

YATTON ARMORIAL GLASS

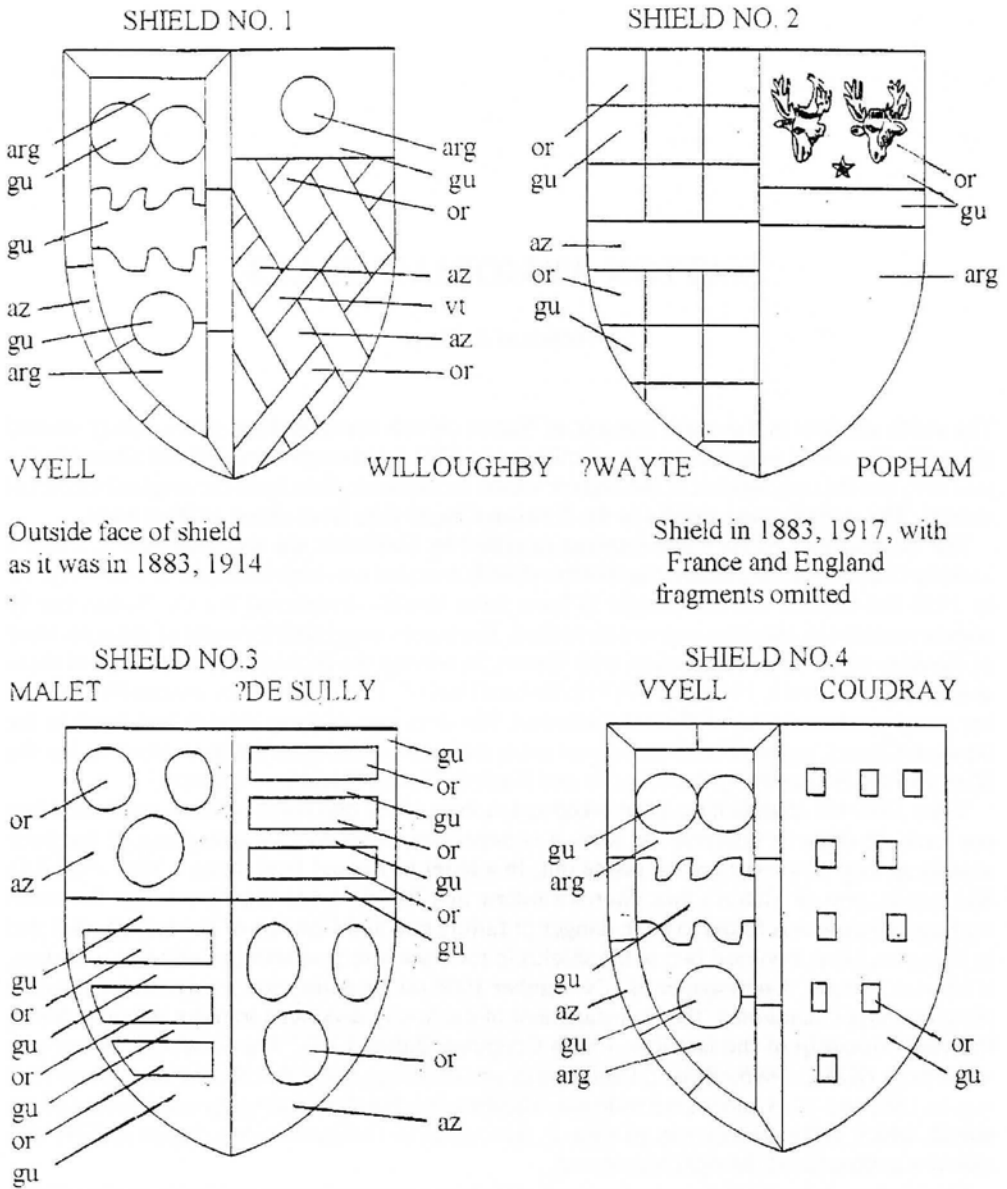
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The south window in the south transept of Yatton church contains three 15th-century stained glass shields which were recorded by Collinson in 1791.¹ Although damaged and altered in the past they are the only shields in the church which incorporate glass from the original medieval shields. The stained glass shields in the Newton Chapel date from about 1829 or later.

