I am indebted to our President for the privilege of reading a Paper on this Corps, which was formerly known as The Band of Gentlemen Pensioners, and of which the earliest historical account is a long memoir, which it is interesting to note was read before the Society of Antiquaries on March 21st 1782,—this appears in Curialia by Samuel Pegge.

After this, Regia Insignia, or an account of the King's Honourable Band of Gentlemen Pensioners, or Gentlemen-at-Arms, by W. M. Thiselton, was published in 1819, and Some Account of the Ancient Corps of Gentlemen-at-Arms, by James Bunce Curling, Clerk of the Cheque, in 1850, while Captain Lord Foley compiled a volume of The Claims and Privileges of His Majesty's Bodyguard, in 1865.

The valuable history produced in 1892 by the late Major Henry Brackensbury, known as The Nearest Guard, however, summarises most of the information available, and I wish to express my grateful acknowledgment to all these works, particularly to the latter.

The exact date of the formation of a Royal Guard is uncertain, but three appear to have been formed since the Conquest—the first in the reign of Richard I following the example of his ally Philip II of France, and the members were consequently known as the Serjeants-at-Arms, but that body eventually lost its military origin, though the Serjeants-at-Arms exist in various forms at the present day.

Henry VII created for the protection of his person in 1485 a Royal Guard known as the Yeomen of the Guard, which consisted of archers and enabled Henry to employ and reward many soldiers who had fought for Lancaster during the Wars of the Roses. This
splendid Corps, which is well known to everyone, has maintained its military character throughout the four hundred years of its existence.

Henry VIII, on succeeding in 1509, formed a new Royal Guard amongst the earliest acts of his reign, which was cavalry, not infantry, like the 'yeomen'; it was recruited from the higher ranks. He was evidently prompted by the example of the French Court where the Royal Guard was known as 'Gentilshommes de l'Hôtel du Roy ou Pensionnaires.' This Corps was first styled as the 'King's Speres,' but, according to Pegge, they were officially styled the 'Band of Gentlemen Pensioners' in about 1526, when the battleaxe was introduced for dismounted work, though they retained their spears when mounted.

This Guard was actively employed in the field within four years of its foundation at the Battle of the Spurs on the 16th August, 1513, by which name the action at Guinegate is more generally known, and also at the Siege of Boulogne in 1544. In 1547 the Band accompanied the Duke of Somerset in the expedition to Scotland, when that campaign was undertaken to further the scheme that Edward VI should be married to Mary Queen of Scots. This expedition is dealt with in a contribution by Sir Charles Oman to our Institute in 1934, to which I wrote an Appendix. It has a somewhat romantic origin, as Sir Charles had discovered some original drawings of an unknown battle which, with his extraordinary knowledge of military history, he was able to locate as that of Pinkie on the 10th September, 1547, and which, curiously enough, I was able to confirm from an engraving in my possession. This was undoubtedly made up from these drawings, and I consider it to be the earliest contemporary engraving of a British battle in my collection, which the State honoured me by accepting as a National Trust. Time does not permit me to give any details, but any members interested will find the article worth reading, in which the original drawings and the engraving to which I referred have been very effectively reproduced.

Incidentally I do not think the Corps could expect
BATTLE OF GUINEGATTE (THE BATTLE OF THE SPURS). FROM AN ENGRAVING OF THE ORIGINAL PICTURE AT HAMPTON COURT PALACE. NOTE THE STANDARD BEARING ST. GEORGE'S CROSS, AND THAT WITH BANDS (RED AND YELLOW), THE TUDOR COLOURS
QUEEN ELIZABETH'S PROCESSION TO BLACKFRIARS
From the engraving by Vertue
this campaign to be recognised in its battle honours, but I certainly feel that Guinegatte and Boulogne should appear on its Standard.

Hall's *Chronicle* and *Archaeologia*, Vols. 3 and 47, supply a great deal of information about these two actions and of the operations in France under Henry VIII, when their first Captain was the Earl of Essex and Sir John Pechie was the Lieutenant. An interesting and, I imagine, practically contemporary picture of the Battle of the Spurs is in Hampton Court Palace, and I had some difficulty in tracing it from the engraving of it in Monstrelet's Chronicles.

This engraving (Pl. i) is by James Basire and was published in 1781 by the Society of Antiquaries, and on it is stated 'From the original picture presented to the Society by His Majesty the King,' but I have to thank the Director of the National Gallery for acquainting me with its location. A reproduction of the picture is in Mr. Baker's catalogue of the pictures at Hampton Court.¹ (Please note Standard of St. George's Cross, and that with Bands (red and yellow), the Tudor colours.)

