

II.—NOTES ON THE OLD GLASS IN ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.

[Read on 22nd February, 1922.]

I. By R. J. S. BERTRAM.

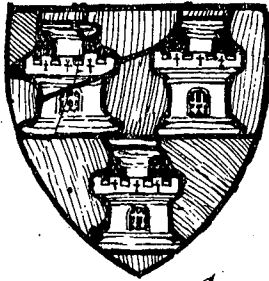
These notes refer only to the glass in the north chancel window and a shield with the Percy arms affixed to the centre light of the north window on the east side of the north transept. In this glass certainly six different periods are represented, ranging in date from about 1350 to 1848.

First period, 1350-75. The earliest pieces are apparently the medallions at the top of the first and third lights, counting from west to east. The medallion in the third light (fig. c) contains a black shield which bears in white a rebus of William Hutton: there is a **W** in the dexter chief; an **H** placed vertically, and a **E** placed transversely are interlaced on the field, and a small tun appears in sinister chief. The units employed are the same as these carved on the shield at the junction of the inner drip moulds of the two western arches of the north nave arcade, though arranged in a slightly different manner. According to Brand this same rebus occurred with the addition of two fuller's clubs in the south-east window of the south transept. As the north nave arcade was erected about 1350, this work may be assigned to about that time. The companion medallion (fig. a) bears the interlaced letters **W** placed vertically and **E** placed transversely: the dark background is relieved by boldly scratched tendril ornament. In both medallions the border consists of beads between concentric circles and the space between shield and border is filled with conventional leaves; silver stain is applied to heighten the effect.

The small pieces (fig. g) of which I found three, are certainly as early as, if not earlier than 1350. The same pattern is to be seen in a window at St. Ouen, Rouen,. From similarity of treatment I assign to about 1375 the Thornton Shield (fig. 2); the shield with letters T.G. (fig. 3), which was reversed on insertion in its present position, the very beautiful shield with the arms of Newcastle (fig. 1) and the *vesica* shaped panel with the Virgin Mary (fig. f). The arms of Newcastle are fine in design, the castles are bold and effective when viewed at a distance and interesting in detail at close range, the gateway high above the base and the central towers, without visible means of support, show how decorative effect was considered of more importance by the artist than literal truth. The glass of the field is a rich deep red of striated texture. The Virgin Mary panel in the third light has a background of red glass similar in colour and texture to the Newcastle shield, and a border of blue varying to purple. The figure, halo, and drapery are all on white glass painted and shaded very delicately. Her robe is edged with a border of braid and pearls and fastened at the neck with a large round brooch. Her hair and curious elliptic halo as well as brooch and dress decorations are stained a lemon yellow.

Second period, 1400—1430. The Percy shield (fig. 7), now in the north transept may be definitely dated near 1400. In Brand's time this shield was incorporated in the Great East Window of the chancel. As at present suspended the painting is on the outside of the glass; so evidently the shield should be reversed. The arms are of fine design and execution; the leading is very skilful, and the spots of red given by the lions' mouths and tongues, most effective. The backgrounds of first and fourth quarters are diapered with small circles.

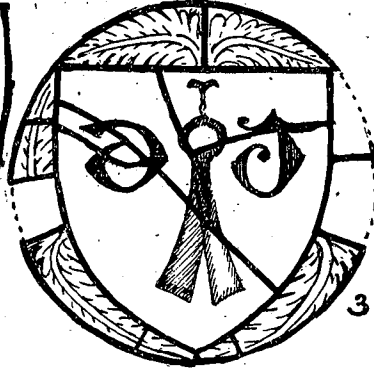
Of the same period is the fragment of glass (fig. 8) inserted upside down, beneath, and to the left of the upper medallion in the first light. I have attempted a restoration. It shows the arms of



