

ARMORIAL PANELS IN EASTHAM CHURCH

THE three panels shown in the accompanying plates are generally recognised as being among the most interesting specimens of old oak carving now remaining in Cheshire, and their excellence, both in design and workmanship, has attracted the attention of many visitors to Eastham. A short account of these carvings will, therefore, probably be interesting to the members of the Society.

Although the panels have been previously photographed on several occasions,¹ the subjoined reproductions, from photographs by Mr. Waite, convey an idea of the carving so much more true than that afforded by any former pictures that the Council of the Society have decided to publish them.

At first sight one is inclined to look upon the panels as belonging to the latter part of the fifteenth century, but on a more careful examination the Renaissance feeling which distinctly pervades the whole work and its general design and character suggest that the carving was executed about the year 1520, a conclusion in which Mr. W. H. St. John Hope, an acknowledged authority, concurs.

The arms displayed on the panels are those of the three Cheshire families of Poole, Capenhurst, and Buerton, and there can be little doubt that they were all originally set up in the church, on a screen or pew, by some member of the family of

¹ The photograph, which is given in vol. lii. of the Society's *Transactions*, as an illustration to Miss Poole's paper on "The Poole Family of Poole Hall in Wirrall," was taken sideways, with the result that the details of the carving are by no means distinct.



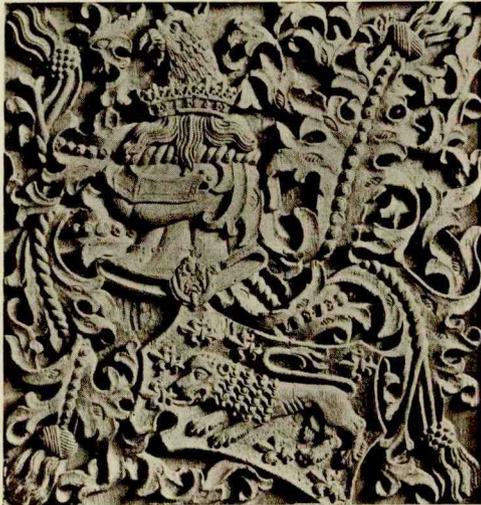
CARVED OAK PANEL IN EASTHAM CHURCH

ARMS OF BUERTON



CARVED OAK PANEL IN EASTHAM CHURCH

ARMS OF CAPENHURST OF CAPENHURST



CARVED OAK PANEL IN EASTHAM CHURCH

ARMS OF POOLE OF POOLE

Poole of Poole Hall, the Pooles being at that time entitled to quarter the arms of Buerton and Capenhurst with their own. But it is not easy to determine by whom the panels were set up. Thomas Poole, who died without issue in 1510, was succeeded at Poole Hall by his brother John, then aged forty; John also died without issue, and was succeeded by his brother Randle, Rector of Neston, who, dying in 1538, was succeeded by his nephew Thomas, the son of Randle's youngest brother, Sir William, who had died in 1535.

Sir William, who was knighted at Lille on the 14th October 1513, was High Sheriff of Cheshire in 1527-28, and, as already mentioned, died in 1535.

In Harl. MS. 1045, fol. 101*b*, there is this note:—

“The crest, the Staggeshead caboshed [Gules] the hornes gobony of 4 peces Or and b, was given to William Pull of Wirall in Chester esquier by Thom's Wrottesley [Wriothesley] *alias* Garter and John Young *als* Norrey by letters pattenes dated A° 1613 [1513] in the 4 year Hen. viij.”

This was an adaptation of the Buerton crest, and was borne by Sir William, together with the old Poole crest of a griffin's head erased, gorged with a ducal coronet; both crests appear as badges upon his banner.

If Sir William was living at Poole Hall during the lifetime of his brother Randle he might well have caused the panels to be carved, but in that case one would have expected to find this new crest of a stag's head accompanying his arms. His elder brother, Thomas, seems to have died too early to have ordered the work, and Randle, as a priest, would not be likely to display the helm and crest which stand above the shield on the first panel; so possibly the second brother, John, may have been the one who wished to show his arms in the church, but this is merely conjectural.

J. P. R.