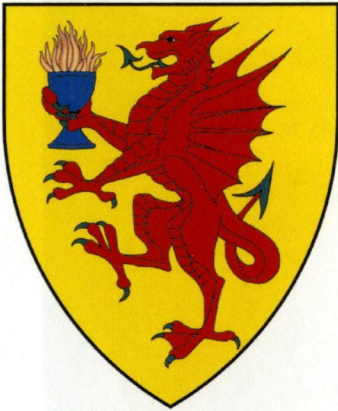


THE SOMERSET DRAGON

THE JOURNAL OF THE SOMERSET HERALDRY SOCIETY

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**THE SOMERSET
DRAGON**

Editorial

This issue introduces the first of a series of articles under the generic heading *Heraldry to Write Home About*. Members are encouraged to submit pieces on items of heraldic interest they have come across on their travels. Our first contribution covers the coats of arms located in a country house in Surrey, so writers are certainly not limited to discoveries in Somerset – the authors will provide the local link. Articles of up to 1,000 words and containing half a dozen or so illustrations would probably be typical.

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HERALDRY TO WRITE HOME ABOUT 1.

THE FARMER HERALDRY AT NONSUCH PARK



The Nonsuch estate near Cheam in Surrey was bought by Samuel Farmer, M. P. for Huntingdon, in 1799, and it was he who commissioned the architect Jeffrey Wyatt to build him the present mansion. The inspiration for the house appears to have been the Tudor palace of Nonsuch, built by King Henry VIII and demolished by Barbara Castlemaine, mistress of King Charles II. The house was built of brick and rendered with 'Roman' cement and lined to resemble ashlar. Tudor detail abounds, most obviously in the Victorian stained glass in the Little Drawing Room, which depicts King Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth, the heraldic frieze in the same room, which includes the Tudor Rose, and the fan vaulting in the centre of the Large Drawing Room. Wyatt later changed his name to Wyatville and achieved fame by his reconstruction of Windsor Castle for King George IV.

The house was extended in the 1840s when a conservatory was abolished to be replaced by a new library, and the existing library became the Little Drawing Room. The Large Drawing Room, the Dining Room and the new Library were thus the chief rooms on the south side of the house. The main heraldic decoration is to be found in the Ante Room, a small room that separated the Large Drawing Room and the Dining Room, and the Lobby, which separated the Dining Room and the Library.

Five generations of the Farmer family lived at Nonsuch Park. Samuel himself, who married a Miss Meeke from nearby Beddington, his son William Meeke who married a Frances Barstow but who predeceased his father, his grandson William Francis Gamul, who owned the estate from 1838 to 1860 and who married a Matilda Wilkinson. Then followed Gamul and Matilda's son, William Robert Gamul Farmer, who owned the estate from 1860 until 1910 and who married Charlotte Williams, and finally Alice Matilda Mary, who married the Hon. Lionel Colborne, second son of Lord Seaton. On her death in 1937 the estate was sold.



William Francis Gamul Farmer, inherited Nonsuch in May 1838 at the age of twenty-six. J. P., D. L., and High Sheriff of Surrey in 1849 he died at the early age of forty-eight.



The arms to be found in the Ante Room are those of Farmer impaling Meeke, Wilkinson and Williams. They are located over the three doorways that lead into the Entrance Hall, the Large Drawing Room and the Library. Over the Entrance Hall door is *argent a fess sable between three lions' heads erased gules* (Farmer) impaling *gules a chevron ermine between three Saracens' heads couped at the shoulders proper* (Williams) with the Farmer crest *out of a ducal coronet or a cock's head gules crested and wattled gold*.





The door into the Large Drawing Room is surmounted by Farmer *impaling gules a fess vair between three unicorns trippant argent* (Wilkinson), and that into the Library by Farmer *impaling vert a swan argent* (Meeke).



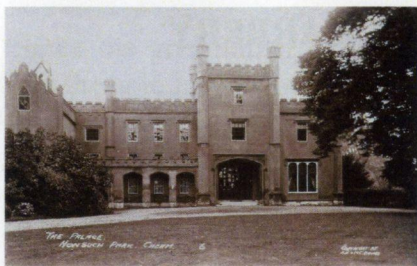
The lobby that separates the Dining Room from the Library provides two more achievements to complete this particular set. The first has Farmer *quartering or three milk-picks sable* for Gamul, a Welsh family from whom the Farmers were descended,

and the second has Farmer impaling Williams once again. Presumably Frances Barstow's father was not armigerous as this particular door could have been used for such an impalement. William Robert Gamul Farmer married Charlotte Williams in 1861 and these arms obviously date from the time she was the mistress of Nonsuch Park. The frieze in the Large Drawing Room clearly dates from Samuel Farmer's occupancy and presumably was the work of Wyatt. The Meeke swan is visible between a Tudor Rose and a portcullis; the latter being the badge of the Beaufort family, descendants of John of Gaunt, from whom the Tudors gained their somewhat tenuous claim to the throne.



