

XIX.—TWO LETTERS PATENT FROM HUTTON
JOHN NEAR PENRITH, CUMBERLAND.

BY C. H. HUNTER BLAIR.

Photographs (plates XXXIV and XXXV) of these letters have been given to our Society by Mr. N. Hudleston of Hutton John, where the originals have been preserved since they were written in the later fifteenth century. Translations on plates XXXIV and XXXV have been made by our librarian Mr. Hugh A. Taylor, the county archivist. They both guarantee certain payments, for services rendered, to Thomas Hoton of Hoton John, gentleman. They are not of much intrinsic interest but they both bear the signatures and armorial seals of men of importance in the history of England and therefore are worth publication.

The first letter (fig. 1, plate XXXIV) is from Richard (Neville) earl of Warwick known to history as the King-maker. In the document he styles himself lord of Bergavenny and captain of Calais to which office he had been appointed, for the second time, on 7th May 1461. It is dated from his castle of Middleham on 26th August in the first year of Edward IV (1461). This castle was the head of the great Neville estates in Yorkshire, to which the earl had succeeded after the execution of his father on 31st December 1460. He was at this date at the height of his power and indeed the most powerful man in the kingdom when Edward IV came to the throne on 4th March 1461. He was killed at the battle of Barnet on 15th April 1471. In 1474 his great estates were forfeited and divided between the Duke of Clarence and Richard Duke of Gloucester

fig. 2, plate XXXV). The letter is signed by the earl

and also bears an impression in wax of his quartered armorial seal. This is very imperfect but can be completed by comparing it with the only other known example published in *The Ancestor* IV p. 143. This shows the dexter supporter to be the muzzled bear of Warwick and the sinister the griffin of Salisbury. The crests on the two coronetted helms above the shield are on the dexter the swan's head of Warwick and on the sinister the griffin of Salisbury.

The example in *The Ancestor* is from a document dated 1st February 1465, nearly four years later than our impression. It therefore seems probable that the seal must have been in use during this period but that no other examples are known to have survived.

Its interest lies in the odd marshalling of the many shields of arms upon it, combining in the one design the crests, supporters and arms of the Kingmaker's paternal earldom of Salisbury with his wife's earldom of Warwick. The blason is

Grand quarters I—1 & 4 Beauchamp 2 & 3 Clare, II—1 & 4 Montagu 2 & 3 Monthermer, III—Neville differenced by a label compony, IV—1 & 4 Newburgh 2 & 3 Despencer.

This confused marshalling shows a sad falling off from the reality and austerity of the early medieval art, this tendency became worse in later years as can be seen in the example of the earl's armorials as depicted in the Rows Roll of about 1477-85 (plate XXXVI). This roll is an heraldic account of the earls of Warwick by one John Rows. The

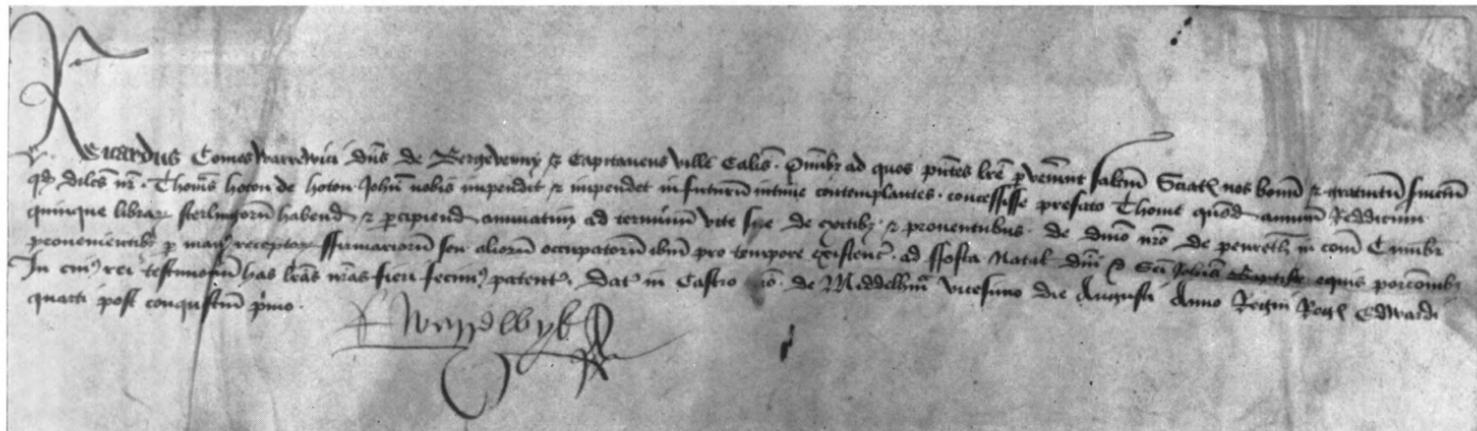


FIG. 1.

Richard, earl of Warwick, lord of Bergevenny and captain of the town of Calais, to all to whom our letters patent shall come, greeting.

Know that we, most heartily considering the good and acceptable service which our well beloved Thomas Hoton of Hoton John has rendered us and will render us in future, grant to the said Thomas a certain annual payment of five pounds sterling, to have and receive annually to the end of his life from the revenue and profits issuing from our demesne of Penreth in the county of Cumberland, by the hand of the farmers of the receipts, or of other possessors existing for the time being, at the feasts of Christmas and St. John the Baptist, in equal portions. In witness whereof we have made these our letters patent. Given in our castle of Middleham the twentieth day of August in the first year of the reign of King Edward after the conquest the fourth.

