



Congratulations to TRH William and Catherine Duke and Duchess of Cambridge



29th April



MMXI

Stephen Kibbey and Kay Holmes

The *Seaxe* is usually edited by our Chairman, **Stephen Kibbey**, but since the last issue he has been in hospital for treatment. While he is convalescing, the job has temporarily been passed to Andrew Gray, who is glad to say that Stephen is well on the mend. His indisposition is also one reason for the temporary suspension of our meetings at Ruislip. We are, as ever, welcome at meetings of the Chiltern Heraldry Group; see www.chiltern-heraldry.org.uk.

Kay Holmes is a founder member of this Society, and has worked tirelessly for it for over thirty years, for much of it as Chairman. Currently he is responsible for booking and opening our venue in Ruislip, a job he no longer feels able to do. We need someone to take over this task, so that our activities can continue.

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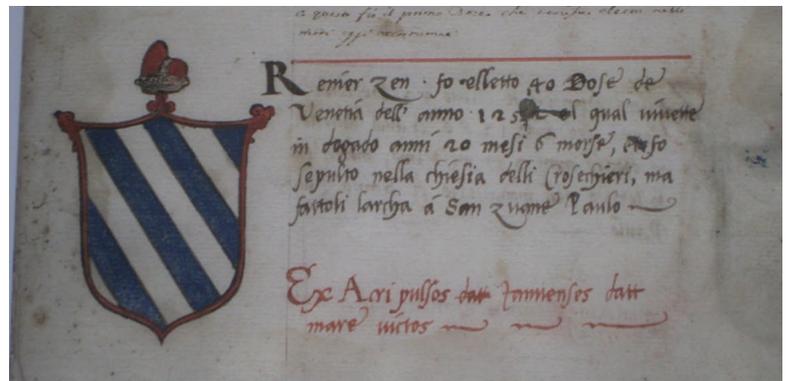
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The Election of Doge Lorenzo Tiepolo, Venice 1268

This year has seen a referendum on the voting system for the election of members of the UK Parliament. There were two options; the first passed the post system where the candidate with the most votes wins and the alternative vote (AV) whereby the voter lists the candidates in order of preference. A candidate required a minimum of 50% of the vote. If this was not achieved at the first count the second preference of the candidate in last position would be distributed and this process continued until a candidate received 50% or more of the votes or there were no more votes to distribute. One of the criticisms of AV was its complexity. Many thought it was far too complex and that the first past the post system was a much simpler, cheaper and better option. Listening to the arguments put forward in support for and against both systems led me think of what the politicians and commentators of today would make of the election process that was used for the election of the Doge in the 13th century. Before we look at the election procedure itself, it would be useful to give some background information as to how the election process evolved.

Venice has always been fearful of being dominated by an all-powerful, dominating family dynasty such as seen in the other Northern Cities. Florence immediately comes to mind with the Medicis. The Venetians were continually taking steps to avoid the highest office of state falling into unscrupulous hands. During



Doge Zeno's time (1253-1268), new wealth had come into Venice with new families growing in power and influence. Together with the old established aristocratic families feuds and tensions often flared up into serious trouble. One such feud between the Dandolo and Tiepolo families culminated in a brawl in the Piazza which directly resulted in a law being hastily passed banning the representations of family emblems or coats of arms on the exterior of buildings.

