

## THE HERALDRY OF CHESHIRE.

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THE heraldry of the Earldom of Chester has survived in the arms of corporations within its territory probably more than that of any other feudal honour in England. This is due to the tremendous power and influence of the Earls of Chester, who ruled the Palatinate in almost royal state, leaving little room for the establishment of families of comparable power or for the consequent appearance of the emblems of such families in the arms of boroughs in which they might have held manors. This is not to say that there were not strong and historic families within the Earldom—it is well-known that Cheshire was called “the seed-plot of gentilitie” on account of their numbers—and family emblems are certainly to be found in Cheshire’s municipal coats, but as the Earls held most of the manors directly and granted many of them to vassals, it is the heraldry of the Earls that appears most frequently. In fact, the entire corpus of registered arms in Cheshire contains only two civic coats wherein no reference to the Earldom occurs.

Even those who pretend to little or no heraldic skill seem to be able to name immediately the gold wheat-sheaf as the distinctive emblem of Cheshire, just as they can name the roses of Lancaster and York. The occurrence of the gold garbs on blue in so many Cheshire coats is ample evidence of their popularity dating from early heraldic times. Hugh of Cyveiliog, or Kevilioc, Earl of Chester, *temp.* Henry II, bore six gold garbs on blue, and Ranulf de Blundevile reduced their number to three; this has remained the characteristic Cheshire pattern ever since. The garbs, however, are not the only emblems associated with the Earldom of Chester, whose heraldry derives from seals and badges as well as from shields.

The first Norman Earl of Chester, Hugh d’Avranches, was commonly called Hugh Lupus, except by the Welsh, whose genius for bestowing nicknames, even in the eleventh century,

was responsible for his uncomplimentary name of Huw Fras—"Fat Hugh"—referring more probably to his grossness than to his strength. His device—hardly to be called a coat-of-arms at that period—was a white wolf's head, whose heraldic descendants have acquired a body to match. This wolf's head may be seen carved upon capitals in the church at Mold, probably in allusion to the office of Seneschal of Chester held by one of the Barons de Montalt. Hugh Lupus held the earldom of Chester "by the right and honour of the sword", and his formidable weapon is another of the Chester emblems.

The white ostrich feathers, commonly called "the Prince of Wales' feathers", though strictly those of the Heir Apparent, have been a part of the Earldom's heraldry since the Earldom has been granted to the Prince of Wales. Dr. Taylor, in "Selected Cheshire Seals" (BULLETIN, Vol. 26, No. 2), describes a number of seals of Earls and of the Earldom, in which these feathers appear. In that of Henry, Prince of Wales, Duke of Aquitaine, Lancaster and Cornwall, and Earl of Chester, afterwards Henry V (Rylands Ch. 1309), the dexter supporter, the famous swan of de Bohun, is given as "supporting a labelled ostrich feather in its mouth", though the actual feather is missing in this impression. Other seals containing the feather are :

- (1) *County Palatine of Chester*, A.D. 1531, in which the feather is seen in the interstices of the diapered ground of the obverse, and on the reverse appears a shield of Chester supported by two dragons sitting back to back and each holding an ostrich feather with a label inscribed Ich Dien. (Rylands Ch. 916).
- (2) *County Palatine of Chester and County of Flint*, A.D. 1603. (Mainwaring Ch. 405). The obverse shows an equestrian figure of the King, with a crest of five feathers, three long and two short; the reverse shows the feathers supported by the seated dragons.
- (3) *County Palatine of Chester and County of Flint*. Charles, Prince of Wales, Duke of Cornwall and York, Earl of Chester (afterwards Charles I), A.D. 1616. The obverse shows the same crest of five feathers as the previous seal, with separate feathers in the interstices of the horse's

diapered caparison. The horse, as in the previous seal, also has a plume of feathers. The reverse shows the seated dragons holding the feathers and supporting a shield of three garbs for the Earldom of Chester.

Later seals repeat the seated dragons with feathers and the shield of three garbs. A seal of *Henry de Lacy, Constable of Chester*, c. A.D. 1300 (Rylands Ch. 1266), shows on the reverse a shield of de Lacy's personal arms with a garb on either side; the garb also appears as a diaper ornament on the obverse of (3).

The incidence of these several emblems in the heraldry of Cheshire may now be discussed.