A further Farmer-Wilkinson shield surmounted by a splendidly carved Farmer crest is to be found above the fireplace in the Dining Room and mention should be made of the heraldic stained glass in the Small Dining Room which shows the crest once again as well as Farmer impaling Meeke – clearly more of Wyatt's work.





This last picture is taken from an Edwardian postcard and shows the front entrance to the house, not the palace as the caption inaccurately has it.

Nonsuch Park is now jointly owned by two local councils and the house itself is leased to a catering company that specialises in wedding receptions. At the time I paid my visit only the ground floor had been restored to its former state but perhaps if the company prospers more of the Farmer's family home will receive the same sympathetic treatment. One can only hope, but in the meantime those fortunate enough to visit Nonsuch when the door is open will have some intriguing nineteenth century heraldry to admire.

THE SOMERSET DRAGON NEW STYLE

Alert readers will have noticed that our Somerset Dragon has relinquished his mace, the symbol of local government, and instead proudly brandishes a flaming goblet. Members on the Malvern visit (see page 13) felt that the goblet was a far



more appropriate appendage for our monster than the rather prosaic mace. Our grateful thanks go to John Gaylor for coming up with the idea and for producing the art work.

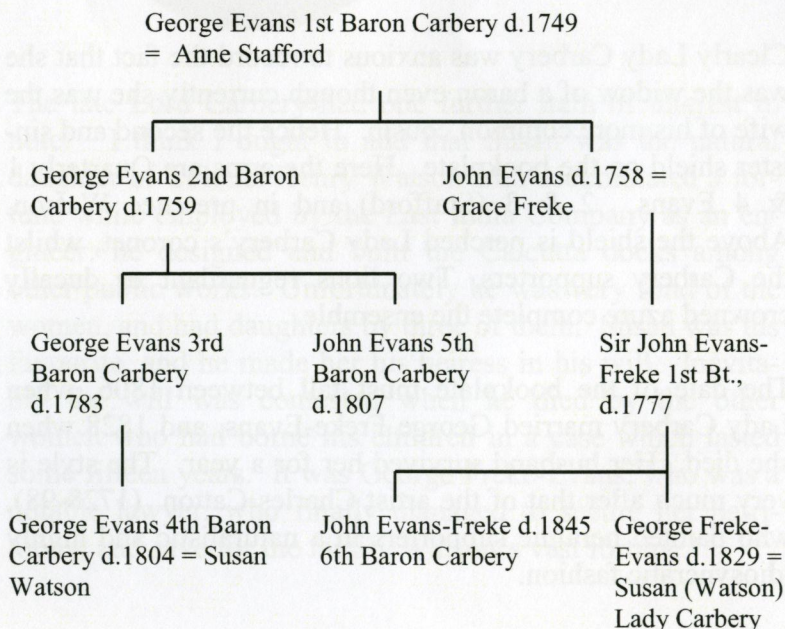
SUSAN LADY CARBERY
&
THE LAXTON HALL BOOKPLATE



This bookplate, which appeared in our *Notes & Queries* section in issue no. 24, certainly had an interesting story attached to it. According to the late Lord Carbery (the 11th baron) in a letter written to Stephen Slater in 1999, it was the bookplate of George Freke-Evans and his wife Susan Lady Carbery, the widow of the 4th Baron Carbery. The bookplate was used in most of the 19th century books in the library at Laxton Hall, a property which lay on the borders of Northamptonshire and Rutland. The hall had been the English seat of the Barons Carbery for many generations and is now an old people's home.

‘Since the grandfather of this George Freke-Evans married the sole heiress of the Irish branch of the Frekes, his family had called themselves Evans-Freke,’ wrote Lord Carbery. ‘George never succeeded to the barony but his elder brother John Evans-Freke did, and as he was married to Susan who was still known as Lady Carbery, he changed his name to Freke-Evans to prevent any confusion between the two brothers and their wives. Susan and George continued to live at Laxton, and the sixth baron, John, preferred to live at Castle Freke, the family seat in Ireland, S. W. Cork.’