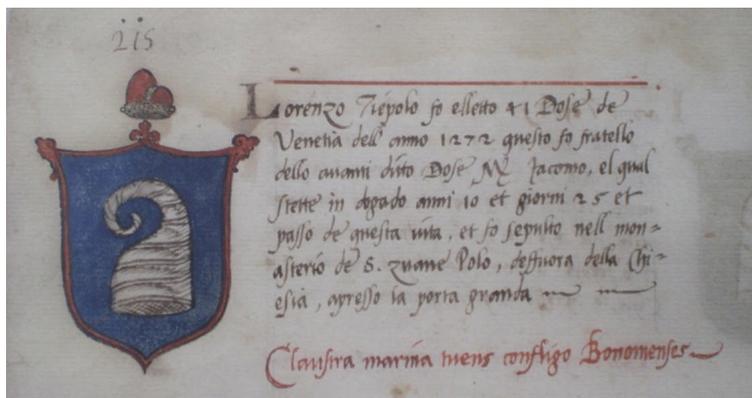
By the early 13th century it had become traditional that the Doge on taking office was obliged to sign a 'promissione', in effect a sort of coronation oath. In the early days it was merely a formality in confirming his promise to do his duty with diligence and impartiality and for the interests of the Republic. Originally it was usually drafted by the new Doge himself. However, gradually it evolved into a longer and more precise document, being written by officials for the new Doge to sign. By the time Giacomo Tiepolo (1229-1249) was required to sign the 'promissione' in 1229, it had become virtually a legal contract between him and the State. Not only was he required to promise to do his duty with diligence and impartiality but also to renounce all claims on the revenue of the State, the only exception being his salary which was paid quarterly and his share of the tribute from certain Istrian and Dalmatian towns. He also received certain specified quantities of apples, cherries and crabs from Lombardy and Treviso. Anti-corruption measures were also included. He was not permitted to accept presents except specified quantities of food and wine, not more than one animal or ten brace of birds at a time – and even those are forbidden if the donor asked for a favour.

In 1268 Doge Renier Zeno died and in the summer of that year and it was time to elect a new Doge. The election process was in two parts, the first part was the preliminaries and the se-

cond part the election itself. The preliminaries consisted of the 'Signoria' (the inner council of the state), electing forty-one of its members to go through to the second part of the process and to elect the Doge. On the day appointed for the election, the youngest member of the 'Signoria' was to pray in St Mark's; then, on leaving the Basilica, he was to stop the first boy he met and take him to the Doges' Palace, where the Great Council, minus those of its members who were under thirty, was to be in full session. This boy, known as the 'ballotino', would have the duty of picking the slips of paper from the urn during the drawing of lots. By the first of such lots, the Council chose thirty of their own number. The second was used to reduce the thirty to nine, and the nine would then vote for forty, each of whom was to receive at least seven nominations. The forty would then be reduced, again by lots, to twelve, whose task was to vote for twenty-five, of whom each this time required nine votes. The twenty-five were in turn reduced to another nine; the nine voted for forty-five, with a minimum of seven votes each, and from these the 'ballotino' picked out the names of eleven. The eleven now voted for forty-one – nine or more votes each – and it was these forty-one who were to elect the doge. They first attend mass, and individually swore an oath that they would act honestly and uprightly, for the good of the Republic. They were then locked in secret conclave in the Palace, cut off from all contact and communication with the outside world and guarded by a special force of sailors, day and night, until their work was done.

So much for the preliminaries; now the election itself could begin. Each elector wrote the name of his candidate on a paper and dropped it in the urn; the slips were then removed and read, and a list drawn up of all the names proposed regardless of the number of nominations for each. A single slip for each name was now placed in another urn, and one drawn. If the candidate concerned was present, he retired together with any other elector who bore the same surname, and the remainder proceeded to discuss his suitability. He was then called back to answer questions or to defend himself against any accusations. A ballot followed. If he obtained the required twenty-five votes, he was declared Doge; otherwise a second name was drawn, and so on.

It is quite remarkable that a candidate was ever elected considering the complexity of the procedure but on 23rd July 1268, just sixteen days after the death of Renier Zeno, Lorenzo Tiepolo was elected. The bells of St Mark's rang out the news of the election of a new Doge and crowds flocked to the piazza where traditionally the new Doge was to be paraded.



Led barefooted before the high altar Lorenzo took the oath of office and was invested with the banner of St Mark. Newly robed and enthroned on the 'Pozzetto', a special circular chair and so named from its resemblance to the characteristic well-heads of the city, the new Doge was paraded around the piazza scattering largesse to the crowd. He was then taken to the Doge's Palace to address the people.

Stephen Kibbey

Illustrations: Arms of Renier Zeno, Doge 1253-68 and Lorenzo Tiepolo, Doge 1268-75

A Scrope in Ruislip

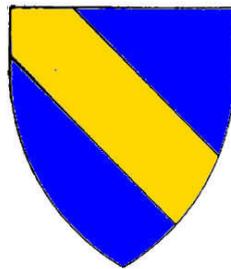


St Martin's church in Ruislip is unusually well endowed with hatchments. One of them, awkwardly placed in the tower and partly obscured by the frame for the bellropes, plainly shows the arms of the famous family of Scrope: *Azure a bend Or*.