### 1. *City of Chester.*

The arms of the City are the oldest civic arms in the county. The familiar shield showing the Royal Arms of England dimidiated with the shield of the Earldom is said to have been in use in 1329, and regranted by Richard II, who erected Chester into a Principality. The shield was confirmed and crest and supporters added in 1580.

Arms : England (gules three leopards or) dimidiating Chester (azure three garbs or). The shield is surmounted by a barred helm facing outwards, Scottish fashion—certainly unique in English civic heraldry, as is the mantling, the dexter side being red and white, the sinister blue and white, and the wreath woven in all three colours.

Crest : A sword erect within a sheath tied with a gold fillet.

Supporters : Dexter, a lion or, gorged with a crown argent; sinister, a wolf argent gorged with a crown or.

The garbs of Chester and the sword and wolf of Hugh Lupus are added to the royal leopards in this coat. The lion supporter, is thought by Scott-Giles (*"Civic Heraldry of England and Wales"*, 1933), to be the lion of the Ferrers Earls of Derby, as are those of the arms of Lancashire; the dynastic connexions of this family with both counties support the theory, but in the case of the Chester arms, it would appear that the wolf was placed so as to support the Chester half of the shield, the lion to uphold the royal half. This would indicate the lion as a royal emblem, and a further pointer to the royal character of the lion is that the

supporters chosen for the County arms were gold lions, and this may have been a deliberate imitation of the Chester supporter. The County arms were granted after Scott-Giles' description of the Chester coat was published, so that he would not have this consideration to help his surmises on the Chester lion.

It is not certain whether the motto used by Chester was intended as such. The words "Antiqui colant Antiquum Dierum" seem to have been added to Flower's confirmation and grant almost as a pious injunction to the grantees, and indeed in the representation of the arms upon the official notepaper, following the style of the 1580 patent, the motto is not to be found stretched across the compartment between the supporters, but is engraved separately below the whole achievement. But the motto, whatever its origin, is certainly now used as the motto of Chester, and it is therefore shown in the illustration in the usual manner.

## 2. *Cheshire County Council.*

Prior to the grant of arms of 1938, the arms of the Earldom were used with variations (*vide* Scott-Giles, *sup. cit.*). These were naturally ineligible for granting, and a new achievement was designed and submitted by the late County Architect, Mr. Anstead Brown. This design, with minor amendments, was granted as follows :

Arms : Azure a sword erect between three garbs or.

Crest : Upon a mural crown gules a lion statant gardant or, between two ostrich feathers argent.

Supporters : On either side a lion or supporting between the forelegs an ostrich feather argent.

Motto : Iure et dignitate gladii.

The shield is not a new one, as is usually the case in a new grant. The *Statute Merchant Seal of Chester*, A.D. 1589 (Rylands Ch. 1530) has on the reverse a shield bearing a sword between two garbs. The impression is described as "somewhat rubbed"—is it possible that there was a third garb which has been obliterated? It seems odd, in any case, that this seal should not bear the arms, with crest and supporters, which were given to Chester only nine years previously. The shield with three garbs and sword appears in two other places ; it has been the Chester hallmark since 1779,

replacing the dimidiated shield (which has always been the official shield of Chester), in use from 1701 to 1779. It appears also upon the Eastgate, which was rebuilt in 1769, and "Hemingway states that on one side there is the arms of the City, and on the other the arms of the Grosvenor family, the expense of rebuilding having been borne by Lord Richard Grosvenor". Mr. G. Burkinshaw, Town Clerk of Chester, to whom I am indebted for this note, has no further information on the use of the shield of three garbs and a sword by the City; but it would appear that at the time of the rebuilding of the Eastgate, this shield was associated with the City, since it is displayed upon the Eastgate. It is only ten years later that the same shield came into use as the Chester hallmark, and from other evidence it seems to have been in use before the grant of 1580 as well. Mr. Geoffrey C. Scrimgeour, Clerk of the County Council, quotes another correspondent: "I have a print of a Plan of the City of Chester said to be of the year 1560, and although no colours are indicated, the shield of the City depicted in the right hand corner consists of an upright sword between three wheat sheaves." Thus there seems to have been a concurrent use of both coats by the City of Chester both before and after the confirmation of 1580, though no documentary evidence is available in either the City or the County records of an authorization of the use of the shield bearing the sword and three garbs. However, it has now earned official recognition, in the arms of the County, and no more suitable shield could be devised.