1



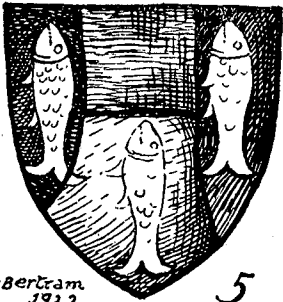
2



3

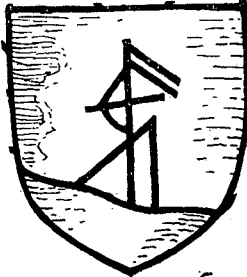


4



5

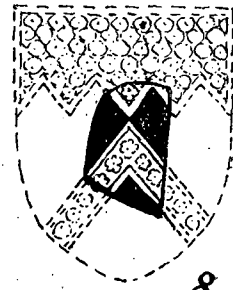
R Bertram
1912



6



7



8

Thornton as they appear in Brand's illustration of the Thornton tomb in All-Hallows 1429. The chevron and chief are diapered with little flower-like forms:

Third period, 1450—1475. Fragments of many quarries in outline and yellow stain are dispersed throughout the window. There are twenty-three pieces showing a broad yellow border with a five-petalled flower in the centre of each quarry (fig. m) three pieces with border and monogram (fig. n) and two pieces with border and conventional four-pointed ornament (fig. o). In all these pieces connecting stems are absent and the flower or other feature is an isolated detail in the centre of its quarry. A characteristic mid-fifteenth century treatment.

The crowns (fig. h) of which there are fourteen and a C or S two portions, are units from the coloured borders that surrounded these quarries.

(Fig. e) the lower medallion, in the centre light, in outline, painted bears the letters I H C ; Boyle says they are surrounded by a crown of thorns—in reality there is a curious tree-like plant, very roughly drawn with branches intertwined in such a manner as to resemble a crown of thorns, but bearing a species of foliage somewhat like oak leaves. The design is roughly stained yellow in parts. There is lettering at the base, as stated by Boyle, but it is very badly done.

The upper Medallion in the centre light, also in outline and stain, represents an angel robed in white, wearing a crown and holding an open scroll. The wings are outspread and feathered alternately gold and white: the background is bright red. The lower medallion in the first light (fig. d) in outline and stain, represents the Resurrection. Our Lord partly draped in a freely flowing garment with Dürer-like folds, rises from a grave; in his left hand he carries a staff with a cross, on each side a startled soldier springs up and a still recumbent person is indicated on the left. Hills are repre-



R. Bertram
1922

sented in the background. This medallion has rather a Dutch appearance. The fragmentary head (fig. k) seems of late 15th or early 16th century.

Fourth period, 1509—1603. The remains of this period are particularly interesting as they include certain fragments of the royal arms, mentioned by Brand. There are several fragments of a diaper pattern based on a series of circles ornamented with *fleurs-de-lis*, in outline and yellow stain. Two of these fragments are contiguous (fig. p) and across them is a portion of either one or two wings, according as the fragments should be placed, evidently a portion of the sinister supported. The small piece (fig. q) resembles a lion's paw. Brand says the dexter supporter 'seems a lion.' Evidently the next piece (fig. t) is a portion of the mantling. There is a suggestion of the border used with this work in the seven fragments of Renaissance design (fig. l) and the six or seven portions of a laurel wreath (fig. r) may be of the same date. There is one piece of foliage (fig. s) Tudor in character and another piece of the same date, evidently based on the earlier fragment shown in figure g. All these fragments are of inferior workmanship. The figures adoring in the centre light beneath the lower medallion (fig. e) may be of the same date, but they are so faded that it is difficult to determine their period.

Fifth period, 1820. The large fragments in the centre light (fig. j) are the remains of a window mentioned in Mackenzie as 'A brilliant specimen of painted glass representing Jésus Christ with the Cup of the Last Supper was lately inserted in this window [the East Window]. It was executed by Mr. John Gibson, an ingenious ornamental and house painter, who has paid much attention to the long-neglected art of enamelling in-glass.' This work is apparently a last flicker of the Reynolds influence. It was inserted about 1820, very shortly before the Gothic revival. The treatment reminds one of the work of Peckitt of York. In many

ways the artist may have been mistaken, but he was undoubtedly a good draughtsman, the composition does not lack dignity, and the colour of Christ's robes, pale blue over pink, is quite pleasing. The bread in his left hand is applied in dark enamel, the chalice is stained bright yellow and the platter bright orange. Of the head only two ringlets on the shoulder remain, though the leading of the mass is still in *situ*, fitted with incongruous fragments.

Sixth period, 1848. Most of the glass below the thick saddle-bar and line of lettering is in small pieces, apparently the gleanings of a workshop in 1848.