Any armorist will be familiar with this blazon, and its place in heraldic litigation. Who has not heard how, on Richard II's Scottish campaign, the great Baron, Sir Richard le Scrope of Bolton, came face to face with a minor knight from the Welsh

border of Cheshire, Sir Robert Grosvenor of Hulme, and then sued him in the High Court of Chivalry for misappropriating these arms? Neither really had the better claim, but Scrope's influence won the day. Grosvenor's retaliation was to take the arms of the Earldom of Chester and simplify them from: *Azure three garbs Or* to: *Azure One garb Or*. But history's revenge was to relegate the Scropes to relative obscurity, while the Grosvenors, as Dukes of Westminster, still own much of the West End of London.

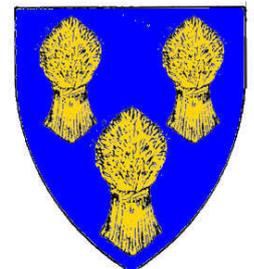
Is this a genuine Scrope in Ruislip? Hatchments are notoriously a vehicle for dubious heraldry, and many a canvas carries arms which are disallowed, assumed or just wrong. But this one is indeed genuine.



Sir Richard
Scrope of
Bolton



Sir Robert
Grosvenor of
Hulme



Earl of
Chester

Sir Richard's Scrope's barony of Bolton became extinct in 1630, and the descendants of his uncle Geoffrey, in Masham in the North Riding of Yorkshire, had met the same fate in 1517. However, Bolton spawned a cadet line, the Scropes of Spennithorne, whose descendants, the Scropes of Danby, represent the name today. From Spennithorne in their turn arose the Scropes of Cockerington in Lincolnshire. Of the last male members of this branch, Gervase (died 1776) occupied Eastcote Park, and the hatchment is probably his. It might have been re-used for his brother Frederick (1780); both were unmarried. With their younger brother Thomas, married but childless, this line came to an end in 1792.

For a full account of this family, see Burke's *Extinct Peerage*, and the pedigrees on the *Stirnet* website (<http://www.stirnet.com/>) under *Scrope*.

Andrew Gray

The Arms of William Morris



Much has been written about this great man. However it is very hard, if not impossible, to find any reference to his having been armigerous. It seems that most of his biographers saw little value in recording this fact. This begs the question: did William Morris make use of his arms? The answer is yes; he did so in a moderate way.

William Morris is a man whose life and work is admired around the world. He was a man of exceptional and rare talent, a man who could turn his skill to almost anything.

His prodigious output became a benchmark of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Later in his life he was an advocate of Socialist ideals; ideals he believed in passionately wrote and lectured about.

Biographers of Morris tell of his childhood, which was, by all accounts, safe, secure and nurtured. From childhood experiences he developed 'A Romanticism' which fired and drove much of his later works. He was born in 1834 and lived at Elm House in rural Essex in the parish of St Mary's, Walthamstow; at that time only a village. His father William, a City businessman and partner in a discount Stock Brokers, made some very successful investments on the stock market, thus securing the families fortune.

The Morris family moved to Woodford in 1840 when William's father purchased Woodford Hall. Woodford Hall is now long-gone but its perimeter wall can still be seen in large sections in the front garden walls of subsequent houses.

While growing up here, young William was taken by his father to visit local Churches. While on a trip to Canterbury it is reported that William thought that he 'had been taken to the gates of Heaven'. He grew to share his father's passion for the medieval period. As a child, William would dress in a miniature suit of Armour and ride a pony through the glades of Epping Forest. On one occasion he was taken on a visit to Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge, which has a commanding view overlooking the plains of Chingford. William remembered seeing there, hung upon the walls of a long room, 'tapestry faded green', and wrote of 'the impression of romance it made upon me'.

As a man appreciative of the medieval period, it is no surprise that William Senior petitioned for a Grant of Arms, granted in 1843. Blazoned: *Azure, a horse's head erased Argent between three horseshoes Or.*

In the 'Walthamstow Armorial', George Roebuck the author commented on the effect the Arms had upon William Junior. 'These bearings, whatever their origin, became in the mind of the boy, then aged nine, something deeply if obscurely associated with his life. He considered himself in some sense a tribesman of the White Horse. He made a regular pilgrimage to the White Horse on the Berkshire downs, which lies within a drive of Kelmscott.' Roebuck further noted that 'in

the house William built for himself, the Arms are depicted on tiles and on glass painted by his own hand'.



