THE PAINTED WINDOWS IN THE CHAPEL OF THE VYNE IN HAMPSHIRE.

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Those who were present in the Chapel of the Vyne in Hampshire on the 22nd of July, 1924, in the course of the Winchester Meeting of the Institute, may remember that various views were expressed about the painted glass in the three windows of the apse. But as those views were based mainly on conjecture and not on facts, and as some of the printed accounts of the glass are misleading, I thought it worth while to investigate the subject at leisure, and the results of this inquiry, such as they are, are summarized in the following pages. I contributed a fuller account to the Walpole Society's fifteenth volume (1927), to which I may refer those who are desirous of greater detail. But all the essential facts and considerations on which my case rests will be found in the present paper.

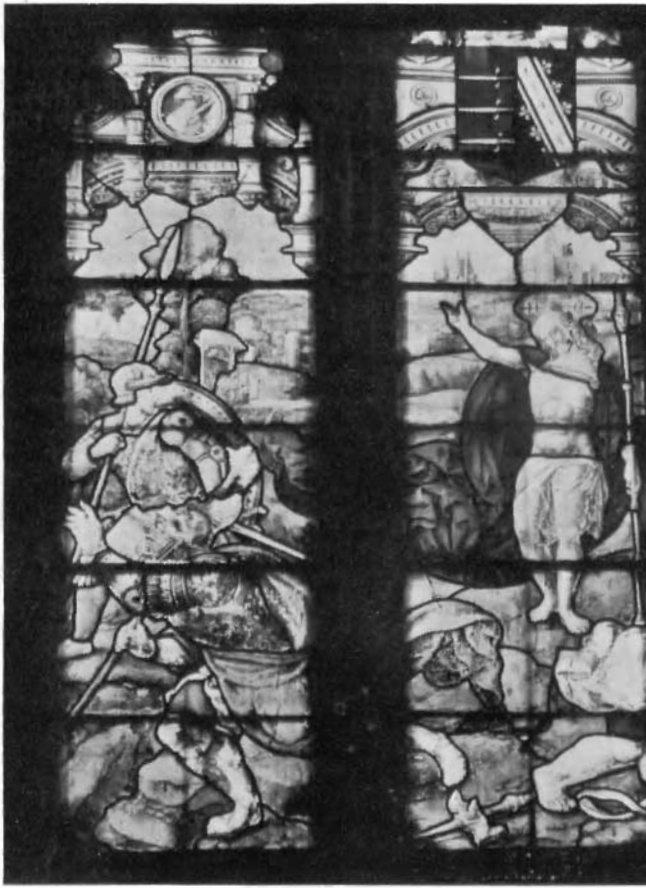
William Sandys, created Lord Sandys in 1523, spent his life in the service of Henry VIII, and between 1513 and 1526, partly as a commander in the French campaign and later as Treasurer of Calais, must have been much abroad. We do not know when he began to rebuild his ancestral home, 'The Vyne,' converting the 'no very great or sumptuus maner place,' as Leland calls it, into 'one of the principale houses in goodly building of all Hamptonshire.'[1] But the chapel was not finished till after 1518, for the arms of Sir William Sandys are carved on the battlements surrounded by the Garter, which was conferred on him in that year; and the gallery not till even later, for the arms of Tunstall, as bishop of London (1522–29), appear on its panelling.[2] The glass of the chapel windows, therefore, cannot have been put in before 1518, and may be later, though it must be earlier than 1528, for queen Catherine

[1] *Itinerary* (ed. Toulmin Smith), ii. 8.

[2] Chaloner W. Chute, *A History of the Vyne in Hampshire* (Winchester and London, 1888), pp. 20, 158. The book is referred to in the notes which follow as 'Chute.'

appears in one of them as the consort of the king, and in that year the proceedings for her divorce began to take shape.