The three shields in the south transept recorded by Collinson are now numbers 1, 2 and 4 looking from inside the church. Each of the shields contains two impaled coats of arms (Fig. 1). In 1920 the Church Council sought to have these shields deciphered but the Yatton family commemorated by the arms was not identified. The names suggested for some of the arms were of families who had no connection with Yatton. In solving the problem, the drawings of these shields made in 1883, 1914 and 1917 by Roland Paul (d. 1935) have been invaluable. He was for many years architect of Bristol Cathedral. His drawings of these shields and those in the Newton Chapel, together with associated notes and correspondence, are now preserved in the library of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society at Taunton.²

Since 1883 the shields have been taken out at least twice and some of them reversed when put back. In order to interpret the arms it is necessary to establish whether any of the three shields as they now exist are set inside out. In a letter to Roland Paul dated 6 May 1922 T.G. Simmonds, one of Yatton's two churchwardens in 1905–9, wrote that 'years ago the south transept window was found to be in danger of falling out, and Cowlins of Bristol rebuilt it and in doing so, I fear, reversed two of the shields in the tracery thus upsetting Collinson's reading, if his was correct.' A newspaper of 1 November 1906 on the dedication service in the restored Newton chapel mentioned 'the re-instatement of the lovely decorated transept window during the short vicarship of the late Rev. Philip Chapman Baker, LLB.' The Revd P.C. Baker was vicar from 1895 to 1896.³ Roland Paul's notes and drawings show that Shield no.1 is now as it was in 1883 and 1914 and is set inside out. The drawing therefore shows the outside face of the shield, which is the correct way to view it. According to Collinson's description in 1791 this shield was then fitted the right way round.

Shields nos. 2 and 4 are now correctly set after being reversed again (probably in the 1920s). Roland Paul recorded that in no. 2 everything below the 'chief' in the Popham arms (ie. on the sinister or female side) had been made up with fragments from the destroyed shield of France and England quarterly and that some fragments of it were included in no.3 (now no.4) on the dexter side (ie. in the lower part). The arms of France and England had been in a fourth shield noted by Collinson. The 1931 church guide stated that a new shield had been provided incorporating all that remained of the arms of France and England from fragments of glass within two other shields (ie. the present shields nos. 2 and 4).⁴ It was probably at this time that: 1) the dexter side of shield no. 4 was repaired to match the dexter side of shield no.1, and 2) the fragments of the arms of France and England removed from the lower half of the sinister side of



Outside face of shield as it was in 1883, 1914

Shield in 1883, 1917, with France and England fragments omitted

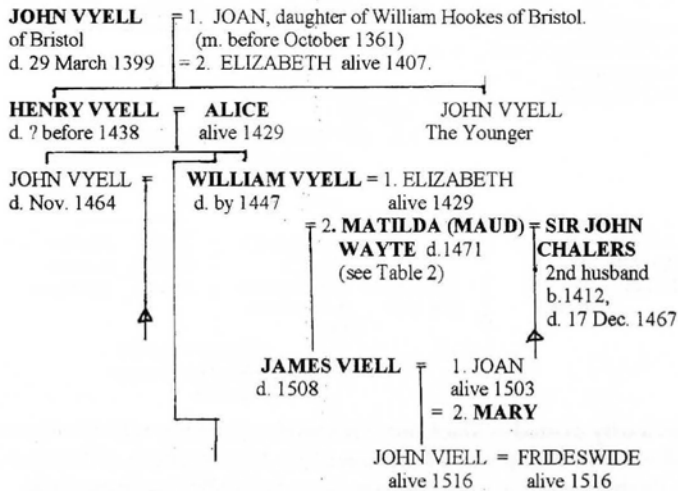
Fig. 1 Shields in the south transept window, Yatton Church. Nos 3 and 4 are as in 2000; drawn by Brian Bradbury

shield no. 2 were replaced by plain glass. The left stag's head and the pierced mullet (five pointed star) between the two stags' heads are now missing. Shield no. 2 is drawn to show the Popham arms as they were recorded in 1883 and 1917 but without the fragments of the arms of France and England.