This reference is to the 'Red House' at Bexley in Kent, the house designed and built for Morris in conjunction with his good friend the celebrated architect Phillip Webb. Here we find evidence of William using his paternal Arms. The tiles mentioned are to be found in the porch at the rear of the building set in a panel on the wall. Details of these tiles created by Morris's own hand are shown in the accompanying picture. They are presumably contemporary with the building, dated 1860.

Upon the death of his beloved father in 1848, William paid for the erection of a splendid monument in St Mary's Churchyard, Woodford, which was adjacent to the Old Manor. William had his father's Arms carved upon it. The Arms, as shown in the accompanying picture, have the difference mark for a second son - a Crescent. This is a clear indication that William was proud to adopt his father's Arms. William's mother Emma was also later interred in this grave.



While William did not appear to use his Arms in public, he clearly used them in his home and private life. It may be conjectured that while William took delight in exemplifying the beauty and romance of medievalism in his tapestries, printing and building, he could not reconcile having the right to bear Arms with his Socialist ideals - ideals he came to hold so dear.



The illustration, included herewith, show the ceramic tile panels upon the Ross Wylde building in Hoe Street, Walthamstow. The panels on this building celebrate the Arms of a number of notable people who were once influential in the making of Walthamstow, which included those of Morris.

The coloured version of Morris's Arms that are shown above has been taken from 'The Walthamstow Armorial'. Marshalled and annotated by the late George Roebuck, Borough Librarian, Historian and Heraldist in 1932. Now revised and republished by the Walthamstow Historical Society.

Clive Alexander

For Walthamstow Historical Society publications, contact its Hon. Publications Secretary at 82 Charter Road, Woodford Green, Essex IG8 9RE or alternatively: The Vestry House Museum, Vestry Road, Walthamstow, London E17 9NH. See the Society's website (<http://www.walthamstowhistoricalsociety.org/>) for further details.

What's a Portuguese Queen doing in Limehouse?

Should you ever venture into the far East of our historic county, and walk or ride down Butcher Row, near Limehouse station, you may – if you're sharp – spot a coat of arms in white stone on the front of a late Georgian building.

Closer inspection will reveal the arms of Portugal impaled by the Stuart Royal arms, for this is Catherine of Braganza, the wife of King Charles II. Why she is here is a strange story of monastic survival.

It is almost true that every abbey, priory and hospital was dissolved under Henry VIII. A few precious institutions were preserved, and one of them was St Katherine's by the Tower.

Its saving grace was that it was traditionally under the patronage of the Queens Consort and Queens Dowager of England, having been founded as a hospital for the poor by Matilda, wife of King Stephen, in the twelfth century. It retained this protection under each of Henry's wives and thereafter, receiving special attention from Charles' Queen Catherine, until her death in 1705.



Chapel of St Katherine's by the Tower, 1810

By the early nineteenth century St Katherine's was an extensive spread of mediaeval and later buildings with the population of a small town. But it was a prime waterside site by the Pool of London. The pressure to clear the area for new docks became irresistible, and this ancient institution moved to a neat Gothic precinct among the Nash terraces of Regent's Park. Today the chapel there is a church of the Danish community, but it retains floor slabs commemorating Masters and patrons, and a clerestory frieze of the arms of all the patron Queens up to Mary of Teck.



Queens Matilda of Boulogne and Catherine of Braganza at the Regents Park Chapel



However, by 1948 its role as almshouses was over, and it moved again, to Limehouse, where it now serves as a retreat house and conference centre. Its modern chapel retains many of the furnishings of its mediaeval predecessor, including wooden stalls and panelling bearing the arms of successive masters of the foundation.

At both locations the arms of the Royal Foundation can be seen, with the strange device of half a Catherine wheel.



I leave it to readers to speculate why one of Queen Catherine's supporters is a dragon.

Left: Stalls from St Katherine's by the Tower, at the Foundation's Chapel in Limehouse

Andrew Gray