The painted glass of these windows (plates I–VI) obviously belongs to the period when the classical ornaments of the Italian Renaissance had superseded Gothic details, a period of which the earliest English examples in glass are the later windows of King's College Chapel, Cambridge (1526–30). This development was of foreign, and especially Flemish, origin. In England it was exotic, and we may feel pretty sure that the designs for the Vyne glass, if not the windows themselves, came from the Low Countries. The accompanying illustrations make a detailed description unnecessary. The three scenes in the upper halves of the windows (plates I–III), the Crucifixion in the centre, with the Way of the Cross on the south side, and the Resurrection on the north, call for little comment. They are evidently in the style of the Flemish imitators of the School of Raphael in the second quarter of the sixteenth century. More interesting for our purpose are the three royal personages below, kneeling in the attitude of donors of the windows, and presented by the name-saints who help to guarantee their identity. There can be no question about the still youthful Henry VIII in the middle window (plate V) with St. Henry, the canonized emperor of Germany, nor about queen Catherine who kneels behind him under the patronage of St. Catherine of Alexandria (plate IV). The lady in the south window is vouched for as a Margaret by the presence of St. Margaret of Antioch (plate VI). But there were two Margarets closely connected with Henry VIII; his grandmother, Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond, who died at the age of sixty-eight a few months after his accession in 1509; and his sister, Margaret Tudor, who married James IV of Scotland in 1503, and was left a widow by his death on Flodden Field in 1513. The aged and ascetic features of the Lady Margaret are familiar to us from portraits of her later years, and have no possible relation to the youthful figure in the window, who is evidently a contemporary of queen Catherine's. There can, then, be no doubt that we see before us the queen mother of Scotland, who was only four years younger than Catherine. In 1515 the difficulties of her position in Scotland drove her to take refuge in her brother's dominions, and she spent



NORTH WINDOW IN THE CHAPEL OF THE VYNE.

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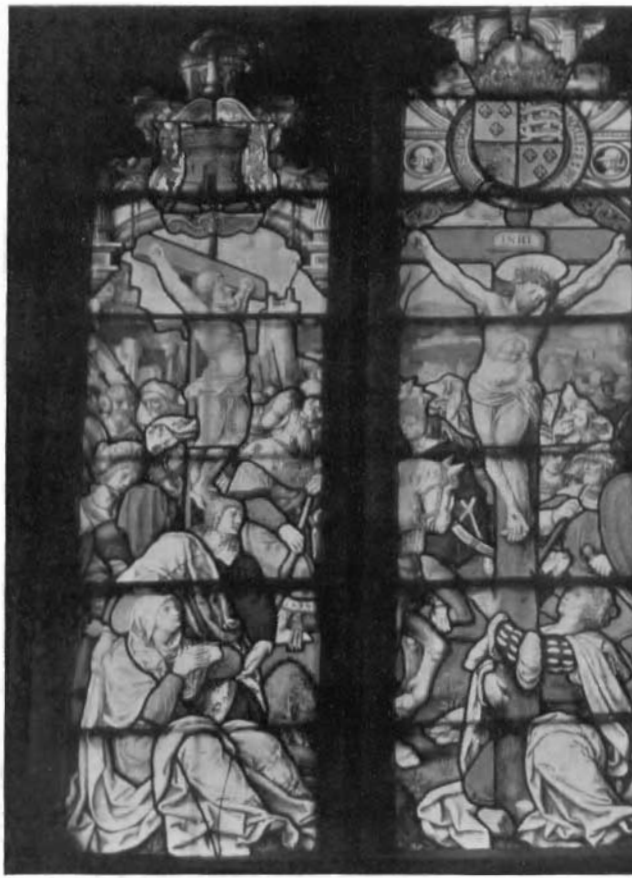
PLATE I.

[*Sydney Pitcher, Gloucester, photos.*

THE RESURRECTION



EAST WINDOW IN THE CHAPEL OF THE VYNE.

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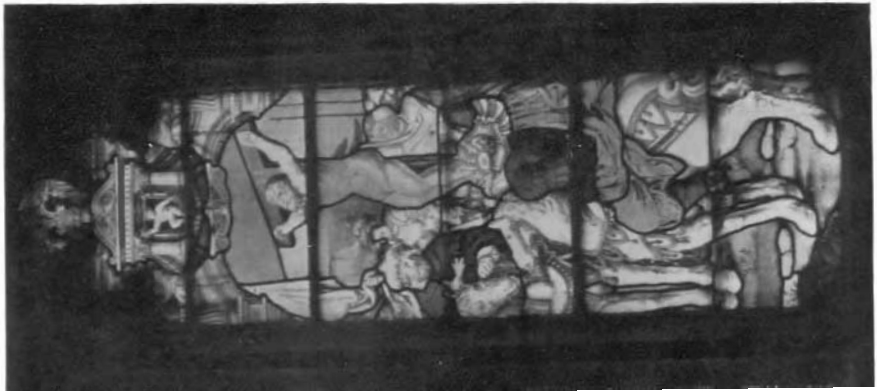