The mural crown with its battlements is a familiar symbol in civic heraldry. It is usually of gold, but its red tincture in the County grant is a felicitous allusion to the red sandstone walls of Chester. Upon it stands the leopard, or lion statant gardant, from the Royal Crest—an appropriate reminder of the Palatinate status of the County and of its brief career as a Principality, as well as of the merging of the Earldom into the title of the Prince of Wales. The familiar ostrich feathers complete the design in conjunction with the lion crest and supporters. The motto recalls the terms of Hugh Lupus' tenure of the Earldom, and the whole achievement is one of the finest, most dignified and significant in British corporate heraldry.

### 3. *Borough of Dukinfield.*

Arms : Quarterly azure and argent, a cross pointed and voided quarterly argent and sable, in the first quarter a raven and in the fourth a garb, or.

Crest : Out of a crown palisado or, a cubit arm vested azure. the cuff argent, the hand proper grasping a shield azure charged with the sun or, all between two ostrich feathers argent.

Motto : Integrity.

These were granted in 1900, and the shield is the first civic shield in the county granted after that of Chester to bear a Cheshire emblem. The familiar garb, and the ostrich feathers in the crest, combine with the Dukinfield family's pointed cross and their crest of a hand holding the sun, to make a pleasing and significant design. The raven, locally called a docken (according to Fox-Davies and Scott-Giles), provides a traditional heraldic pun. The crown is an alternative to the mural or embattled crown granted to corporations, and represents the pales of a stockade. Scott-Giles draws the crown correctly, but calls it a crown vallary, which is of slightly different pattern, the upright parts forming a continuous pattern and not attached severally to the rim.

### 4. *County Borough of Wallasey.*

Arms : Or, on waves of the sea a three-masted ship in full sail proper, on a chief azure three garbs or, two and one, in the dexter, and a horn in the sinister, proper, stringed and garnished or.

Crest : A dolphin facing outwards, proper, entwined about a trident erect or.

Motto : Audemus dum cavemus.

These were granted in 1910. The maritime associations of the town are combined with something of its history. The garbs and the horn refer to the Mastership of the Forest of Wirral, which descended from Alan Sylvester to Alexander Storeton, after its bestowal upon the former by Earl Randle Meschines. Possibly the dolphin was deliberately chosen to represent New Brighton, two dolphins being the principal charges in the arms of Brighton.

5. *Borough of Sale.*

Arms : Azure on a pile argent between two garbs or, three lozenges sable.

Crest : Upon the battlements of a tower argent a moorcock proper.

Supporters : On the dexter a unicorn argent, armed and hooved or, maned and tufted azure, on the sinister a badger, each gorged with a collar of sallow twigs proper.

Motto : Salus et felicitas.

The arms and crest were granted to the Sale U.D.C. in 1920. The Chester garbs accompany three black lozenges from the arms of Massey of Sale. These arms form an interesting series with the arms of Hyde and Shaw, or Ashawe. Each family bears a chevron between three lozenges, with varying tinctures. There would appear to be heraldic kinship between them, and perhaps a link with the de Stockports. The crest refers to the district of Sale Moor.

The supporters, designed by Major T. G. Woolley and the author, were granted in 1945 to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the incorporation of the borough. The unicorn was suggested by the unicorn's head crest of the Carringtons, much as the wolf's head of Hugh Lupus gave the complete wolf. This supporter represents the Ashton-on-Mersey district of Sale, and the badger, or brock, gives a punning allusion to Brooklands. Each beast wears a distinctive collar of sallow twigs in reference to the origin of the name of the borough, which also finds an echo in the motto.

6. *County Borough of Stockport.*

Arms : Azure crusilly and three lozenges or, within a bordure or charged with three garbs and three double-headed eagles alternately azure.

Crest : Out of a mural crown or, a mount vert thereon a castle of two towers proper.

Motto : Animo et Fide.