2. THE INSCRIPTIONS. By A. Hamilton Thompson, M.A., F.S.A.

Portions of inscriptions have been leaded into the window ; but these are very fragmentary, and, although their general form is obvious, the words essential to their real interest are wanting. The horizontal band composed of the principal fragments consists of pieces of three, or possibly four, separate inscriptions. (a) The panes in the western light contain the remains of an inscription in small black letter, probably of the first half of the fifteenth century, as follows: (1) *bus Thome* (2) *g [?]* (3) *or[um] ac p[ro]* (4) *genitor* (5) *u* (6) *c p[ro] a [n]i[m]abus i*

(b) In the middle light is the inscription *Saluator M* upside down in large black letter. This is obviously modern : the lettering is of the correct and featureless type used by the artists of the early Gothic revival, and is contemporary with the modern pieces of glass referred to by Mr. Bertram. The inscription, of course, was *Saluator Mundi*, and was intended to be placed under a figure of our Lord. A pane in another part of the window, with the letters *that*, is of the same date, and so also may be some of the small groups of letters elsewhere in the medley of glass.

(c) Next this, also upside down, is *et quor* in black letter larger

and coarser than that in (a). This belongs to a late fifteenth-century inscription.

(d) In the eastern light are two panes with a portion of an English inscription in lettering of the same character and approximately the same date as (c) : (1) *yff' of W[?]ill'm hi*. The last letter appears to be the first stroke of *u*. The first word is [w]yff', *i.e.* wife.

(e) Two other fragments remain in the same light, but the black pigment is much perished. One appears to be a surname, probably *Poclin*[gton]; but the other has been reversed and is no longer legible.

Other fragments which remain are mere letters or groups of two or three letters which cannot be read into any scheme. It need hardly be said that the old inscriptions of which traces survive are memorial inscriptions, and the original form of (a) is approximately clear, *viz.* : *Orate pro animabus Thome*¹ *et* *ac pro animabus illorum*² *omnium benefactorum ac progenitorum*. The words *ac pro animabus* are probably those mentioned by Brand as being legible in the east window in his day; but *ac*, not *et*, is the conjunction employed.

It has been noted that the figure of our Lord at the Last Supper in the middle light has much in common with the work of William Peckitt (1731—1795); the celebrated York glass-painter, both in drawing and colouring. In both these respects it may be compared with a good example of his figure-work in the south aisle of the church of Yarm, which is a replica of one of the figures executed by him for the west window (now removed) of Exeter cathedral. At the same time, there are points in the colouring of the figure in St. John's which have a somewhat different character

¹ The letter, apparently *g*, on a small triangular pane after *Thome* is an insertion which does not belong to this part of the original inscription.

² The word which follows *animabz* begins with *i*. *Illorum* seems probable. The inscription must have contained a second name, doubtless that of the wife of Thomas.

from that of most of his work ; and Mr. Bertram has shown that it is due to a later painter who, like Peckitt, modelled his designs on the French and Flemish glass of the previous century.

3. THE SHIELDS. By C. H. Hunter Blair, M.A., F.S.A.

There are six³ shields in the window, three of them are armorial, one bears a merchant's mark, whilst two display, one with initials, the tools or instruments of their owner's craft or trade. They illustrate well the lines of the fourteenth century poem⁴ which tells of windows :

Shynen with shapen sheldes
To shewen aboute
With merks of merchauntes
Y- medeled betweene

They were all, when Brand⁵ wrote his history of the town, in the east window of the chancel, though that may not have been their original position. They were probably put in their present place in 1848 when the south and east walls of the chancel were rebuilt.⁶ The topmost armorial shield⁷ in the western light is of richly coloured red glass charged with three silver castles ; the arms of Newcastle, *gules three castles silver*. They differ, however, from the usual form. The gateway is here guarded by a partially lowered portcullis with two spikes and each castle has only one turret in place of the three which have invariably crowned them from the first common seal⁸ of the town onwards to modern times. This shield of arms judging from its shape and the quality and colour of

³ This is in addition to the two small sable shields with monograms at the top of the east and west lights which have been described by Mr. Bertram, *ante* p. 35.