Sir Anthony Brown was the second Captain and is the only Commoner who has held the office, but he was a great favourite of Henry VIII, who made him a Knight of the Garter.² The well-known set of pictures of the Boulogne Expedition of 1544 were engraved and published by the Society of Antiquaries in the latter part of the eighteenth century, just before the originals were destroyed by fire at the burning of Brown’s splendid seat, Cowdray House, in 1793. In that depicting the Siege of Boulogne the King appears with his Band of Speres, and I would invite attention to the Standards, as the question of the correct Standard for the Corps has been under serious consideration for some time past, a subject I will deal with later on. The Band bears one with the St. George’s Cross, another with St. George and the Dragon, and a third bearing the King’s Arms, namely a Lion Passant, etc.

¹ See p. 149 and Plate xxxi.
² He was subsequently created Viscount Montagu by Queen Mary, in 1554.
In Queen Mary's reign it is recorded that 'the pensioners did notably guard the Queen's person when others for fear fled away' in Sir Thomas Wyatt's insurrection.

The plate of Queen Elizabeth's visit to Blackfriars in 1580 (Pl. ii) is from an original engraving by Vertue in the Mess of the Corps, and shows the dress of the time and the axes, as far as one can rely on the engraver. The original picture was in the possession of Lord Digby, but is believed to be at Coleshill (Colonel Digby's). This I have not had an opportunity of verifying.

Sir Christopher Hatton was a Gentleman Pensioner at that time, and his portrait is reproduced in Thiselton's history of the Corps. He became eventually Captain of the Yeomen, Vice-Chamberlain, a Knight of the Garter and finally High Chancellor in James I's reign.

The appointment of Gentlemen Pensioners was then vested in the hand of the Sovereign, but, unfortunately, during this reign the pernicious practice of the purchase of appointments crept in, and remained in force, in spite of several attempts to abolish it, until 1862.

In the sixteenth century a Guard of soldiers was formed in Ireland to attend the Lord Lieutenant, armed with axes and styled the Battle-Axe Guards, but I have no further information so far about this Corps.

James I did not seem to have any great liking for the Corps and abolished their table, where they dined at his expense, giving them an allowance in lieu.

During the reign of Charles I the Pensioners appear to have been constantly employed in the Civil War, but there is very little record of the occasions. They accompanied the King when he went in person to Parliament to arrest the five members, and on the outbreak of war they escorted His Majesty, and subsequently the Queen, to Oxford.

The Pensioners suffered heavily during the Civil War, especially at Edge Hill and Naseby, and do not appear to have acted so much as a personal escort to
BANQUET OF THE ORDER OF THE GARTER

From Ashmole's History of the Order of the Garter
him but in raising and commanding regiments for his service, and with his death the survivors dispersed.

At Edge Hill his Standard, which was being borne by Sir Edmund Verney, was taken and Captain Smith of the King's Life Guards rode into the enemy's ranks and recovered it. Captain Smith was made a Knight Banneret on the field. This gives the impression that the Pensioners were carrying the Royal Standard, but Sir Edmund Verney did not belong to the Corps.

It is interesting to note, however, that Cromwell had 'a life guard of horse of forty young gentlemen, which was reformed so that twenty be employed as ordinary Pensioners.' This appears in a letter dated March 10th, 1656, from the Dutch Ambassador to the States General.

Under Charles II the Band resumed its position, and twenty-five of his father's original Band appeared to welcome him on his accession. On the 7th February, 1674, the Commons resolved that the keeping of any standing forces other than the militia was a grievance, and that according to law the King ought to have no guard except the Gentlemen Pensioners and the Yeoman of the Guard, and that it was impossible to deliver the nation from a standing army until the Life Guards were pulled up by the roots. The Band was reduced by Charles to forty and has remained at that strength ever since. It is interesting at this period to note that Charles II, by an Act of Council in 1677, gave a Charter to the Corporation of Archers in Scotland, which now bears the title of the Royal Company of Archers, the King's Body Guard in Scotland.

In the reign of James II the rank of Gentlemen-at-Arms received official sanction, and these formed a nucleus from which the Gentlemen Pensioners were selected and became 'Gentlemen Pensioners Extraordinary to the Band' (Pls. iii and iv). In the troublesome times which ended this reign, the Band remained true to the allegiance of King James and as a result the majority were deprived of their places by William III.

With the accession of the House of Hanover the military activities of the Band practically disappeared, but during the rising of 1745 they were warned for
service, and from Pegge an order, which was sent to each member, dated 5th December, 1745, reads as follows:

'The rebels having advanced to Derby, the King has signified his intention to set up his Standard on Finchley Common. You are therefore commanded to acquaint the Gentlemen of the Band to be in readiness with their servants, horses and arms to attend His Majesty there.'