Warrewyk. (Sign manual).

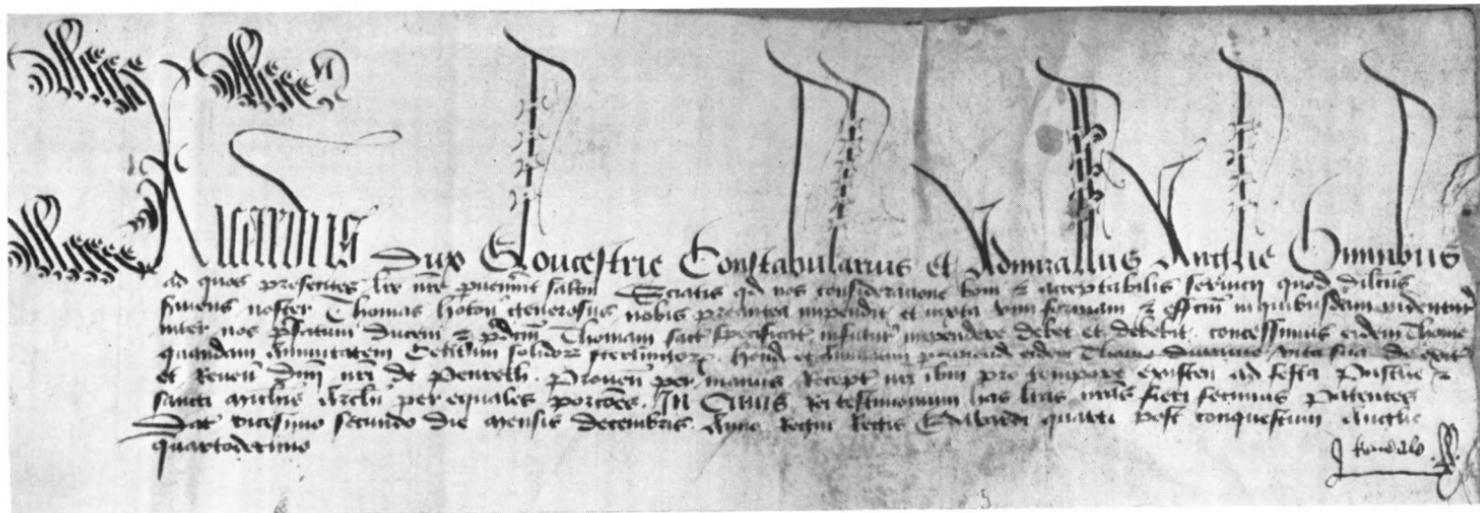


FIG. 2.

R. Gloucestre. (Sign manual).

Richard, duke of Gloucester, constable and admiral of England, to all to whom these our present letters shall come, greeting.
 Know that we, in consideration of the good and acceptable service which our well beloved servant Thomas Hoton, gentleman, has rendered us aforetime, and according to one farm and office in certain indentures between us the said duke and the said Thomas made for that purpose which ought to be rendered now and in the future, allow to the said Thomas a certain annuity of a hundred shillings sterling, to be granted and paid annually to the said Thomas for life from the profits and revenue of our demesne of Penreth, to be issued through the hands of our receiver there for the time being, at the feasts of Easter and Michaelmas, in equal portions. In witness whereof we have made these our letters patent. Given the twenty second day of the month of December in the fourteenth year of the reign of King Edward after the conquest the fourth. J. Randale.

English version of it was published by William Pickering in 1845 from which plate XXXVI is taken. In this the King-maker is shown in the full armour of his time holding a Gothic shaped shield charged with the arms of Montagu and Monthermer quarterly. He stands upon the bull of Neville with the eagle of Monthermer perched upon its back. His open visored helm is without a crest but on his right is the Salisbury crest of a griffin with expanded wings standing upon a coronetted helm, upon his left is a wreathed helm with the bull's head of Neville upon it. Above the earl is a banner of many quarterings. Some of the arms upon it are real, telling of the earl's lands and lordships, but mixed with these are many bogus shields recording only the vague imaginings of the heralds—a new heraldry of fancies and fictions having no relation to reality, a "crazy quilt" style which spread rapidly and only returned to the sanity of the medieval art in quite recent years.

The earl's equestrian seal (plate XXXVII, fig. 2) is free of such fanciful shields. On it his shield is charged only with his paternal saltire of Neville differenced by a label of three points, his helm bears the swan's head crest of Beauchamp rising from a crest coronet. He wears no surcoat but the flying housings of his horse display on its front quarters the Salisbury arms and on its hind quarters those of the Warwick earldom.

The second letter (plate XXXV, fig. 2) from Richard Duke of Gloucester has his signature at the top left hand corner with a fragment of his seal in the bottom on the right side.



Its full description is France and England quarterly, a label of three points ermine each charged with a canton gules.

Crest, on a cap of estate a lion standing differenced by a label as on the shield. Supporters two boars argent armed gules. The letter confirms the continuance of the payments made to Thomas of Hoton by the Kingmaker. It is dated 22nd December 1475, the year after the Duke had received his share of the forfeited lands of the late Earl of Warwick. He came to the throne 26th June 1483 as Richard III, he was slain at the battle of Bosworth on 22nd August 1485, the end of the Wars of the Roses and of most of the old nobility. New men, new measures, new heraldry came with the accession of Henry Tudor as Henry VII on 22nd August 1485.



RICHARD EARL OF WARWICK (THE KINGMAKER). FROM THE ROWS ROLL.



FIG. 1.



FIG. 2.

SEALS OF RICHARD EARL OF WARWICK—THE KINGMAKER.