The Family Tree of the Barons Carbery



The Evans-Freke arms are to be seen on the dexter shield on the bookplate in the first and fourth quarters. These are blazoned *Quarterly 1 & 4 Sable two bars and in chief three mullets or* (Freke) *2 & 3 Argent three boars' heads couped sable* (Evans). The second and third quarters display the arms of Stafford, *Or a chevron gules and a canton ermine*, recording the fact that the first Baron Carbery had married Anne Stafford, an heraldic heiress.

Argent an oak tree growing out of a mound in base proper surmounted of a fess azure, the arms of Watson, occupy a miniscule escutcheon in pretence, denoting the fact that Lady Carbery was the daughter and heiress of Colonel Henry Watson. This dexter shield is topped by two crests. *A boars head sable collared and chained or* is for Freke, and *A demi-lion reguardant or holding between the paws a boar's head as in the arms* is for Evans.

Clearly Lady Carbery was anxious to record the fact that she was the widow of a baron even though currently she was the wife of his more common cousin. Hence the second and sinister shield on the bookplate. Here the arms are *Quarterly 1 & 4 Evans, 2 & 3 (Stafford) and in pretence Watson*. Above the shield is perched Lady Carbery's coronet, whilst the Carbery supporters, *Two lions reguardant or ducally crowned azure* complete the ensemble.

The date of the bookplate must fall between 1806, when Lady Carbery married George Freke-Evans, and 1828 when she died. Her husband survived her for a year. The style is very much after that of the artist Charles Catton (1728-98), who painted heraldic supporters in a naturalistic and highly idiosyncratic fashion.



Susan Lady Carbery (died October 1828). The essayist De Quincy described her as 'a religious woman of very fine presence and figure, having masculine and austere understanding'. Portrait miniature by Anne Mee c.1795

The late Lord Carbery had one further item of interest to note. 'I think I ought to add that Susan was the natural daughter of Colonel Henry Watson who accumulated a fortune while employed by the East India Company as an engineer: he designed and built the Calcutta docks among other public works. Unfortunately he was very fond of the women, and had daughters by three of them. Susan was his favourite, and he made her his heiress in his will. Inevitably the will was contested when he died by the other women who had borne his children in a case which lasted some fifteen years. It was George Freke-Evans, who was a notable lawyer, who finally managed to secure her patrimony, and save for the family Watson's vast fortune.'

VISIT TO BREAMORE 23RD MAY



Figs 1 & 2



Fig. 1: The arms of Sir Hamilton John Hulse, eighth baronet.

Fig. 2: Hatchment of Sir Edward's father, the 9th baronet, who died in 1996. It must be one of the most recent hatchments to have been created. Sir Edmund admitted that the hatchment had never been hung outside the house, as would have been traditional; probably a sensible step given the vagaries of the weather.

A select group of members had the privilege of visiting first the Saxon church at Breamore, near Fordingbridge, Hampshire, then the house itself. At the church we were treated to a talk about the eleven hatchments there by Sir Edward Hulse, the 10th baronet, whose ancestors the hatchments commemorate.

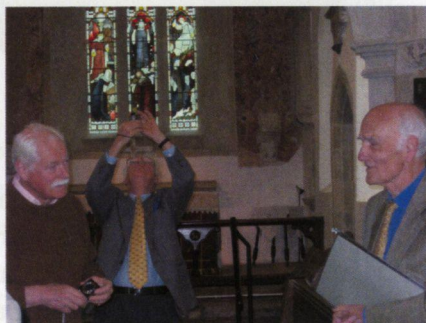


Fig. 3: Conversation Piece. Sir Edward, on the right, holds forth, Alex Maxwell Findlater pays attention while David Vaudrey takes a picture.

Philip Hickman's photographs of the Breamore hatchments appeared in Issue No. 20 in Summer 2011.

VISIT TO MALVERN 11TH JULY

The society's second visit of the summer was to Malvern in Worcestershire where we visited Little Malvern Priory, Little Malvern Court, and Great Malvern Priory; not to mention The Cottage in the Wood where members enjoyed a superb view and an excellent light, or not so light as the case may be, lunch.

Only the tower and the choir remain of the former Benedictine Priory of Little Malvern, a thirteenth century house that fell victim to King Henry VIII in the 1530s.