As mentioned above, the arms on the dexter side of shields nos 1 and 4 are now the same. These represent the Vyell (Viell, Viall) family which held the manor of Claverham in Yatton parish for four or five generations from the latter part of the 14th century to the early years of

the 16th century (Table 1). The first of the family to hold the manor was John Vyell (d. 1399), a wealthy Bristol merchant who became the first Sheriff of Bristol in 1373 when the city was created a separate county. He was Mayor of Bristol 1388–9 and MP for Bristol in 1382 and 1390.⁵ He lived in a fine residence on the Quay in Bristol, constructed out of one of the towers of the city walls. William Worcestre writing in 1480 referred to it as a corner mansion of large stones ('*lapidibus magnis*') called Viell Place.⁶ The site of the mansion is shown on the large scale 1882 OS map of Bristol marked 'Vielle's Tower' at the entrance to Baldwin Street.

Table 1 The Vyell (Viell) family; persons holding the manor of Claverham, in Yatton, are shown in bold



At Easter 1398, not long before his death, John Vyell was party to a settlement by which he transferred to his son Henry Vyell and the latter's wife Alice the manor of Claverham, together with lands in Claverham and Yatton.⁷ Henry Vyell, described as 'King's esquire' in 1392 and 'escheator in the County of Somerset' in 1401,⁸ had two sons John and William.

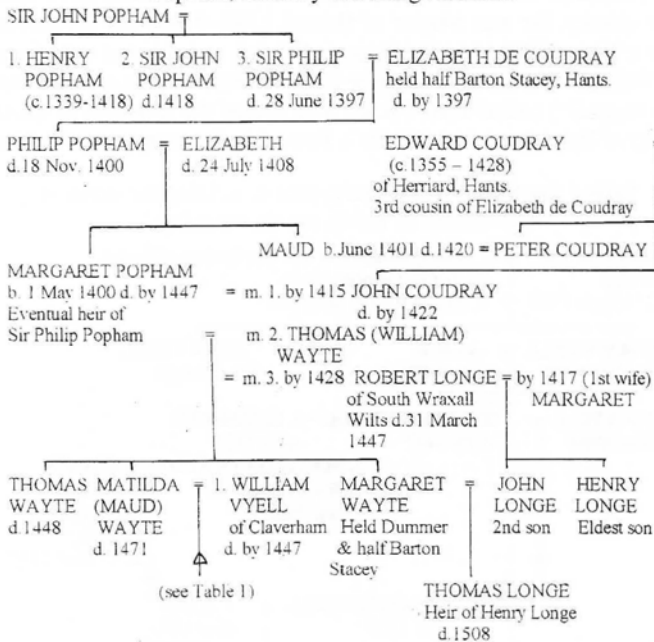
Most of Henry Vyell's property probably went to his elder son John and the latter's two daughters, who were co-heiresses. However in 1438, probably after the death of Henry, William Vyell and his wife Matilda were confirmed in their possession of the manor of Claverham, lands in Claverham and Yatton, and the advowson of the free chapel of Claverham.⁹

William Vyell, like his father Henry, was one of the King's esquires. He held an important position in the household of Henry VI as one of the marshalls of the hall. In addition he was granted in 1434 the office of constable of the castle of Tintagel, Cornwall, with all the usual fees, wages and other profits. This office was probably a sinecure as the castle was already becoming ruinous and William was allowed to appoint a deputy.¹⁰

The mother of William Vyell's wife Matilda was Margaret Popham, an heiress who inherited manors in Hampshire and Berkshire which had been held by the Popham and Coudray families for many centuries. The arms of these two families are shown in two of the shields in the south transept window on the sinister (female) side – see shields nos. 2 and 4.

