maces in saltier on the pale for the sword and cap of maintenance, are found on the monument of John Walton, Alderman of the City, in the Church of St. Nicholas. He died 20th September, 1626, and was there buried.

On the monument of John Jones, three times Mayor of Gloucester, and Burgess in Parliament, as well as Registrar to eight succeeding Bishops of the Diocese, who died 1st June, 1630, besides a large shield of his family arms with 5 quarterings,<sup>2</sup> are two oval medallions, the dexter charged with the arms of DeClare, or, three chevronels, gu. ; that on the sinister: or, three chevronels, gu., between ten torteaux, exactly like the modern arms of the city of Gloucester—(*Plate IV., No. 7 and 9*). On a bracket on each side of the monument are two maces, gu. Whether or not the medallions here found shewed Mr. Jones' connection with the City or with the Diocese, or with both, would seem to be uncertain. It is remarkable that the Bishops of Gloucester, during the 16th and 17th centuries, used the arms of De Clare, ensigned on the middle chevronel with a mitre.—(*Plate IV., No. 8.*) The arms so borne

<sup>1</sup> In Papworth's Ordinary the coat:—*är*, on a chev. between three cinquefoils *az.*, as many escallop shells of the first, is ascribed to Hawkins; and *az.* on a chev. or, between three roses, *ar.*, as many escallops *sa.*, to Templeman, of Dorchester (see Proc. Soc. Antiq., 2nd Series, vol.viii, p. 98). We are indebted to the Society for the use of the block.

<sup>2</sup> Fosbrooke, page 154.

may be seen on the monument of Bishop Goldsborough in the Lady Chapel, who died 16th May, 1604, and as used by his successor, Bishop Ravis, who was translated to London in 1607, and whose arms, so blazoned, remain in painted glass in the Bishop's Palace. The same arms are also found on the monument of Bishop Tomson at Windsor, who died in 1613, and on that of Bishop Miles Smith on a ledger-stone in Gloucester Cathedral, who died in 1624.

The De Clare arms also formed the basis of a new grant of arms, made to the city on 14th August, 1652, in which are incorporated the Arms of the See of Worcester. (*Plate IV., No. 6.*) which arms are still used, viz.: or, three chevronels between ten torteaux—three, three, three, and one. (*Plate IV., No. 9.*) The disused arms, granted by Barker, are preserved in the painted glass of one of the windows in the Houses of Parliament.

