

# Suffolk Institute of Archæology.

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## SUDBURY CORPORATION REGALIA.

BY WILLIAM WALTER HODSON.

### *The Maces.*

THE Sudbury corporate body, being an ancient one, it would be naturally inferred that it possessed regalia of a more or less imposing character. This is the case, though the inventory is limited as compared with that of some old boroughs. There was formerly a Moot Hall, dating back from early times, where the Corporation meetings were held, with other local ceremonies, but we do not read of a "Burghmote" horn to summon the "Motes." Though there was an ancient fishery, and in 1635, and indeed long prior to that date, there were Chamberlain's charges for "2 lynes to fysh withall (ijs. iiij*d.*), and "summes payd for nettes," and "to helpe to fysh," there is no record of any "Silver

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Oars" in the Jewel Chest. The City Fathers at their "love feasts," of which frequent mention is made in "The Books of Orders and Decrees," and in local Wills, Charity deeds, &c., could not place on their sideboard a shining array of punch bowls, salts, hanaps, flagons, and goblets (if so, they have been long melted down), but they could proudly display a handsome "Loving Cup" of considerable historic interest. We do not find any mention of Swords of State in jeweled scabbards, or Caps of Maintenance, though there are frequent references in the Corporation "Minutes" to the Mayor's, Aldermen's, and Burgesses' gowns, and sumptuary laws as to their fashions, materials, and cost. But all are gone, the last being sold in 1843, when there was a writ against the Corporation, arising out of a law suit in which they were the unsuccessful defendants. The Chief Magistrate, however, wears a "Mayor's gown" of recent date, and gold chain, with enameled badges and armorial bearings, so that all the pomp and circumstance of municipal state, is not departed, nor is "Ichabod." writ large on our corporation wardrobe. There is also a fine Corporation Seal engraved with the Borough Arms.

With regard to Maces, there are records to show that about A.D. 1300, the Lords of Clare, who owned this Saxon Burgh, gave licence to the "commonality" to appoint two Mace Bearers, or Sergeants-at-Mace, to bear maces before the Earls at their state visits to Suthburie, and also before the Mayor of the Borough. As early as 1274 (2 E. I.) a warrant was directed to the Mayor and Constables of the town for the apprehension of a criminal; so that the office of Mayor is an ancient one. It seems very probable that these "Clare" maces were the originals of the present ones, which were restored by Mr. Alderman Richard Firmin, of Woodhall, Mayor of the town, in 1613. They are inscribed:—"Richard Firmyn, deceased, late Mayor, donor, xt. Anno Dom.: 1614." "Thomas Robinson, Gent., Mayor 1718." "Samuel Higgs,

Mayor 1861" (on one of them). But it is shown that they could not be new ones, from the following codicil of the worthy Alderman's will, dated 15th Nov., 1614, witnessed by Charles Abbott, Mayor; William Byatt, Ex-Mayor; and Thomas Smythe and John Willitt, two of the Aldermen:— "Legacy of Tenne Poundes, given to the Mayor and Aldermen of Suthburie for the tyme beinge, to be by them imployed and laide out towards the newe-making, bettering and inlargynge of the twoo Maces used to be carryed by the Sergeants there, before the Maior of the towne of Suthburie aforesaid, for ye tyme being." The sum named in the Will was not sufficient to purchase the present handsome maces, and further it is expressly stated it was left for their "newe making," &c. Their workmanship seems to show that they are of more than one date, and composite in style and execution.

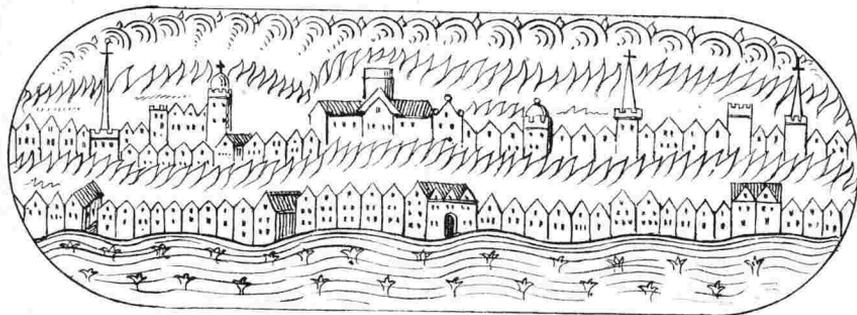
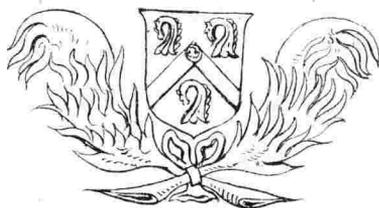
They are of silver gilt, 2 ft.  $5\frac{3}{4}$  in. long, with their heads crested with seven crosses, and fleur-de-lis, alternately, and surmounted by open crowns, with orbs and crosses. The "crowns of the heads" are engraved in high relief, with the Royal Arms (temp. Chas. II.), and round the heads, which are divided by vertical lines of conventional leaves and terminal flowers, with thistle-like heads, into four compartments, are the Borough Arms, the Rose of England, the Thistle of Scotland, and the Fleur-de-lis of France (crowned). The stems are  $16\frac{1}{2}$  in. long, with a bold, semi-globular moulding in the centre, and a smaller ovolo at the lower end. The extremities or "handles" are pear-shaped, with a narrow fillet nearly in the centre, the lower half being semi-globular with knob or button, and presenting a bell-like appearance. The inscriptions are round this bell. The stems and handles appear much older than the heads of the Maces. The upper half of one of them is battered and cracked, and the ovolo mouldings are indented in several places. Judging from these and other bruises, and from the different quality of the metal, and also from the marked simplicity of design, contrasting sharply with the elaborate ornate heads and crowns, it

