

GLOUCESTER CIVIC INSIGNIA: WITH NOTES ON MACES  
OF THE TIME OF THE COMMONWEALTH.<sup>1</sup>

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The insignia of the city of Gloucester, if they do not make such a brave display as those of Bristol, or Norwich, or Southampton, or Hull, have a special interest of their own which, so far as I know, is not shared by the insignia of any other city or town of Great Britain. This special interest lies in the fact that although within the last four centuries the maces have been re-fashioned as many times, by an exceptional chain of evidence we are able not only to indicate the several maces possessed by the city from time to time, but we actually have representations showing their form and ornaments. The city sword, too, by no means presents to us its original appearance, yet in this case also we could, if necessary, reproduce various ornaments that have been superseded by those now adorning it.

That the city of Gloucester is one of the most important and historically interesting of our cities is a matter of common knowledge. It is mentioned as a borough in Domesday Book, but its first charter of definite municipal privileges was not granted until the reign of Henry II., probably about the year 1155. By a charter of King John granted in 1200, and confirmed by Henry III. in 1227, the government of the town was vested in two bailiffs or provosts. By Richard III. a new charter was granted in 1483, by which the town was declared to be a county of and by itself, and its governing body was ordained to be a mayor, two sheriffs, and other officers. By Henry VIII., upon the creation of the bishopric of Gloucester, the town was raised to the rank of a city. The early charters were confirmed and enlarged from time to time, the last one previous to that of

<sup>1</sup> Read at Gloucester, August 14th, 1890.

the Reform of 1835 being one granted in 1672 by Charles II., under which the Corporation consisted of a mayor and eleven other aldermen, an indefinite number of common councillors, not to exceed forty, a recorder, two sheriffs, a coroner, town clerk, chamberlain, sword-bearer, four sergeants-at-mace, a water-bailiff, provost-marshal, and other officers.

Of the time when maces were first borne before the bailiffs of Gloucester we have no record, but such a practice had become common generally before the middle of the fourteenth century, for in 1344 the Parliament passed an Act to restrain all sergeants save the King's from carrying maces tipped with silver, and ordained that they should carry "maces tipped with copper only and of no other metal, and wooden staves as they were wont to carry in olden times." Maces were, however, certainly used in Gloucester as early as 1429, for in that year, by a composition made between the abbey and the town, it was agreed amongst other things that the sergeants-at-mace should carry their maces before the bailiffs into the abbey church. At this time I think there can be little doubt that there were two maces only, one for each bailiff. By the charter of Richard III., granted in 1483, the number of sergeants was increased to four, the two who had formerly preceded the bailiffs being now assigned to the newly-created mayor, and the other two to precede the newly-appointed sheriffs. We now see why Gloucester has four maces, for the four sergeants each carried one, two being borne before the mayor, and one before each sheriff. The case of Gloucester also serves well to explain why some cities and towns have four maces, some two, and others only one. Where a mayor and sheriffs have succeeded two bailiffs there are usually four maces; when a mayor only takes the place of two bailiffs we often find two maces; and one mace implies either, as in the case of London, that there has been a mayor from the first, or, as at Derby, that the two bailiffs' maces were made into one on the creation of the mayoralty. I need not here discuss such exceptional cases as the eight maces of Bristol, where the mayor was preceded by four sergeants and each sheriff by two.

What the earliest Gloucester maces were like there is no evidence to show, but they probably did not differ much from the first of which we have any actual representation. This brings us to the interesting part of my story.

In 1564 the city of Gloucester caused to be made a new common seal. Its device consists chiefly of a large shield of the extraordinary arms granted by Christopher Barker, Garter, in 1538; but on each side of this shield is depicted a pair of the city maces. Although they barely exceed five-eighths of an inch in length, these small figures enable us clearly to understand the general type and form of the originals, which could not have differed much from the beautiful contemporary maces at Winchcomb.

In addition to the 1564 seal, two other representatives of the early maces exist.

The first is on part of Blackfriars, built by Sir Thomas Bell shortly after his purchase of the buildings in 1539, and consists of a shield bearing two crossed maces. Bell was twice mayor of Gloucester, and so there was no impropriety in his setting up a shield with the two maces that were borne before him; they differ somewhat in form from those on the 1564 seal, and may represent an earlier pair of maces.

The other representation of the maces is an exceedingly interesting one. In the south aisle of St. Nicholas' church is the tomb of John Walton, alderman of Gloucester, who died in 1625. Over the tomb is a shield of the city arms granted by Barker in 1538, but differenced by the substitution of a pair of crossed maces for the city sword and sword-bearer's hat on the pale. These maces closely resemble those on the 1564 seal, and may, I think, be taken as evidence of these particular maces having continued in use until at least 1626. Shortly afterwards, I have not yet been able to find the exact year, four new maces were made; the old maces were then disused, and in 1642 were sold, with the old mayoralty seal and various pieces of the city plate, and the money spent in strengthening the city fortifications.