[*Sydney Pitcher, Gloucester, photos.*

THE CRUCIFIXION

a year at Henry's court (May 1516 to May 1517). It had already occurred to Mr. Westlake that this visit might have some connexion with the appearance of Margaret in the window at the Vyne,[1] and we may carry the suggestion a step further. We know that, in the autumn of 1516, the king, accompanied by his queen and his sister, made a tour through Surrey and Hampshire and as far as Salisbury, returning through Easthampstead to Greenwich.[2] It was from the royal hunting lodge at Easthampstead (Berks) that Henry had already visited The Vyne in 1510,[3] and it is quite possible that in 1516 the royal party, including queen Margaret, may have called at The Vyne, either going or returning, and have seen the progress of the new house and the plans for the chapel. However this may be, it seems to be clear that the windows were given by the king and the two queens, as is shown by their kneeling attitude as donors, and also by the fact that originally (as we shall see) the glass displayed only the royal arms and badges, and no heraldic or other allusion to Sir William Sandys. We need not regard the gift as a mere compliment to the owner of the house, for the chapel was not an ordinary domestic chapel, but the continuation on a new site of an ancient endowed chapel of the Virgin, established at the end of the twelfth century by the then owners of The Vyne, and enriched by the foundation of a chantry in the fourteenth.[4] We may suppose, then, that the king and the royal ladies made the offering of the windows to honour this old foundation, quite as much as to gratify the courtier who happened to be the owner of the place.

Henry's youthful appearance is consistent with the date of 1516, when he was twenty-five. Ten years later, a miniature in the Duke of Buccleuch's collection represents him when his face was beginning to coarsen, but one can see that the portrait in the window is the same man in an earlier phase.[5] The portrait of queen Catherine may be

[1] N. H. J. Westlake, *History of Design in Painted Glass* (London, 1894), iv, 53.

[2] *Calendar of Letters and Papers of the reign of Henry VIII*, ii. pt. 1, p. 705, no. 2294; pt. 2, p. 1472.

[3] *Ibid.* ii, pt. 2, p. 1446. Chute, p. 35.

[4] Chute, 11, 14. The chantry was suppressed under the Act of Edward VI (Chute, 27), when the chapel became purely domestic.

[5] *Henry VIII* (Goupil monograph) by A. F. Pollard, p. 127. *Victoria and Albert Museum: Ninety-six Miniatures lent by the Duke of Buccleuch*, 1916–17, pl. 4. *Early English Portrait Miniatures in the Collection of the Duke of Buccleuch* ('The Studio' Special Number, 1917), pl. vii.

compared with another miniature in the Buccleuch collection,[1] while that of queen Margaret is very similar to her picture (a pendant to that of her husband) in the 'Hours of James IV,' done for him at Bruges during his reign (1503–13), and now in the National Library at Vienna.[2] Considering that we must not look for too great accuracy of portraiture in glass, not to speak of making allowance for a certain amount of flattery in the case of royalties, the resemblance of the persons in the windows supports their identifications.

With the exception of some of the architectural canopies in the heads of the upper lights, the glass is in a fairly complete condition, and evidently suffered little during the Civil War, though the place was occupied by a Parliamentary force. While the chapel of a private house was less exposed to violence than a church, it is tempting to connect the disorder of the canopies with this period, whether by hasty removal of the glass or by deliberate damage, though, if the latter were the case, it would be strange that the sacred pictures were left intact. Not long after, in 1653, the then Lord Sandys sold The Vyne to Chaloner Chute, a rising barrister of the day, who became Speaker of the House of Commons, and died in 1659, just before the Restoration. It was probably his grandson who put the windows into the state in which we now see them, the defective canopies being patched and made up with glass brought from elsewhere. And so they remained when Horace Walpole discovered 'the most heavenly chapel in the world.'[3]

It is worth while to examine these canopies more closely. Originally the central feature of each will have been the arms of the donor kneeling below, and those of the king in the middle window are intact (plate II); while the lozenge in the same position in the south window (plate III) should stand for queen Margaret, though it presents a difficulty to which we must return presently. But the escutcheon of queen Catherine has vanished from the north window (plate I), and been replaced by a later shield which suggests

[1] Reproduced with the miniature of Henry VIII in the Goupil monograph (see last note).

[2] *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 5th Ser., iii (1921), 214. Reproduced in the *Walpole Society*, vol. xv.

[3] Letter to Sir Horace Mann, July 16, 1755 (Oxford edition of the *Letters*, iii, 319; cp. p. 258).

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[*Sydney Pitcher, Gloucester, photos.*

SOUTH WINDOW IN THE CHAPEL OF THE VYNE. THE WAY OF THE CROSS.

[Sydney Pitcher, Gloucester, photos.

CHAPEL OF THE VYNE. LOWER HALF OF THE NORTH WINDOW. QUEEN CATHERINE.