seems probable that these older portions may have belonged to the "Clare" Maces of 700 years ago. The present bold and symmetrical handles—like the stems devoid of any surface decoration—may have been the heads of the original Maces. At the restoration, "inlargynge," &c., by Alderman Firmin, 230 years ago, the present handsomely designed and executed heads were probably added, the Maces being reversed, and the old simple but bold heads becoming the handles. There are no hall marks distinguishable.

It is generally known that the early form of the Mace was that of a short staff or truncheon, with rounded head, which head was gradually (by evolutionary process) transformed into "flanges." In the 14th century, when Sergeants-at-Arms were accustomed to carry Maces as a badge of office before the Sovereign, it became necessary to adorn them with the Royal Arms, and afterwards the floral insignia of the three kingdoms were engraved in high relief on some of them, as at Sudbury. The lower ends were subsequently fashioned into buttons and arms stamped on them. When the Mace was discontinued as a weapon and used solely as a symbol, it was reversed, till, in the 17th century, it assumed its present shaped head, with open-arched crown with orb and cross, while the flanges grew less and less, till they totally disappeared. There are several good examples extant of "transition" maces.

The Sudbury Maces were restored by Thos. Robinson, Gent., Mayor, in 1718; and were further repaired and burnished, &c., by Samuel Higgs, Mayor, (1861), who presented the handsome oak chest in which they repose when off duty, in company with the Borough Seal.

In 1671 the then Sergeants-at-Mace, John Deering of All Saints', and Thos. Brackett of St. Gregory's parish, "at their own cost of £3 5s. 0d., renewed and new made two small pocket silver maces, to be kept by their successors when they went out of office." The illustration which heads this paper, gives a correct representation of the larger interesting ancient insignia.



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ENGRAVINGS ON LOVING CUP, SUDBURY.  
GREAT PLAGUE AND FIRE OF LONDON. GODFREY SHIELD.

*The Loving Cup.*

This Tankard is of silver, and weighs  $38\frac{1}{2}$  oz. ; it has a handle, lip, and movable cover. On one side is the following inscription, and at the bottom a clearly cut quaint engraving of the Great Plague of London (of 1665), with coffins borne on shoulders, closed houses, an open grave, with skulls and cross-bones, and other details of this terrible event so vividly depicted by De Fœe.

“ Ex dono E. B. G. Militis,  
Irenarchæ seduli, Integerimi,  
Quem

Post Egregiam in fugandâ peste præstitam operam,  
Carolus secundus semper Augustus  
Assensu Procerum a secretis Concilij  
In perpetuam tantæ Pietatis Memoriam  
Argento donavit Oenophoro, et vere Regio,  
Hoc Ampliore modo Insignito.  
Gratia Dei et Regis Caroli Secundi,  
Pestis Aliis, sibi salus.  
E. B. G. 1665.”

The gift of E. B. G., Knight, an active and most upright Magistrate, whom, after having rendered invaluable services in checking the progress of the Plague, the ever august Monarch, Charles the Second, with the consent of his Privy Council, to perpetuate the memory of his patriotic efforts, presented with a silver cup, a right royal present, bearing this honorable inscription:—By the grace of God and the favor of King Charles the Second. Others' woe was his weal. E. B. G. 1665.

On the other side is this inscription, which is accompanied by an engraving of the Great Fire of London in the year 1666; (old “Powles” is seen in the centre).

“ Vir reuera Reipublicæ natus !  
Cum urbem Iñanis vastabat Ignis  
Dei Providentia et virtute suâ  
Flammarum medio, Tutus et Illustris  
Deinde, Cogente Rege.  
(At Merito) Emicuit Eques Auratus  
E. B. G. 7 brs. 1666.  
Cætera Loquentur Pauperes et Trivia.”

A man truly born for his country! When a terrible fire devastated the city, by the Providence of God, and his own merit, he was safe and illustrious in the midst of the flames. Afterwards at the express desire of the King (but deservedly so) E. B. G. was created a Knight in September, 1666. The poor and the thoroughfares will tell the rest.

