

Coats of Arms of Some Ricardian Contemporaries

LAWRENCE T. GREENSMITH

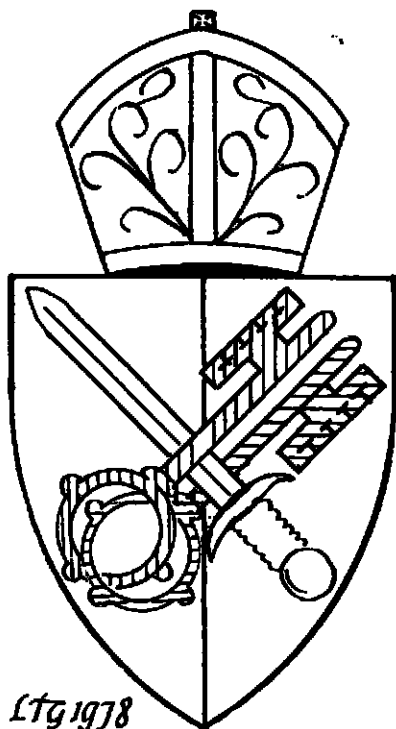
CHERTSEY ABBEY and SURREY EARLDOMS

CHERTSEY (on the Surrey side of the Thames) 'some four miles to the south of Staines . . . ' was the site of a Benedictine Abbey, founded in 666, a noble and splendid pile which occupied four acres of ground and looked like a town.¹ Accounts differ as to whether anything or nothing remains to be seen (perhaps no more than the few stones of Fotheringhay Castle). A King of the Mercians was overlord of Surrey at the time of the foundation and died there. About 200 years later, the Abbey was sacked by the Danes in King Alfred's time. There was no reconstruction until *ca.* 950.²

Domesday Book shows that the estates of the abbey of St Peter were already considerable and not confined to Surrey. By the time of Montfort's Parliament in 1265, there was a mitred abbot as one of its Lords.³

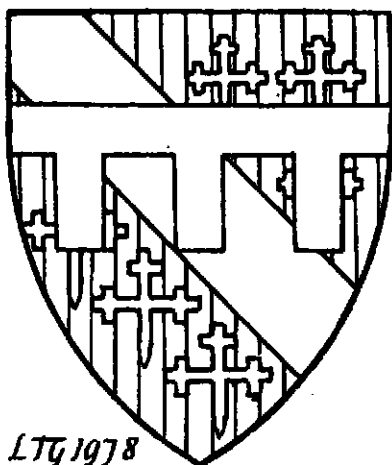
Of Ricardian interest there seems to be nothing, except that the body of King Henry VI, after being shown at St Paul's, was conveyed to Chertsey by

CHERTSEY ABBEY



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HOWARD



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barge. There it remained until it was removed to Windsor by Richard III on 12th August, 1484.⁴ It seems possible that miracles had been reported from the tomb at Chertsey, as they were later at Windsor.⁵

The arms of the abbey are blazoned:⁶ Per pale, gold and silver, two keys addorsed and conjoined at the bows in bend sinister, the upper red the under blue interlaced with a sword in bend dexter of silver hilted and pomelled gold.

If they look familiar, it is because in outline they seem identical with those of the See of Winchester: partially hatched—and better still in full colour—it will be seen that the tinctures are quite different. Further, in arms of places which for evident reasons have 'borrowed' Chertsey's keys they are seen to be in red and blue (but in saltire): in the new arms of Croydon, there are also two swords (again in saltire) of the same tinctures. Croydon's pretty leaflet showing the arms in full and in colour declares that one supporter, a white horse (no, not a pre-incarnation of White Surrey) is from the arms of the ancient Earls of Surrey who for centuries were the county's feudal lords, but nothing seems to confirm this. The new arms of the London Borough of Sutton (as the old ones of Sutton and Cheam) have the keys separately on roundles.

THE EARLS OF SURREY

We do, however, know a little more about the Ricardian Earls of Surrey who—not being the Warennes or FitzAlans of the 12th–14th centuries—were all Howards who became Dukes of Norfolk. The first was Thomas (1443–1524). Son of the first Howard Duke, created Earl of Surrey on the same date his father was created Duke. Thomas was at both Barnet and Bosworth, imprisoned in the Tower for a short time by Henry VII, and in the next reign, became most famous as the victor of Flodden, by which time he was 70. He survived the battle by eleven years. His son, another Thomas (1473–1554), led the van at Flodden, put down the Pilgrimage of Grace, was finally ousted from favour and condemned to death but reprieved by Henry VIII's own death. He survived another seven years and died at the same age as his father.

The arms⁷ in the principal quartering for Howard are: Red, a bend between six cross-crosslets pointed at the foot all silver, each charged with the label of the eldest son. These are the arms of both first and second Thomas in the lifetime of their father. It was the second Thomas who later had the famous Flodden augmentation.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Harold P. Clunn, *The Face of London*, London (1956), p.542.
2. *Victoria County History of Surrey*, Vol. 1, London (1902), pp.329–51.
3. *V.C.H. Surrey*, Vol. 2 (1905), p.61.
4. John Rous, *Historia de Regibus Anglie*, translated by Alison Hanham in *Richard III and his early Historians 1483–1533*, London (1975), p.123.
5. J. H. Ramsay, *Lancaster and York*, Oxford (1892), Vol. 2, p.527, note 4.
6. Bernard Burke, *The General Armory*, London (1884), p.189.
7. C. W. Scott-Giles, *Shakespeare's Heraldry*, London (1950), p.181.