For the heraldist the chief glory of the Priory is the group of seven hatchments that commemorate members of the families who lived at the adjacent court, chiefly the Berington family, which still occupies the house.

Fig 3 Hatchment for William Berrington d.1847



Fig 1 Little Malvern Court and Little Malvern Priory

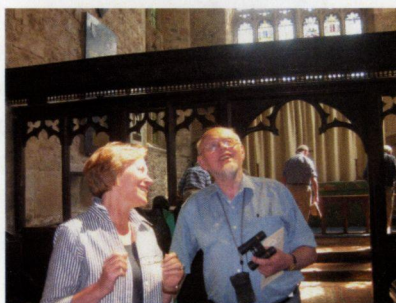


Fig 2 Hilary T-T and John Uncles discuss the finer details of a hatchment



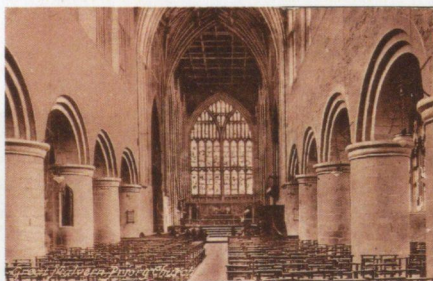


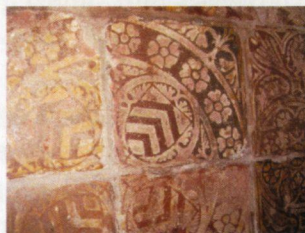
Fig 4 Great Malvern Priory Nave

Features of the Priory included the awe-inspiring Norman columns in the nave, a vast selection of medieval wall tiles, all produced locally, some beautifully carved misericords, dating from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and a rather magnificent Tudor monument to Sir John Knotsford.



Fig 5 Impaled shield of arms from the Knotsford Monument

From Little Malvern Court we moved on to Great Malvern Priory, founded by the Benedictines in 1085 and bought by local people for £20 in 1541; minus 74 tons of lead from the roof.



Figs 6 & 7 Medieval and Victorian tiles at Great Malvern Priory



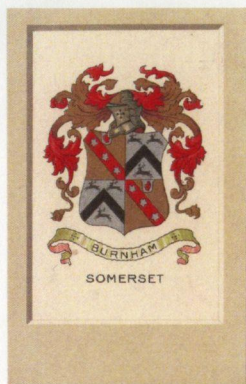
A keen band of hatchment hunters rounded off a memorable day with tea and cakes at Malvern's impressive modern theatre. And there is just enough space for a final picture!



Fig 8 Cope impaling Flood 1814

THE HERALDRY OF EDWARDIAN SOMERSET

No. 3 BURNHAM



The town of Burnham on Sea has never been granted arms but this did not deter the local firm of Pople & Churchill who published this postcard. It was posted on the 124th September 1907 in Burnham itself. The arms it displays are *Quarterly 1 & 4 or on a bend gules three mullets argent complete with the red hand of Ulster denoting the baronetcy 2 & 3 argent a chevron between three stags trippant sable.*

The arms in the first and fourth quarters were those of the second Baron Poltimore, whose seat was near Exeter. The connection between Lord Poltimore and Burnham is at present unknown, at least by *The Somerset Dragon*, which has yet to identify the arms in the second and third quarters (perhaps Rogers?). Suggestions from readers as to why this particular achievement was chosen to represent the seaside town would as always be very welcome.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- | | |
|---|---|
| Mon 30 September | Visit to Dyrham Church with Tony Ryan.
Another hatchment hunt. |
| Wed 30 October | Annual Dinner at The Wharf, Langport
Speaker Roland Symons |
| November | Meeting at Monteclefe Cottage
Talk by Stephen Slater |
| Details on all events to be circulated in due course. | |

Note: A postscript to the Hulse arms at Breamore will appear in the December issue of *The Somerset Dragon*

THE SOMERSET HERALDRY SOCIETY

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THE SOMERSET DRAGON

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Contributions welcome

Objects

The aims of the society are to promote and encourage the study of heraldry especially in the historic county of Somerset.

Stop Press

The date of the Annual Dinner has been changed to Tuesday 29th October.

Our Speaker is Roland Symons, Secretary of the White Lion Society, and his subject is *Confessions of a Copyist*.

The date of the November meeting will be Wednesday 6th. Stephen Slater's subject is *Heraldic Funerals*.