But with the retreat of Charles Edward into Scotland and the collapse of the rising the order was countermanded.

In the earlier part of the nineteenth century, the Corps appears to have worn a Guards uniform with certain variations, which appear in the Orders from time to time and, at the Coronation of George IV in 1821, they were specially dressed, at the King's expense, in a Tudor style, of which illustrations of the Lieutenant and Harbinger (Pls. v b and vi) are given.

In William IV's reign the Corps' name was changed from Gentlemen Pensioners to Gentlemen-at-Arms and their dress was as illustrated in Pl. vii. In 1838, in the reign of Queen Victoria, it is detailed fully in Corps Orders, and the shako was changed to the helmet of the present pattern in 1848, as appears in Pl. viii. This uniform is to all intents and purposes that worn at the present day.

It is interesting to note that the Mr. Samuel Wilson who was Harbinger in 1830 and 1865 was an Alderman and Lord Mayor of London in 1839. The office of Harbinger was abolished when he retired, but was resumed in 1927.

The Corps has been styled by every Sovereign as 'Our Nearest Guard and Principal Military Corps of our Household' and has many privileges, including the right to guard the Sovereign in Coronation processions, and his remains on his decease, which painful privilege we have so recently experienced, also of carrying the second course of the Sovereign's dinner at the banquet at the coronation, and at the installation of the Knights of the Garter, besides duties at

1 See Plate iv.
A. UNIFORM OF THE GENTLEMEN-PENSIONERS IN 1742
From an engraving in the possession of the Corps

B. WILLIAM HENDERSON, LIEUTENANT OF THE CORPS AT THE CORONATION OF GEORGE IV
UNIFORM WORN BY W. M. THISELTON, HARBINGER OF THE CORPS, AT THE CORONATION OF GEORGE IV
Now in the London Museum
Courts, Investitures and the Opening of Parliament, and it is interesting to recall that a special guard of ten, under the Clerk of the Cheque, was on duty at the State Balls at Buckingham Palace in June and July, 1914, to check disturbances by suffragettes.

I now wish to deal briefly with the question of the Standard, which has been for some time a subject of great controversy. The present Standard is that which can be fairly clearly seen on the bookplate of the Corps, and which was worked by the wives and widows of officers and presented by King Edward VII at Buckingham Palace on the 25th June, 1909. This Standard is only carried when the Corps is on duty as a body, one of the occasions being the Opening of Parliament.

But to revert to history, it would appear that the Corps Standard was the St. George's Cross, though, until the Life Guards were raised, one bearing the King's Badge was also borne at times by, or with, the Band of Pensioners.

Patten, in his *The Expedicion into Scotlāde*, published in 1548, says in his description of the Cavalry attack:

'Lyke as also a little before this onset, Syr Thomas Darcy, upon hys approach to the enemies, was strocken glancing wyse on his ryght side, with a bullet of one of their feldepeces . . . About the same time certain of the Scotts ran out hastely to ye Kynges Maiesties Standarde of the horsmen (the whiche Syr Androwe Flammak bare) and laying fast holde upon the staff thereof, cryed a Kyng! a Kynge!

'That if both his strength, hys hart and hys horse had not been good, and hereto somewhat ayded at this purch by Sir Ranulph Coppinger a pencioner: both he had been slain, and the standard lost, whiche the Scottes nevertheless hilde so fast, yt they brake and bare away ye nether ende of the staff to the burrel, and intended so much to the gayne of the stadert, thus Syr Androw (as hap was) skaped home all safe, and is without hurt. . . .