Although the new maces in their turn no longer exist, a fortunate accident enables us to say what they were like

In the cathedral church of Gloucester, at the west end of the south aisle of the nave, is an alabaster monument, rich with painting and gilding, to alderman John Jones, who was mayor in 1597, 1618, and 1625, and died in 1630. On each side of the monument is a small bracket, and on each bracket stands, carved in alabaster, a pair of the city maces. These had semi-globular crested heads, and plain shafts divided midway by encircling bands; and were not unlike the contemporary maces at Brecon, Cowbridge, Cardiff, and other places not far distant.

The maces shown on alderman Jones's monument we learn from the city accounts for 1651-2 to have been sent to London in that year to be re-made. The bill, as entered in the accounts, amounted to £85 5s., but as some alterations of the city sword are included in this, we cannot tell what the re-fashioning of the maces actually cost.

We must, however, now diverge a little from the history of the Gloucester maces to see why they were re-fashioned in 1652.

On the establishment of the Commonwealth after the King's murder in 1648-9, the Commons ordered a new mace to be made in place of that usually borne before the Speaker. The making of the mace was entrusted to Thomas Maundy, a London goldsmith, and on June 6th, 1649, the new mace was brought in and shown to the House. It was evidently received with great satisfaction, for the Commons proceeded to make the following order:

“Ordered

That this Mace made by Thomas Maundy of London Goldsmith be delivered into the Charge of the Serjant at Armes attending the Parliament and that the said Mace be carried before the Speaker, and that all other great Maces to be used in this Commonwealth be made according to the same forme and Paterne, and that the said Thomas Maundy having the making thereof and none other.”

The mace made by Maundy continued in use till April 20th, 1653, when Cromwell so unceremoniously dissolved the Long Parliament, and bid one of his soldiers “Take away that fool's bauble.” Several corporate bodies

claim to possess the identical mace thus removed, but, as a matter of fact, within a few days of the establishment of the so-called Barebones Parliament on July 4th, 1653, it was again brought out, and continued to be borne before the Speaker by the sergeant-at-arms as of old. At the Restoration in 1660 a new mace was ordered to be provided for the House "with the Crowne and King's Majestie's Armes, and such other Ornaments as have bin usuall," and the famous "bauble" thus became a thing of the past. So at least we should imagine. On examining, however, the present mace of the House of Commons, which the Speaker most kindly allowed me to do only a week ago, I found that the shaft and knots are unmistakeably Thomas Maundy's work, with a new head and base made in 1660, and so the "bauble" is practically still borne before the Speaker.

Owing to the fortunate circumstance that all other great maces in the kingdom had been ordered to be made "according to the same forme and Paterne" as the Parliament mace we know exactly what it was like originally. In form it closely resembled the large crowned maces of which so many examples exist; it had a staff divided by knots, and surmounted by a head of the usual type encircled by a coronet with an arched crown. But it was in the pattern of these that it differed so completely from a royal mace. The coronet consisted, not of the regal crosses and fleurs-de-lis, but of an intertwined cable enclosing small cartouches with the arms of England and Ireland; and instead of a jewelled circlet there was often a band with raised letters which read: "THE FREEDOME OF ENGLAND BY GOD'S BLESSING RESTORED," with the date of the making of the mace. Instead of the jewelled or beaded arches of the crown, four gracefully-curved members, adorned with oak foliage, met in the centre and supported, not the time-honoured orb and cross, but a handsome sort of cushion surmounted by an acorn. The head was divided as before into panels by caryatides, but the royal badges were replaced by the arms of England and Ireland in oval cartouches. The knots of the staff were wrought in spirally-laid gadroons, and

the staff itself chased throughout with branches of oak or other foliage running longitudinally and encircled by a narrow spiral ribbon. The knop forming the base was also wrought with the arms of England and Ireland. The corporations of Weymouth, Marlborough, and East Retford, still possess maces showing all these characteristics. I have omitted mention of one point, viz., that the arms on the top were no longer the royal arms, but those of "the State." These have been in almost every case replaced by the royal arms, as in the examples cited; a small mace belonging to the city of Coventry still, however, retains them unaltered.

We will now resume the history of the Gloucester maces. That the order of Parliament concerning the new fashioning of "all other great maces" was obeyed in many places, we know not only from the maces themselves but from the entries in the minute and account books recording the circumstances. Occasionally, as at London and Leicester, we get very full particulars of the re-making of the maces, in each case by Thomas Maundy, who, as we have seen, enjoyed the monopoly of making them. The Gloucester maces were also re-made at this time, as I have already said, but the accounts refer to payments to "Mr. Alderman Vyner, of London," and not to Thomas Maundy. It was, however, these very Gloucester maces that first opened my eyes to the peculiar characteristics by which the Commonwealth maces can be identified, for the spirally gadrooned knots, the ribbon-entwined oak stems on the shafts, and the arms of England and Ireland on the foot-knops, clearly belong to the maces of 1651-2, as do parts of the head; and one pair bears the mayor's name and the date 1652. Moreover, two of the maces bear a maker's mark formed of a letter M surmounted by a T, which is assuredly the mark of Thomas Maundy, for a similar one also occurs on the Leicester mace, which the accounts show to have been made by him in 1650. When the Monarchy was restored in 1660 those corporations who had altered their maces in conformity with the order of 1649 proceeded to convert them again into royal maces. Some by merely replacing the State's arms by the royal arms; some by making the mace entirely anew; while others were content to substitute the royal crown and badges for the non-regal devices