These arms were granted in 1932, replacing a shield of the de Stockport arms (that is, blue strewn with crosslets and charged with three lozenges of gold), which was "supported" by two

figures which appeared to be trying to hide behind it. To the Stockport family coat was added a gold border bearing the three garbs of the Earl of Chester, with colours reversed. In the Town Hall is stained glass showing Robert de Stockport presenting to the burgesses a charter making the town a free borough, and an equestrian figure of Randle, third Earl of Chester, who granted the charter in the thirteenth century. The eagles are from the arms of the local family d'Eton. The castle commemorated in the crest has disappeared, its site being now partly occupied by the market-place.

### 7. *Borough of Bebington.*

*Arms* : Per chevron azure and or, in chief a saltire couped argent between two garbs or, and in an base ancient ship sail furled sable, flags flying gules.

*Crest* : In front of a rising sun or, a representation of Bromborough Cross proper.

*Motto* : Civitatis fortuna cives.

The borough was incorporated in 1937, but the arms had previously been granted to the Urban District Council in 1934.

The garbs, like those in the arms of Wallasey, refer to the granting of the Forest of Wirral by Randle Meschines. The ship refers to Bromborough Port, the Cross to Bromborough itself, the sun to Port Sunlight, and the saltire to the parish of St. Andrew in Bebington.

### 8. *Borough of Altrincham.*

*Arms* : Azure two garbs and a cogwheel or.

*Crest* : A leopard or, supporting with the dexter paw a staff gules, the truck or, flying therefrom a banner azure charged with a cornucopia or, the fruit proper.

*Supporters* : On the dexter side a unicorn ermine, maned, armed and unguled or, gorged with a collar pendant therefrom by a chain gules an escutcheon of the arms of Grey : Barry of six argent and azure ; on the sinister a lion or, similarly gorged and with an escutcheon of Massey of Dunham Massey : Quarterly gules and or, in the quarter a lion passant argent.

*Motto* : Altrincham en avant.



These were granted to the new borough in 1937. The Cheshire garbs are accompanied by a cogwheel alluding to the engineering industry. The royal leopard in the crest is said to be especially significant as the arms were granted in Coronation year, but it seems more likely to be a survival of the device previously used by the Altrincham U.D.C., which was the shield of Massey (*vide* the sinister supporter), but with a royal leopærd in place of the white lion passant. The cornucopia on the banner refers to the market gardening of the district and to the motto of the former U.D.C.: Pax et abundantia. The supporters recall the two great local families of Grey, Earl of Stamford and Warrington, and Massey of Dunham Massey.

### 9. *Bowdon U.D.C.*

Arms : Per chevron arched or and vert, two yew trees proper and a garb or, on a chief gules a lion passant argent.

Crest : A demi-unicorn ermine, armed, crined and unguled or, holding a bow strung proper, and gorged with a collar vert.

Motto : Beau don.

These arms, designed by the author, were granted in 1945 to commemorate the jubilee of the U.D.C. in 1944. The arched chevronwise division represents the "rounded hill" which gives Bowdon its name. The yews recall that many of the bows of the famous mediaeval Cheshire bowmen came from the trees of this district, a magnificent specimen of which is in the churchyard. The yews also refer to the wooded parts of Bowdon, especially Dunham. The garb of Cheshire also indicates the Agricultural Show which is a feature of the life of the area. The Earl of Stamford's unicorn, and the white lion of the Masseys, which have already been noticed in the arms of Altrincham, complete the design, with the addition of a punning charge, a bow—which happily recalls the yews in the arms—and a punning motto, "Beau don"—"Splendid gift." The motto is not only a pun on the name, but also refers to the gift of the arms to the U.D.C. by its Chairman, to the gift of the Denzell House as a cultural centre, and to the opening of Dunham Park to the public by the Earl of Stamford.

One other civic coat in Cheshire remains to be mentioned, though its shield bears no emblems from the Earldom. The crest of the *Borough of Stalybridge* is a wolf statant argent in front of a garb or, and was granted in 1857. The shield contains emblems from the arms of the Staveley and Dukinfield families (*vide* Scott-Giles, *sup. cit.*).

Of the municipal coats of Cheshire, only two bear no charges at all in reference to the Earldom, namely those of *Birkenhead* and *Hyde*. The former borrows from the Massey arms, the latter from the Hyde coat, both with many additions and a not very happy result. They are discussed in Scott-Giles and Fox-Davies.