'Hereat further wear Canarley the standard
bearer of the men of armes, and Clemet Paston a
pecioner thrust eche of them into the leg with
pykes: and Don Philip a Spaniard, in ye knee:
dievers others maymed and hurt, and many horses
sore woned besyde.'
From this it is obvious that the King's Standard
was not borne by the Pensioners, Sir Thomas Darcy
was Standard Bearer but was then acting as Captain.
Machyn refers to a muster in 1552 when the King's
great banner of damask, blue and red, was borne by the
King's Pensioners, while Strype refers to one in 1556
when the Standard, which was borne by a man of
arms in front of the pensioners, was red and yellow
and bore on one side a white hart and on the other
side a black eagle with gilded legs, namely one of the
cognisances of the English Queen and the other part
of the armorial bearings of Philip.
The St. George's Cross was undoubtedly its Standard
in the field, as I have shown in the representations
of the Battle of the Spurs and the Siege of Boulogne.
Chamberlayne's Angliae Notitia, that valuable work
of reference which was published between 1669 and
1675, referring to the Gentlemen Pensioners, says, in
the sixth edition, in 1672, 'Their Standard borne in
time of war is a Cross Gules in a Field Argent, also Four
Bends.' It appears as such until 1684 inclusive, but
from the 1687 edition onwards it always appears as
a Cross Gules in a Field Argent. I am indebted for
this to Mr. Morshead, the Librarian at Windsor Castle,
who thinks that possibly 'Four Bends' may refer to a
second flag. Though there is no record of this, some
of the historic descriptions might lead one to that
supposition, for instance, the Standards shown in
the Battle of the Spurs, 1513, are the St. George's
Cross and one with bands of red and yellow, the Tudor
colours.
Brook's Army List of 1684, an extremely scarce
publication, shows the band of Gentlemen Pensioners
on page one, before the Household Troops, giving the
details of the Officers and members and stating that
' the usual arms they do duty with are gilt battle-
axes, and that their Standard is St. George's Cross in a
UNIFORM OF THE GENTLEMEN-AT-ARMS IN THE REIGN OF WILLIAM IV
From an engraving in the possession of the Corps
UNIFORM OF THE GENTLEMEN-AT-ARMS IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN VICTORIA

From an engraving in the possession of the Corps
Field Argent with Four Bends,' but I understand from the Garter King-at-Arms that he considers the Four Bends have no heraldic connection with the Corps of Pensioners, which accounts, I am sure, for their omission in the latter editions of Chamberlayne.

A design exists for a Standard which was made in 1639 (Charles I), which appears to have been found amongst some MSS. in 1790. It follows the usual heraldic design for banners of the period, and substantiates the St. George's Cross, adding the emblems of the axes and the rose, thistle, harp, etc.

With the advent of the Horse and Life Guards, the Royal Standard appears to have been borne by someone in those Regiments. Each Regiment has a Royal Standard, which is carried only when a Sovereign's escort is furnished, whereas the ordinary Regimental Standards are used on Escort, Guard, or other duties.

The Royal Standard which followed King George V's coffin was found by the Blues, and it seems incon-
ceivable that the Band of Pensioners should have lost, or transferred, that privilege without some definite record being in existence, as is the case in all its other claims.

Consequently, with all submission, I feel justified in suggesting the design in Fig. 1 as an appropriate one for the Corps, though, unfortunately, the King's cipher has been changed since it was prepared. I think also that we are legitimately entitled to bear the battle honours of 'Guinegatte, 1513,' which was known as the Battle of the Spurs, and 'Boulogne, 1544,' with the badge of its illustrious founder, Henry VIII.

APPENDIX I

THE GENTLEMAN-AT-ARMS

By Sir Charles Oman, K.B.E., President.

The very distinguished little corps of the Gentlemen-at-Arms was obviously intended to be a real fighting unit, whenever the Sovereign took the field. Henry VIII required heavy cavalry, because the cavalry arm had in the recent wars of the sixteenth century recovered the importance which it had lost in the fifteenth. All English Sovereigns had habitually taken the field for the last three centuries—even the unwarlike Henry VI had been seen in armour, and was actually wounded at the first battle of St. Albans.

The one thing that could not have been foreseen was that after the death of Edward VI in 1553 the crown should have passed to females for a full fifty years. Obviously Mary I and Elizabeth could not go campaigning in France as their ancestors had done, though both sent contingents to foreign wars. Their personal body-guard, therefore, had no chance of going into action, and became more and more decorative as the years went on. If the successors of Edward VI had been males of belligerent tastes, no doubt their bodyguard would have developed into a 'guard cavalry' such as was seen in France; and have become an important unit in a standing army. But no standing army was established, and no sovereign went to the wars—James I could not stand the sight of a drawn sword—for nearly a century. Between Henry VIII's siege of Boulogne in 1544 and Charles I's unhappy appearance in front of the Scots in 1640 no King of England took the field. This fact had many results—among them the chance that the original royal horse-bodyguard did not discharge the purpose for which it was primarily intended.
APPENDIX II

THE AXES OF THE GENTLEMEN-AT-ARMS

By MARTIN R. HOLMES

There is a tradition that the axes carried by the Gentlemen-at-Arms were once part of the equipment of the so-called Invincible Armada. The belief is picturesque rather than correct, and an enquiry into the history of the weapons may result in a suggestion as to the rumour's origin.