of the Commonwealth. The city of Gloucester, like the House of Commons, chose the last course, and in the council minutes for 13th June, 1660, when Toby Jordan was mayor, we find the following entry: "It is agreed at this house that the Sword and Maces that are carryed before Mr. Maior shall be altered at the charges of the chamber, and that Mr. Mayor do cause the same to be done to the best advantage of the chamber." Two of the maces so altered bear the name of Toby Jordan, and the date 1660. All four maces, however, underwent conversion, for the Chamberlain's accounts for 1659-60 contain a payment of £74 1s.: "Payd for 4 new maces and for altering the scabbard of the best sword over and above the summe allowed for the old Maces and Sword as appears by Mr. Cuthbertes note a goldsmith in London." To call the maces "new" was not correct, for although they received new royal crowns, and the royal badges were substituted for the arms of England and Ireland, in other respects they were substantially the maces made in 1651-2. Since 1660, with the exception of repeated and occasionally needless re-gilding, the maces have remained unaltered, and may they long continue to be borne before the Mayor and Sheriff of Gloucester.

The right of the Mayor of Gloucester to have a sword carried before him was specially conferred by the charter of Richard III. in 1483.

The sword then provided was probably that now known as "the mourning sword." The blade is of Solingen or Passau make, with the wolf or fox mark, and the hilt has curved quillons and a disk-shaped pommel embossed with a rose on each side. The whole is, however, now painted black, which conceals the workmanship. The scabbard is covered with black velvet embroidered with black silk. On the upper part are on one side the city arms, on the other a crowned rose; the central ornaments are floral devices, and the chape has on both sides a floral device with the date 1677, in which year the city swords were repaired at a cost of £1 8s. 6d.

The next sword that the city possessed cannot now be found, and all trace of it seems to be lost. It was in existence when Rudder published his *New History of Gloucestershire* in 1779, for he describes it as being

adorned with the figure of Queen Elizabeth and "E.R. 1574," and with the city arms as then borne.

The third "sword of state" was perhaps obtained in 1627, when Charles I. gave leave to the city to appoint a sword-bearer "who shall carry before the mayor a sword with a coloured sheath bearing our arms and those of the city aforesaid or otherwise adorned." A careful and full-sized representation of this sword is carved on the monument of alderman Jones, already referred to. It has a flattened circular gilt pommel with the royal arms within the garter and crowned, with supporters; the grip is shown as covered with gilt wire, and the cross guard is ornamented with a large scallop shell. Owing to the sword being laid on its edge only one quillon was shown, and this has been broken off and lost. The sheath is painted red, with a gold band along the edges, and is divided into three sections by gilt bands or locketts carved in relief. The first of these bears a figure of Justice; the second a king on horseback; and the third, a half-effigy of a king. The chape has a draped female figure, and ends in a crown. In each of the three divisions are two roses and two fleurs-de-lis placed alternately.

Now this carved representation would in itself be interesting if it merely showed us one side of the sword in use during the second quarter of the seventeenth century; but it does more than that, for there can be no doubt that we have here a careful representation of a former and original condition of the sword of state still borne before the Mayor of Gloucester. Of the original sword there remains the Solingen blade, with the gold inlaid wolf-mark of the maker, and the hilt with its pommel and quillons. The sides of the pommel bear the royal arms of Charles II. and the city arms of 1652. The sheath is covered with crimson velvet, and the uppermost locket retains on one side the figure of Justice as shown on the monument. The other side originally bore an inscription, but this has been erased, and instead of it is engraved a later one: *Gloucester*  
*| Toby Jordan | Esqr Maior | Anno Regni | Regis Car*  
*2d XII | Annoq Domi | 1660.* The other ornaments of the sheath do not correspond with those on the monument;



thus, the second locket has on one side the royal arms, etc., in a circle between an oak tree above and the city arms below, and on the other side a cartouche with the city arms; and the third locket has the king riding over a fallen foe on one side, and on the other the king erect and in armour and brandishing his sword. The chape ends in a cruciform ornament instead of the crown, and is wrought with a figure of Fame on one side, and with a fully-armed female figure on the other. The interspaces of the sheath have, instead of the roses and fleurs-de-lis, the royal badges of the House of Stuart, a rose, thistle, harp, and fleur-de-lis, severally crowned. We learn from the accounts that in 1652 the sword was sent to London to be altered, *i.e.*, stripped of all emblems of royalty. It may be seen, however, from the Jones monument that the hilt and figure of Justice on the first locket were retained. What then replaced the other ornaments we cannot tell. In 1660 the sword was again sent to London and altered to its present state by Mr. Cuthbert, a goldsmith in Cheapside. The workmanship of the new bands is, however, much inferior to that which contains the figure of Justice.