⁴ The Creed of Piers Plowman, line 347.

⁵ *History of Newcastle*, 1, 109, note r.

⁶ Knowles and Boyle, *Vestiges of Old Newcastle and Gateshead*, p. 160.

⁷ Illustration p. 37, no. 1.

⁸ See 'Catalogue of Durham Seals,' *Arch. Ael.*, 3 ser., xvi, plate 71, nos. 3738-3741.

the glass cannot be of later date than the beginning of the fifteenth century. It is, therefore, of supreme interest not only for its great beauty but because it is the earliest existing example of the arms of the town. The only other example of like early date, a record of which has come down to us, was carved in stone, at the sinister side of the royal shield of Edward III, on the north front of the barbican built in front of the Newgate towards the end of the fourteenth century.⁹ This unfortunately disappeared when the gate was destroyed in 1823; the royal shield, happily, is still preserved in the basement of the keep.¹⁰ No record remains telling when the town first adopted this shield of arms, but it is not likely that it would be much, if at all, earlier than the end of the fourteenth century. It is tempting to think that it might have been in 1391, the year king Richard II granted that the mayor (William Bishopdale) and his successors should, for their greater honour, have a sword carried before them.¹¹ Or it may not have been till 1400 when, by charter of king Henry IV, the town became the county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne with the right to elect its own sheriff¹²; later than this, the shield set up in this window tells us, it could not be. The earliest official record of these arms, I know of, is dated 16 August, 1575, when William Flower, Norroy king of arms, spoilt the fine simplicity of this "most ancient" shield by decorating it with an impossible crest and unnecessary supporters.¹³ Richard St. George, also Norroy king, at his visitation of 1615, blasons the shield as it is now used, *gules, three castles triple turreted silver*.¹⁴

Beneath this shield, in the same light,¹⁵ is now very properly

⁹ Richardson's *Local Historians' Table Book—Historical*, III, 271. See also etching by T. M. Richardson, 'Newgate as seen in 1823.'

¹⁰ *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Newc.*, 3rd ser., I, 277.

¹¹ *The Mayoralty of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, by A. M. Oliver, p. 15.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹³ Printed in Brand, *op. cit.* II, 183.

¹⁴ *Visitations of Northumberland*, Ed. Foster, p. 1. Also *The Genealogist*, I, 250.

¹⁵ Illustration, p. 37, no 2.

placed that of Roger Thornton one of the greatest of the town's mediaeval merchants, one of the most munificent of its benefactors and its first mayor after the charter of 1400.¹⁶ In shape, this shield is identical with that of the town and was doubtless like it set up at the very beginning of the fifteenth century. It is a fine boldly drawn example of the Thornton arms blasoned *sable a chevron and a chief indented silver*. The deeply indented chief, of only two indents, and the bold way in which the point of the chevron cuts into the chief shew that it cannot be later than the above-named date ; indeed it is more typical of fourteenth century armorial art than of that which followed it. The style of this later art is shewn on his brass in All Hallows church¹⁷ (*circa* 1430), on the painted screen in Hexham priory church,¹⁸ and on the seal of his son attached to a deed of 1439. On all these examples the chief is narrower with more and less deep indentures, the chevron being more flattened out and not rising so high towards the chief.

The last armorial shield¹⁹ is the third one in the eastern light. The colours upon it have been badly fired so that the charges are now almost obliterated, but enough remains to shew that it should be blasoned *silver three salmon paleways silver*, the well-known Northumbrian shield of Orde.²⁰ It is obviously later than the two we have been considering and probably dates from either late in the fifteenth or from the first years of the succeeding century. It is not possible now to say for whom it was set up. The three remaining shields in the window are not armorial. The first²¹ of this type is in the western light beneath the Thornton shield. Its field

¹⁶ Manuscript list of the mayors of Newcastle by A. M. Oliver (unpublished). Also Brand, *op. cit.* I, p. 11 and 382 ; Welford's *History of Newcastle*, I, *passim* and the same author's *Men of Mark 'twixt Tyne and Tweed*, III, p. 517.

¹⁷ *Vestiges of Old Newcastle*, *op. cit.* plate 228.

¹⁸ *The Abbey of St. Andrew, Hexham*, by C. C. Hodges.