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the date when the windows were repaired, for it displays the arms of Edward Chute (d. 1722), the grandson of the Speaker, and his wife, Catherine Keck, whom he married in 1686. The original scheme of the canopies may be inferred from the middle window (plate II), where those of the central and right-hand lights are intact, with the royal arms encircled by the Garter[1] in the former, and in the latter a seated cupid or 'putto,' holding a pomegranate and a sheaf of arrows, well-known badges of Catherine of Aragon. A considerable portion of the left-hand canopy survives, but the putto has been replaced by another badge of the queen's—the castle of Castile—but on a larger scale than the rest of the details, and evidently an importation. In the north window (plate I) the design of the canopies has also been preserved, but, in addition to the insertion of the Chute arms in the central one, a portion of another canopy (perhaps taken from the south window) has been set below it, while the medallions in the side canopies containing the Sandys crest (a goat's head between a pair of wings) and the red Tudor rose, are also probably insertions, for the remains of the original canopy in the left hand light of the south window show that these side canopies had only decorative and not heraldic motives. The heads of the lights in this latter window (plate III) had evidently suffered more than any other part. As we have said, the left-hand canopy seems to preserve its original design with the arch springing, as in the other original canopies, from oblong brackets or consoles. But the kneeling putti holding the ends of swags of foliage have been almost obliterated by an inserted roundel of the Sandys crest. The lozenge of arms in the middle light should be in its original place, but the canopy in which it is now set, together with that in the right-hand light are so different in pattern from the rest that we can only suppose that they have been brought from some other source to replace the original canopies which were thought to be too much wrecked to retain, though the lower part of the left-hand one seems to survive below the Chute shield in the middle light of the north window (plate I).

The lozenge itself presents special difficulties. Presumably it refers to queen Margaret, who kneels below;

[1] The spelling of the motto is peculiar: *Honi soit qui malle y pence*, but it can be paralleled by contemporary instances. See *Walpole Society*, XV, 9.

but as it stands, its blazon of the old royal arms of 'England' (France and England quarterly) impaling 'England' is meaningless, and was never borne by anybody. The dexter half of the lozenge, however, is a seventeenth or eighteenth-century restoration, for it will be noticed that whereas the gold lilies of the quarters of 'France' in the sinister half are leaded in separately after the medieval manner, just as they are in the king's shield in the middle window, the corresponding quarters in the dexter half are painted on single pieces of glass according to the practice of the later period (see plate III). Evidently the dexter half of the lozenge was ruined and unrecognisable, and the restorer seems to have filled the gap by simply copying the sinister half, the result, as we have said, being meaningless. The explanation given in the *Victoria County History of Hampshire* (iv, 164) that it is the arms of princess Margaret before her marriage in 1503 (the glass, therefore, being of that date, though we have seen that the chapel was not finished till 1518)—in other words, the arms of her parents, Henry VII and his queen—will not save the situation, for it ignores the fact that the arms of queen Elizabeth are always those of the house of York: England quartering Ulster and Mortimer.[1] The probability is that the lost dexter half displayed the royal arms of Scotland (or a lion rampant in a double tressure counter-flowered gules), and we should thus get queen Margaret's proper arms: Scotland impaling England. At the date of the restoration the tradition as to the identity of Margaret may have been lost, and the dexter half of the lozenge, together with the second quarter of England in the sinister half, which is also the restorer's work, must have disappeared or have been too damaged to replace, which is not surprising considering that the whole canopy appears to have been so wrecked that it was thought necessary to replace it by another one brought from elsewhere, as we have seen was done. The two intrusive canopies may have come from the windows of the two-storeyed ante-chapel, or possibly from the now ruined chapel of the Holy Ghost at Basingstoke, which Lord Sandys, in conjunction with others, had refounded in 1524, and to which he added an aisle as a

[1] E.g. on the east end of her tomb in Henry VII's Chapel, Westminster. *Inventory of Westminster Abbey* (Historical Monuments Commission, 1924), pl. 122.

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[*Sydney Pitcher, Gloucester, photos.*

CHAPEL OF THE VYNE. LOWER HALF OF THE EAST WINDOW. HENRY VIII.

[*Sydney Pitcher, Gloucester, photos.*

CHAPEL OF THE VYNE. LOWER HALF OF THE SOUTH WINDOW. MARGARET, QUEEN OF SCOTLAND.

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burial place for his family. It seems that, when the chapel was dismantled about 1700, the remains of its glass were transferred to Mottisfont Abbey, the later residence of the Sandys family; and some of this is now to be seen in the east window of the north chapel in Basingstoke church.[1] In character it closely resembles that in the chapel of The Vyne.