The use of the emblems of the Earldom is not confined to Cheshire. It is not fair to quote the ostrich feather in the arms of various Welsh and English authorities as an emblem of the Earldom, because it is borne in those cases as an emblem of the Prince of Wales or Heir Apparent, the Earldom of Chester being merely incidental as far as concerns the history of those places. Two of these coats of arms, however, belong to places formerly within the Earldom, and bear its emblems in allusion to that stage of their history. They are the *City of Salford* and the *County of Flint*.

### *City of Salford.*

Arms : Azure semé of bees volant or, a shuttle fesswise between three garbs or, on a chief or a bale of cotton corded proper between two mill-rinds sable.

Crest : A demi-lion argent supporting a banner azure charged with a shuttle, or.

Supporters : On the dexter side a wolf or gorged with a chain pendant therefrom an escutcheon gules charged with a mill-rind or ; on the sinister side an heraldic antelope argent maned, armed and unguled or, with a like chain and escutcheon charged with a rose argent.

Motto : Integrity and Industry.

The garbs and wolf—gold this time—refer to the Earldom in which the Hundred of Salford was formerly situated. The ante-

lope, like that of the arms of Manchester, refers to the Duchy of Lancaster. The industries of the City are well represented. The inclusion of the rose of York seems curious, especially in conjunction with the Lancastrian antelope. Possibly it refers to the regular visits of Yorkshire merchants to buy Salford's goods in the early days of its industrial development. As these arms were granted in 1844, this peaceful invasion from the other side of the Pennines would probably remain fresh in mind at the time of the grant.

*Flintshire County Council.*

Arms : Argent on a cross engrailed fleury sable between four choughs, a mascle between four roundels argent.

Crest : A demi-dragon gules holding an ostrich feather erect argent.

Motto : Gorau tarian cyfiawnder.

These were granted in 1938, replacing an earlier design of about 1922 in which the undifferenced arms of Edwyn of Tegeingl, one of the mediaeval Tribal Princes, were placed between the seated dragons holding the ostrich feather from the seal of the Earldom of Chester. By statute of 34 Henry VIII it was ordained that the "original seale of Chester shall be and stand for the original seale of Flint and shall be in the custody of the Chamberlain of Chester", and this continued so long as the Palatinate Court existed. The Earldom of Flint was held by the Earl of Chester, and the Prince of Wales was summoned to Parliament as Earl of Chester and Flint until the eighteenth century. The various seals of the County Palatine of Chester and County of Flint have already been noticed, and the seated dragons with feathers found their way into the device of the County Council in 1922. When the present arms were granted in 1938, the dragon and feather survived in the crest, and the arms of Edwyn of Tegeingl were differenced by the addition of the white mascle or hollow lozenge, and the four roundels on the cross. These charges probably refer to the silk and metal-working industries of the county. The motto means "Justice is the best shield".

One other registered coat in Cheshire contains a Palatinate emblem, though it is not a civic coat. The arms of *Queen's School, Chester*, date from 27th February, 1936.

Arms : Or a rose gules, on a chief azure a mitre and a garb or.

Crest : An eagle or, wings expanded azure, holding a banner or charged with a rose gules.

Motto : Honour wisdom.

The Cheshire emblems occur also in various unauthorised devices in the county. The *Borough of Macclesfield* uses a pretty device, which does not claim to be a coat of arms, not being placed on a shield. It is a rampant leopard grasping a large garb. This would make a very good crest in a grant of arms. Of the other municipal boroughs of Cheshire, *Congleton* and *Crewe*, little need be said, as they are treated in Scott-Giles and do not contain any Cheshire emblems. It is a pity that the one should have stolen the shield of the Vintners' Company of London for the sake of a play upon the unimportant final element of the town's name, while the other persists in using one of the most egregious devices in British heraldry, which moved Fox-Davies to very outspoken criticism.

The Cheshire garb is found in several devices assumed by Urban Districts in the County, e.g. *Northwich, Winsford, Hazel Grove and Bramhall* and *Hale*. Northwich also uses supporters (which is a breach of privilege in an Urban District), which appear to be the Chester lion and wolf with fish-tails in allusion to the Weaver Navigation. It is to be hoped that some, if not all, of these authorities in Cheshire which have not yet registered arms will soon take steps to obtain genuine arms in keeping with the traditions of the County.