^{18a} See illustration, p. 84. ¹⁹ Illustration, p. 37, no. 5.

²⁰ 'The Armorial of Northumberland,' *Arch. Ael.* 3rd ser. VI, p. 123.

²¹ Illustration, p. 37, no. 3.

is silver, and upon it, in sable, are the letters in ornamental capitals T.G. ; between them is an object of an indeterminate nature, but which is probably a tool or instrument used in the owner's craft or trade ; like the previous shield it has been badly fired and the charges upon it are now very indistinct. When the shield was placed here the glass was fixed wrong side in so that the letters now appear in a reverse position. The memory of T.G. is lost, we do not know who he was, but the shield probably commemorates a benefactor of the church who lived in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. The next shield²² of this type is the second from the top in the eastern light. It is coloured azure and upon it is depicted a pair of open shears silver, carefully designed to fit into the shape of the shield, between the open blades is a leopard's face gold. It appears to date about the same time as the previous shield and doubtless is a memorial of a tailor or clothworker ; the shears are obviously those used by a tailor and the leopard's face is, I think, taken from the shield of the Weaver's company. In the lower part of the same light is the third²³ non-armorial shield, it is of deep blue glass charged with a merchant's mark. This is of the usual type of these marks used from the beginning of the fourteenth to the end of the sixteenth centuries. It is probably of late fifteenth century date, but there is nothing by which the owner can now be identified. These well defined marks were in all probability originally used to identify merchandise, later they came to be the personal mark or sign of their owner and were often for want of true arms, placed as here, upon a shield.²⁴ They were used by traders of all ranks and were by no means confined to the wealthy merchant class. Like armorials they sometimes became hereditary and, differenced by some slight change, were used by different

²² Illustration p. 37, no. 4. ²³ *Ibid.* no. 6.

²⁴ *Norfolk and Norwich Arch. Soc.* III, 177. *Trans. Hist. Soc. Lancas. and Ches.*, LXII, p. 1 ; *Proc. Clifton Antiq. Soc.*, VII, 97. All with numerous illustrations.

branches of the same family. The cross was almost always the chief motive of the device, it usually had two or more streamers floating from it but these were, like the design always of straight lines or lines drawn at an angle to each other, curves were very rarely used, though sometimes, a circle was placed at the intersection of the cross or the initials of the owner worked into the device. It has been suggested that they were first used by wool merchants upon their bales and that they derive their motive from the cross with streamers borne by the Holy Lamb, the symbol of St. John Baptist, the patron saint of these merchants.²⁵ Strictly speaking, such marks and instruments of trade ought not to be charged upon shields, though from quite early in the fourteenth century it was not at all uncommon for them to be so displayed by merchants, craftsmen and traders who had no proper arms. This was done in spite of the herald's attempts to prevent it; as early as 1454 a writer speaking of a merchant's mark borne on a shield remarks 'they be non armes but a marke such as Marchaunts use.'²⁶ Similarly, writing in 1606, Francis Thynne, Lancaster herald, mentions among the duties of a herald 'to prohibit any merchant or any other to put their names, marks or devices in escutcheons or shields which belong only and appertain to gentlemen bearing arms and none other.'²⁷

In Brand's time²⁸ (*circa* 1788) there was a shield of the royal arms in the middle light of the east window of the chancel; of this there remain only two fragments of the lion supporter's claws,²⁹ two small parts of the dragon supporter's wing,³⁰ and a piece of the helm mantling.³¹ From the description he gives of it and its supporters, it evidently bore the arms used by the sovereigns of the house of

²⁵ *Proc. Soc. of Antiq. of London*, 2nd ser., XII, 10.

²⁶ Harl. MS. 2259 quoted in *Trans. Hist. Soc. Lancas. and Chesh.* LXII, p. 5.

²⁷ Hearne's *Collection of Curious Discourses*, I, 153. ²⁸ *Op. cit.* I, 109, note R.

²⁹ Illustration, p. 39, no. q. ³⁰ *Ibid.* no. p. ³¹ *Ibid.* no. t.