There is a rather romantic history attached to this cup. It was for a long time supposed that it was the original, presented to the Knight, Sir Edmonds-Bury Godfrey (whose initials it bears), by King Charles II., for his eminent services to his Sovereign and to the poor in the awful times of the Great Plague and Fire of London. The story of Sir Edmond's assassination and its terrible consequences may be read in Macaulay and elsewhere. Suffice it to say that he gave great offence to the Roman Catholics by taking the evidence of the infamous Titus Oates, and by his dogged perseverance in endeavouring to unravel the alleged mysterious popish plots, by which it was said the life of the King was threatened. In October, 1678, the unfortunate Knight was missed from his home for some days, and after much search was found lying dead in a ditch on Primrose Hill, on the way to Hampstead. The cry arose that he had been murdered by the Papists and the whole populace was inflamed with rage. His funeral was conducted with great pomp and medals were struck to commemorate the murder. Three persons were executed for it, but they all denied their guilt on the scaffold.

Mr. W. H. Dutton, the Master of the Cordwainers' Company (City of London), claims to possess the original tankard, and states it came into his possession from Mr. Hugesson, his wife's great uncle, who bequeathed it to his (Mr. H's) sister. The Hugessons married into the Godfrey family. Mrs. Dutton is the owner of a house in the parish of Sellindge, Kent, and a Mr. Godfrey, a descendant of Sir Edmond, holds the adjoining property, on which his famous ancestor and his family once resided. The portrait of Sir E. B. Godfrey hangs on the walls

of the vestry of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, of which the late Rev. Prebendary Humphry, brother to Sir George Humphry of Cambridge (both natives of Sudbury), was Rector for many years.

Till recently (1886) it was not known how a "copy" of this tankard, the Sudbury "Loving Cup," came into the possession of the Corporation. But in that year the writer of the present Paper in searching among the town books and documents discovered the "missing link." One of the papers was a draft of a singular list of "Allegations," made in 1684 against the Mayor; one John Catesby, of much local repute, but in disfavour with the High Church party and extreme Tories of the day, for his official tolerance to the "Sectaries," who at that time met for worship in a barn in the town. One of the counts of the indictment runs as follows:—"Sir Robert Cordell had been for a long time Member for the Borough (1661-1679), and y<sup>e</sup> Corporacon had declared that they would vote for him, but were overpowered by y<sup>e</sup> continued intreaties and wheadles (sic) of Mr. Catesby, and Sir Jervasse Elwes to gratifie the Corporacon did p'sent them with a tankard with some inscription thereon, ingraven in Latine, relating to Sir Edmund Bury Godfrey, which y<sup>e</sup> now said Mr. Catesby keeps and brings forth at all Corporacon Feasts, and in most solemn mannere drinks Sir Jervasse, his health, and y<sup>e</sup> said John Catesby hath declared he had made such an interest for Sir Jervasse Elwes in Sudbury as all y<sup>e</sup> Gentlemen in y<sup>e</sup> Country could never destroy it." Sir Jervasse (or Gervasse) Elwes, of Stoke College, was created baronet in 1661, and was M.P. for Sudbury from that year to 1684, and again from 1698 to 1700, when he died, and was succeeded as Member by his grandson. Probably the Godfreys and the Elwes were friends; both families belonged to the Tolerant party, and were opposed to the reactionists, who wished to bring back the country under Romish rule.

*The Seal*

is of silver, mounted on ivory, and bears the Borough Shield, beautifully cut, with the inscription :—

“Ex dono Ricardi Skynner, 1616.  
Sigill Offic. Burgi de Sudbury in com Suffolk.”

(The gift of Richard Skinner, 1616. The official seal of the Borough of Sudbury in the county of Suffolk.)

This donor minted, for the purposes of his trade, one of the many Sudbury “Tokens” that were extensively used in the town and district from 1650 down to about 1800. On the obverse was his name, spelt “Skinner,” and arms, “three cross-bows, 2 and 1;” and on the reverse, the words “in Sudbury.” In the account of the town expenses of Wm. Nicholl, Mayor, 1635, is the item “Payd for mendeinge the Towne Seale, vjd.”

Old gossips tell how the seal was mysteriously lost about a century and a quarter back, and how, after an interval of several years, it was found among the reeds and rushes when cleaning out one of the fish “stews” or ponds belonging to Chilton Hall, about a stone’s throw from the solitary church, and a bow-shot from the moated ivied grange, the once seat of the famous Cranes. Whether this tradition be true or not there is no documentary evidence to show. The seal is in good preservation, as are also the Maces and Loving Cup, and all are much prized by the Corporation, and by the free and independent burgesses of this old Saxon borough, which boasts of once having been the principal town in the south of East Anglia.