One of the most remarkable features of these windows is the importance given to the donors. In medieval glass, donors or persons commemorated appear as small figures kneeling at the bottom of the lights. But here they and their adjuncts take up the half of each window; they are like additional subjects competing with the sacred scenes above, and their figures are on a larger scale than those of the subjects proper. This development was especially characteristic of Renaissance glass in the Low Countries, and one may look in vain in England for a parallel to the donor groups of The Vyne, filling as they do the whole of the lower halves of the windows. The fine glass in the churches of Liége, belonging mostly to the second quarter of the sixteenth century, illustrates this display of family pride and of the importance of human personality, so characteristic of the Renaissance; and in some of the windows in the quire and apse of St. Jacques it is exaggerated to the extent that the donor with his attendants and the family heraldry occupies practically the whole window, a single figure of a saint in the upper half being the only attempt at a sacred subject. But it is not only the space given to the donors in the Vyne windows which recalls the glass at Liége. The arrangement and details of some of the donor groups in the churches of St. Martin and St. Jacques present remarkable similarities to those at The Vyne.[2] Each group occupies three lights, the middle one being filled by the donor kneeling at a draped desk or faldstool below a valanced tester, from which hangs a straight piece of brocade enriched with jewelled borders

[1] Baigent and Millard, *History of Basingstoke*, 92, 110 ff. *V.C.H. Hants*, iv, 137.

[2] For further details see *Walpole Society*, xv, 15 ff, where also plate vi illustrates two of the windows in St. Jacques, Liege, reproduced from the coloured facsimiles in John Weale's *Divers Works of Early Masters in Christian Decoration* (London, 1846), i, p. 50, plates 35, 36, and 42, 44. In St. Mary's, Shrewsbury, there are four more donor windows (two are copies) from St. Jacques, on a smaller scale, but showing just the same features.

and an ornamental pendant. His devotions are directed to a sacred image set on an altar or pedestal, and he is presented by his patron saint standing behind him. We find just the same scheme and even details at The Vyne. There is, indeed, only one image, that of Christ in Majesty, before which the king kneels, but we must suppose that the devotions of the two queens are directed to it as well. For the rest, the donor groups are arranged just like those at Liége: they kneel under similar valanced testers and brocade handings with jewelled borders and pendants, only the latter hang from swags of foliage and not from cords. Whether these points of contact are sufficient to establish a Liége origin for the Vyne glass may be left an open question, for in general style it has much in common with other contemporary Flemish and even French work.[1] Some support for Liége may, perhaps, be derived from the appearance of St. Henry as the name-saint of Henry VIII, a figure unknown to English art, where the patron of the later English kings is always St. George, but which would occur naturally to an artist of the episcopal principality of Liége, which belonged to the Holy Roman Empire. In any case, there can be no doubt that the designs for the Vyne windows came from the Low Countries; and, considering their very moderate size, they may even have been imported ready made, as we know was being done in other cases rather later.[2] On the other hand, the example of the King's College Chapel windows shows that there were London firms (partly composed of foreigners) capable of carrying out foreign designs for glass; just as in the case of Margaret of Austria's famous church at Brou, cartoons for the windows were sent from Brussels to be executed by French glaziers.[3] While we may be inclined to think that it would be more natural that work of this kind for an English house should come from London, we cannot forget that in 1535 Lord Sandys took the trouble to get from a Dutch mason two very plain table tombs of black Tournai marble for his own and his wife's burial in the

[1] There is a good and well-illustrated account of the Liege and other Flemish glass by R. Graul in *Belgische Kunstdenkmaler* edited by P. Clemen (Munich, 1923), ii, 41 ff.

[2] *Notes and Queries* 12th Ser., iv (January 1918), 19. *The Antiquaries Journal*, v (1925), 148.

[3] L. Begule, *Les vitraux dans la region Lyonnaise* (Paris, 1911), 172. V. Nodet, *L'eglise de Brou* (Petites monographies des grands edifices de la France), 12, 77.

chapel of the Holy Ghost at Basingstoke, where they may still be seen.[1] And recently Mr. Bernard Rackham has shown that the majolica tiles which are an important feature of the Vyne chapel came from a factory at Antwerp.[2] It is, therefore, by no means inconceivable that the windows were both ordered and made in the Netherlands, and brought over to be set up in the chapel of The Vyne which they embellish in such a sumptuous manner.

[1] Baigent and Millard, *History of Basingstoke*, 113 and note; *V.C.H. Hants*, iv, 138. The contract was published by James Weale in *Le Beffroi*, vol. iv (Bruges, 1872–3), 202.

[2] *Early Netherlands Maiolica, with special reference to the tiles at the Vyne in Hampshire* (London, 1926), 55 ff.