Margaret Popham's grandparents Sir Philip Popham and Elizabeth de Coudray held between them the manor of Dummer and half the manor of Barton Stacey in Hampshire (Table 2). Barton Stacey had been granted to Elizabeth in 1370 by her parents Sir Fulk and Joan de Coudray whilst Dummer had come to Sir Philip from his father Sir John Popham, of Popham. The *Victoria County History* of Hampshire states that Dummer passed from Sir John to Philip Popham, possible a younger son, and Elizabeth his wife.¹¹ The five pointed pierced mullet (representing a spur

Table 2 Matilda, wife of William Vyell, and her links with the Popham, Coudray and Longe families



rowel) which previously existed in Shield no. 2 is a mark of cadency which indicates that Margaret Popham's grandfather Sir Philip was a third son of Sir John Popham, of Popham. His two older brothers, Henry Popham and Sir John Popham, were both MPs for Hampshire.

Margaret Popham married three times but had children only by her second husband. Her first husband was John Coudray, son of Edward Coudray of Herriard, Hampshire, who also held the manors of Padworth and Lyford in Berkshire. Margaret Popham must have obtained the manor of Lyford from this marriage as she was holding this manor in 1428 after the death of her first husband. It continued to be held, together with other manors in Berkshire, by her daughter Matilda Wayte and her grandson James Vyell.¹²

Margaret Popham's second husband was Thomas (William) Wayte and by him she had three children, Thomas, Matilda and Margaret. Margaret Popham died before her third husband Robert Longe, of South Wraxall, Wilts (d. 1447). He was the founder of an important Wiltshire family and was M.P. for Wiltshire and a number of Wiltshire boroughs between 1414 and 1442.¹³

After William Vyell's death (before 1447) his wife Matilda Wayte married Sir John Chalors (Deschalors) of Whaddon, Cambridgeshire (Table 1). It was no doubt because of his wife's possessions in Berkshire that he became MP for Berkshire in 1447 and Sheriff of Oxfordshire and Berkshire in 1443–4 and 1451–2. He probably lived at his wife's manor house at Lyford as in 1461 he was said to be of Whaddon, Cambridgeshire, and of Lyford, Berkshire.¹⁴ It should perhaps be mentioned that Lyford is in the part of Berkshire which was transferred to Oxfordshire in 1974.

In 1462 Sir John Chalors and Maud (Matilda) his wife presented William Choke to the free chapel of Claverham.¹⁵ Sir John Chalors died in 1467 leaving three daughters to share his lands in equal parts subject to a reasonable dower for his widow Maud. Maud died in 1471 and on 12 August 1472 the escheators in the counties of Berkshire and Somerset were ordered to take the fealty of her son and heir James Vielle and cause him to have full seisin of his lands.¹⁶ These

included the manor of Claverham in Somerset and the manors of Lyford (Hanney parish) and Hartridge (Ashampstead parish) and half the manors of Titcomb (Kintbury parish) and Haslewick (Inkpen parish) in Berkshire.¹⁷

Turning again to the three shields in the south transept window it seems likely that shield no.4, showing the Vyell arms impaled with those of Coudray, represents William Vyell and his wife Matilda Wayte who later inherited the Coudray manor of Lyford from her mother Margaret Popham.¹⁸ The blazons of these arms are:

Argent, a fess raguly gules between three torteaux, within a bordure gyronny azure (for VYELL) impaling gules ten billets or, three, two, two, two and one (for COUDRAY).

In the middle ages a bordure signified that the bearer was not the head of the house. As stated above William Vyell was the younger son of Henry Vyell.

Shield no.1 also shows the Vyell arms but the colour of the field has been changed from argent to vert since Roland Paul's drawing of the shield in 1914. This is contrary to the rule of heraldry that a colour should never be placed on a colour (in this case red on green). The blazons of the arms within shield No.1 are now:

Vert, a fess raguly gules between three torteaux, within a bordure gyronny azure (for VYELL) impaling azure fretty or and vert, on a chief gules a plate (for WILLOUGHBY).