Tudor 1485—1603.³³ He blasons the shield with the leopards of England in the first and fourth quarters, but this is probably an error of one who was not a learned herald. The shield was supported on the dexter by a lion, on the sinister by a dragon. These beasts were rarely, if ever, used by Henry VII, who preferred the dragon of Wales for his dexter supporter and for the sinister the greyhound of Beaufort; in memory of his mother the lady Margaret.³⁴ Henry VIII and his Tudor successors regularly used the lion and dragon such as were here depicted; but, judging from the few fragments remaining, it seems most probable that the shield bore the arms of queen Elizabeth. Mr. Bertram has also found, amongst the fragments in the lower part of the eastern light, two pieces of glass which must have formed part of another Thornton shield. From them he has drawn a conjectural restoration of it.³⁵ The chief and chevron are finely diapered with small cinquefoils and from its general style and shape it would appear to be of rather later date than the similar shield already described. There remains yet one other armorial shield³⁶ in ancient glass in this church; at the end of the eighteenth century it was in the south light of the great east window, but, more fortunate than the royal shield, it has been preserved and is now in the centre light of the east window of the north transept. It displays Lucy and Percy quarterly, but the glass has been reversed so that it should appear I and IV Percy, II and III Lucy.³⁷ From the nature and colour of the glass and the style of the charges there can be little doubt that it represents Henry Percy (1368—1407), the fourth lord Percy of Alnwick and the first earl of Northumberland,³⁸ and that it was set up about the

³³ *Leopards of England*, by E. E. Dorling, p. 20.

³⁴ *Armorial in Kings College Chapel, Cambridge*, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

³⁵ Illustration, p. 37, no. 8. ³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 37, no. 7.

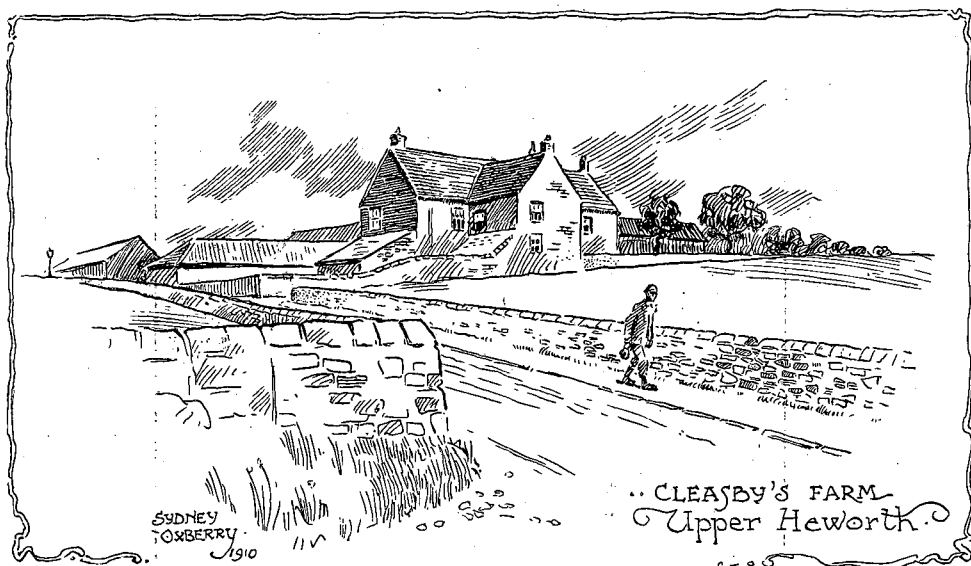
Brand, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

³⁷ 'Catalogue of Durham Seals,' no. 1963. Willement's *Roll of Richard II*, p. 6, no. 39

'Le conte de Northumberland, Sr. de Lucy,' arms as above.

³⁸ Doyle, *The Official Baronage of England*, II, 644.

beginning of the fifteenth century. Henry married; *circa* 1384, Maud; widow of Gilbert Umfraville, sister and heiress of Anthony lord Lucy. The well-known agreement, by which the Percys quarter the Lucy arms need not be recited here.³⁹ The earl himself would quarter the arms as lord of Cockermouth in right of his wife. In the north and south lights of this window there are two modern shields of arms displayed, but they do not come within the scope of this paper.



see page 52.

³⁹ Fine Roll, 8 Richard II; *Arch. Ael.*, 2nd ser., IV, 174.