The axes now used may be assigned to the early part of the eighteenth century (Pl. ix). The picture of a gentleman-at-arms of 1742 shows an axe of the type still preserved at St. James's and illustrated here, the flamboyant partisan-head surmounting an axe-blade, and pointed 'hammer-back,' painted blue and gilded in crude imitation of fine inlaid steel. Pegge, in his Curialia, states that 'In the reign of Charles II, the axes seem entirely to have assumed their present shape, as we may discern from the representation of a Procession of the Knights of the Garter, by Ashmole' (cited by Curling, Some Account of the Hon. Corps of Gentlemen-at-Arms, p. 196, footnote), but this does not seem to be entirely accurate, as Curialia was published at the end of the eighteenth century, when axes of the new type had been in use for some years. The axes in the illustration referred to are, in essentials, those depicted in Sandford's Coronation Procession of James II, and in a similar representation of the coronation procession of William and Mary. The hammer-head, with its several prongs, is still to be observed, but the axe-blade is replaced by a point like that of a war-hammer, or bec-de-faucon. This form, with the single point on one side and the group of three or four on the other, is shown in the well-known picture of Queen Elizabeth going to Blackfriars, and probably represents the original type of weapon carried, since there was, as Pegge points out in Curialia, a close correspondence between these 'Gentlemen of the Axe' and the 'Gentilshommes du bec de corbin' of the corresponding royal bodyguard of France. It is also seen in the queen's funeral roll.

The old name of 'the king's spears' must not be taken too closely as an indication of the nature of the weapon. In the Middle Ages a 'lance' meant a man of some standing and his attendants, and denoted not an individual but a group. Similarly, each unit of 'the King's spears' consisted of a gentleman-pensioner, a servant or coustil, a demy-lance and an archer, and the pensioner's weapon when dismounted was, properly speaking, not the spear but the war-hammer or axe. Sir Charles Oman has pointed out that the sovereigns who followed Henry VIII were in succession a boy and two women, none of whom was likely to venture personally into battle. Consequently, in the course of the second half of the sixteenth century the functions of the bodyguard were little more than those of an escort. It is not surprising, therefore, to find the practical war-hammer superseded by the more decorative processional axe with a spear-
point above, such as had grown on to bill and halberd in the course of time.

Paul Hentzner, a German traveller who visited England in 1598, twice refers to these weapons. In Horace Walpole's translation, we read that in the Tower Hentzner saw 'a great many rich halberds, commonly called partuisans, with which the guard defend the Royal person in battle,' and that when he saw Queen Elizabeth at Greenwich 'she was guarded on each side by the Gentlemen Pensioners, fifty in number, with gilt battle-axes.' Here the translator has made the passages less direct than the original, for Walpole calls the weapons 'halberds' in one place and 'battle-axes' in another, but Hentzner's Latin uses the same word, *hastae*, each time. Similarly the word *satellites* is used both times in the original, but is varyingingly translated 'guard' and 'gentlemen pensioners.'

It may be asked how the weapons of the Corps could be at one time at Greenwich and the Tower. The most probable explanation is that the processional weapons of the Gentlemen Pensioners were taken out of the great supply of decorated pole-arms in the Royal Armouries. A manuscript in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries, published in *Archaeologia* 51 by the late Lord Dillon, gives a list of arms and armour including several hundred 'Morris pikes garnished with velvet and parcel-gilt heads,' removed from Westminster to the Tower in 1547, and these must have formed a useful source of supply when decorated processional-weapons were needed. Many of the items in this list appear again among the objects noted by Hentzner in the Tower, and formed the nucleus of what in later years was called the 'Spanish Armoury.' This name seems first to have been applied to it in the late seventeenth century, merely because of the Spanish origin of many of the weapons, but in the following century the legend arose that the collections were spoil from the Armada, and in a guide-book of 1753 occurs a description of 'The Spanish Ranceurs . . . At the Back is a Spike, with which they tell you they were to pick the Roast Beef out of the Englishmen's Teeth.'

By this time, as Colonel Crookshank has shown, the present axes had come into use. It is not improbable that, with the reorganization of the armoury in the early eighteenth century, it became impracticable to borrow weapons from it indiscriminately for decorative purposes. This, accordingly, would lead to the provision of special weapons for the Corps, processional axes retaining the pronged hammer-head of tradition, but merely painted to imitate the blued steel and gilding of those Spanish originals to which the Armada-legend was first applied.
A BATTLE-AXE OF THE CORPS
(Length 6 ft. 9¼ ins.)
THE FUNERAL-PROCESSION OF QUEEN ELIZABETH, APRIL 28, 1603. FROM *Vetusta Monumenta*, III, PL. 23, ENGRAVED FROM A DRAWING BY WILLIAM CAMDEN, CLARENCEUX KING AT ARMS.

'Gentlemen Pencioers holding their pol-axe handle downwards covered all with black'