The family name of Joan, the first wife of James Viell is not known but it is possible that she was a Willoughby and that shield no.1 represents James Viell and his wife Joan (Table 1). The only Willoughby arms recorded on hatchments in south-west England are on two hatchments in Barton Stacey church, Hampshire. These were seen in 1953 but are now missing.¹⁹ This may be more than a coincidence if Joan was a Willoughby, as a moiety (half) of Barton Stacey manor was held by the Coudray and Popham families and their descendants from 1313 to 1576.²⁰

James Viell married again towards the end of his life as shown by his will dated 21 April 1508 in which he left to Mary Viall his wife his manor of Claverham in Somerset and his manors of Hartridge, Titcomb and Haslewick in Berkshire.²¹ The manor of Lyford was not included as James had settled this manor on himself and his wife Joan in 1503 with remainder to John Mordaunt of Turvey. Consequently the Mordaunt family succeeded to Lyford when James Viell died.²²

Mary Viell must have died before 1516 as John Viell, son and heir of James Viell, in that year gave up all his rights in ten Berkshire manors, including Hartridge, Titcomb and Haslewick, to a group of London merchants, subject to a yearly rent being paid to him and Frideswide his wife from the manor of Hartridge.²³ As there is no reference to the manor of Claverham in the deeds we do not know when it changed hands but it is probable that this happened about the same time. The Capel family seems to have followed the Viell family in owning the manor as Sir Giles Capel presented a priest to the free chapel of Claverham in 1526.²⁴

Shield no.2 is a problem. The arms on the sinister side are the arms of Popham but the arms on the dexter side cannot be identified with certainty. They are not the arms of Sir John Chalers, the second husband of Matilda (Maud) Wayte, nor the arms of John Coudray and Robert Longe, the first and third husbands of Margaret Popham. This leaves the possibility that they are the arms of Margaret Popham's second husband who is a shadowy figure. He is referred to as William Wayte, Thomas Wayte and Edward Wayte in different documents. His death is not recorded and none of the manors inherited by his children came from him. The blazons of the arms within this shield are:

Chequy or and gules a fess azure (for ?WAYTE) impaling argent, on a chief gules a mullet pierced between two stags' heads caboshed or (for POPHAM).

There is now a fourth shield in the south transept window not previously recorded. It is shield no.3 looking from the inside. This must have been brought from elsewhere to replace the reconstructed shield containing fragments of the arms of France and England which was mentioned in the 1931 church guide.²⁵ Assuming that the three oval charges in the first and

fourth quarters are meant to represent shells the blazon of these arms is *Azure three escallops or*. These are the arms of the Malet family of Enmore.²⁶

The arms in the third quarter of this shield are damaged but it appears that they were originally the same as those in the second quarter which are: *Gules three bars or*. In an ancient coat, however, they may have been described as: *Barry gules and or*.

In his history of Somerset, Collinson stated that Sir Raymond de Sully had lands at Huntspill and bore on his seal barry of six.²⁷ He refers elsewhere to the marriage of William Malet Lord of Enmore with Sarah the daughter of Raymond de Sully.²⁸ Raymond de Sully is recorded in 1303 as holding a quarter part of a knight's fee in Huntspill.²⁹ Although the Sullys were Lords of Iddesleigh in Devon their main seat was probably Sully Castle near Barry. They established themselves as members of Glamorgan's gentry in the period up to 1262 when they held two knights' fees at Sully and two at Wenvoe. These four fees were held by Raymond de Sully in 1314, but by 1317 he was dead, the last male of his line.³⁰ Iddesleigh later became the seat of the Malet family, perhaps as a result of the marriage represented by the shield now in Yatton church? The site of Sully Castle is no more as houses have been built over it following excavations carried out between 1963 and 1969.³¹

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- ²⁸ *ibid.*, 3, 220.
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