The occurrence of the emblems of the Earldom of Chester in the foregoing coats of arms may be conveniently summarised in a table ; only registered and therefore genuine arms are entered. It will be seen that of the thirteen coats, twelve include one or more of the garbs ; three have the wolf ; two have the sword ; three include the feather, and one the dragon. The garb occurs in one other crest, that of *Warrington*, side by side with the rose of Lancaster to indicate the town's position on the borders of the

two counties ; but it is not included in this series as it does not refer to a connexion with the Earldom. The garb occurs similarly with the roses of Lancaster and York, in the unauthorised shield used by *Mossley*, to indicate a topographical situation.

	Garb.	Wolf.	Sword.	Dragon.	Feather.	Local Family.	Industry.
Chester . .	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	—
Cheshire . .	✓	—	✓	—	✓	—	—
Dukinfield . .	✓	—	—	—	✓	✓	—
Wallasey . .	✓	—	—	—	—	—	✓
Sale . .	✓	—	—	—	—	✓	—
Stockport . .	✓	—	—	—	—	✓	—
Bebington . .	✓	—	—	—	—	—	✓
Altrincham . .	✓	—	—	—	—	✓	✓
Bowdon . .	✓	—	—	—	—	✓	—
Stalybridge . .	✓	✓	—	—	—	✓	—
Salford . .	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	✓
Flintshire . .	—	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
Queen's School .	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—

*Works consulted :*

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*Note.*—Since the publication of "The Heraldry of Manchester" in the BULLETIN, 1944, a further grant of arms has borrowed from the City coat. The dexter supporter of the arms granted to *Associated Electrical Industries, Ltd.* in 1944, and designed by Maj. T. G. Woolley, is the Manchester heraldic antelope wearing a gold collar with a gold shield charged with a rose of Lancaster. This is of course, very similar to the actual Manchester supporter, and refers to the location of the Company's chief works in the Manchester area. The proposed formation of a Manchester County Council should provide yet another interesting heraldic derivative from the City arms.



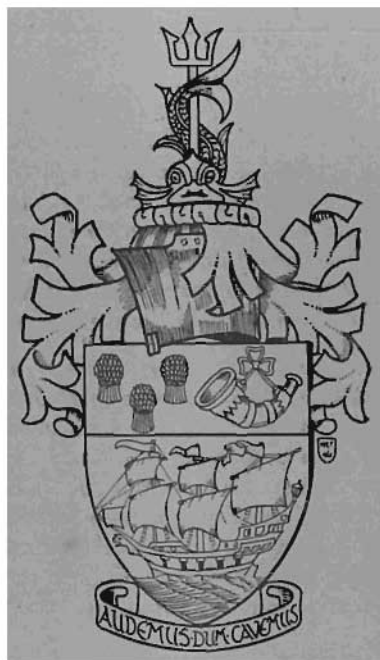
CHESTER



CHESHIRE



DUKINFIELD



WALLASEY



SALE



STOCKPORT



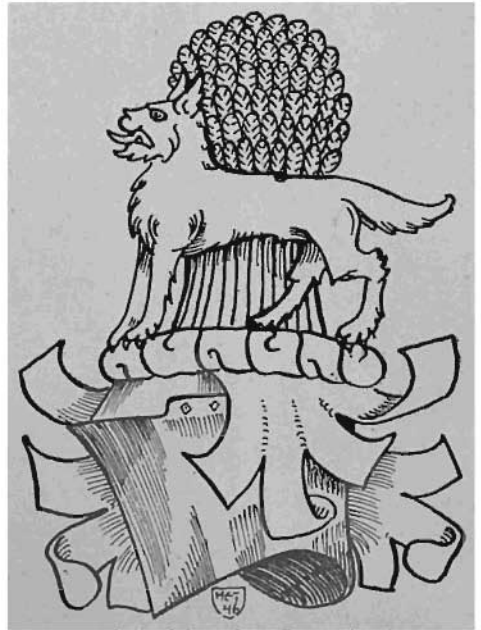
BEBINGTON



ALTRINCHAM



SALFORD



STALYBRIDGE (CREST)



FLINTSHIRE (CREST)



BOWDON



QUEEN'S SCHOOL,  
CHESTER