

The Dering Roll

Prepared & presented
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In the news ...
“Saved for the nation”

British Library acquires
the Dering Roll.

On 2 September 2008 ...

- ... the British Library announced that it had acquired the Dering Roll after a successful fundraising campaign.
- Previously, the Dering Roll was sold at auction at Sotheby's on 4 Dec. 2007 for £192,500. But a temporary export bar was placed on the Roll and the BL began its fund-raising campaign.

What is the Dering Roll?

- A “decorated manuscript roll of arms on vellum” (Sotheby’s catalogue)
- The earliest extant English roll of arms, produced during the reign of Edward I (1272-1307)
- Probably made ca. 1280.
- Original roll is now in the British Library; images here are of same, courtesy of the BL.

The Dering Roll



Why is the Dering Roll important?

- It is a complete medieval roll of arms. These are extremely rare. Only 17 survive (made during 13th-16th century).
- It is the oldest extant English roll of arms, dating from ca. 1280.
- It is a “who’s who” of approximately one-quarter of the English baronage of the late 13th century.

The Dering Roll

- It is “a list of knights owing feudal service to the constable of Dover Castle,” Stephen of Penchester (1268-99).
- According to the British Library, it is The Roll was made by a “specialist herald.”

Dover Castle - 12th century Saxon/Norman



The Dering Roll - specifications

- 4 vellum membranes, each approx. 26 inches long
- Total measurement is 104 inches (approx. 8.5 feet) long x 8.25 inches wide.
- Painted arms on green background

The Dering Roll - What's on it?

- 54 rows of painted armorial shields, 6 per line
- Total shields = 324
- Name of armiger written above each shield “in accomplished English cursive documentary script” (Sotheby's)
- Alphabetical list of names on back of roll, written in a 15th-century hand.



The Dering Roll - Who's Who of the Southeast

- One-quarter of the entire English baronage during the reign of Edward I (r. 1272-1307).
- Some were active during reign of Henry III (r. 1216-1272).
- First two arms on the roll: those of Richard fitz Roy and William De Say, two illegitimate sons of King John (r. 1199-1216).

Connect to Internet:

www.sothebys.com/app/live/lot/LotDetail.jsp?lot_id=159419727

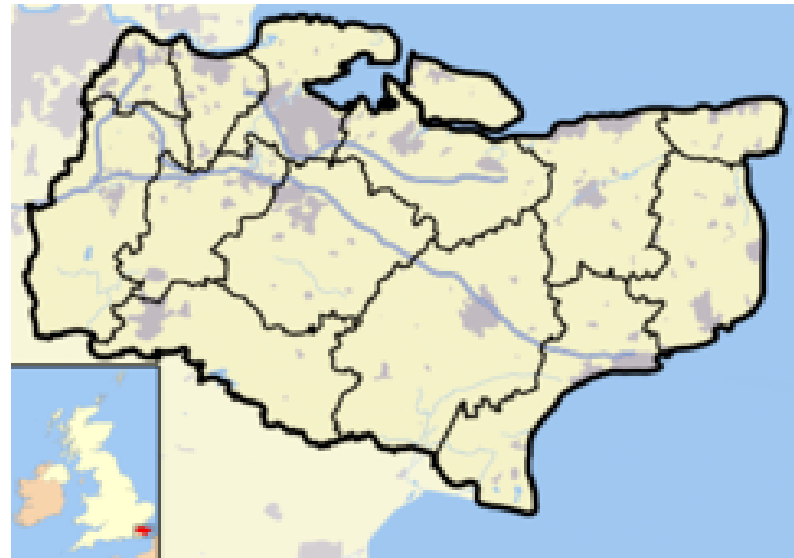
The Dering Roll - More Who's Who

- Shields 1-67 are almost all those of men from Kent, including county sheriffs.
- The strange case of number 61 ... Stay tuned.
- Shields 68-143: these men have some connection to county Sussex.
- Shields 144-294: Various: sheriffs of Dover Castle & others.
- The last 30-35 are those of men from France or Flanders.

County Kent



Dover (within Kent)



The Dering Roll: Sheriffs of Kent

- Henry de Cobham, m. daughter of Stephen of Penchester (r. Edw. I)
- John de Cobham (r. Henry III)
- Bertram de Criol
- Wm. De Hever
- Peter de Huntingfield
- Roger de Leyborne

More Sheriffs of Kent

- Henri de Malmain
- Robert de Scotto
- Waresius de Valoignes
- Wm. de Valoignes
- Wm. de Hornes
- Wm. de Leyborne
- Wm. Mansel

Provenance

- The Dering Roll was probably commissioned by Stephen of Penchester.
- Why?

The Dering Roll - Penchester

- Penchester may well have supported Edward I in his rise to power, before and after the barons' rebellion led by Simon de Montfort.
- Edward captured Dover Castle in 1265, granting authority over it to Stephen.
- The Roll could serve as a visual reminder of relations between various factions of local noblemen, depicted side by side.

The Dering Roll - Provenance (cont'd.)

- Mid- 16th century: Perhaps owned by Hugh fitz Williams of Spotborough. Copies made during this time and into the 17th c.
- ca. 1590: Perhaps owned by Thomas Knevett of Ashwellthorpe.
- Late 1620s: acquired by 1st baronet Sir Edward Dering, when he was Lieutenant of Dover Castle.

Edward Dering (1598-1644)



S^r Edward Dering Bart.
Ob. 1644.

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*more about Sir
Edward in a minute ...*

Provenance - the trail ends

- 1836: Sir Thomas Phillips (1792-1872) acquires the Dering Roll
- 6 Feb. 1948: Roll acquired by Sir Anthony Wagner (1908-1995), F.S.A., Garter Principal King of Arms 1961-1978. Then “by descent to the present owner.”
- Sold at auction at Sotheby’s 4 Dec. 2007 for £192,500.
- Finally, acquired -- after a successful fund-raising campaign -- by the British Library for £194,184 and placed on display in the Sir John Ritblat Gallery as of 1 Sep. 2008.

Edward Dering & #61, or A Case of Fraud

- You'll recall that the Dering Roll is an extremely rare, complete roll of arms.
- But what you don't know -- yet -- is that it was prophetic!
- How else could the arms of a 17th-century baron be included on a 13th-century roll of arms?

Edward, Edward

- The answer: Embellishment! (or fraud?)



Arms: Quarterly: 1st and 4th, argent, a fesse azure; in chief three torteaux (a coat of augmentation); 2d and 3d, or, a saltire, sable. Crest: On a ducal coronet or, a mount vert, thereon a horse, passant, sable; maned, or. Supporters: Two horses, sable, maned, or. Motto: Terrere nollo timere nescio. ("I will not affright and know not to fear.") Seat: Surrenden-Dering, in Kent. Arms granted 1 Feb. 1626, College of Arms.

Edward, Edward ... (cont'd.)

- Bye, bye Nicholas! When the Dering Roll came into Edward Dering's possession, he (or someone else) took the opportunity to add the Dering arms to the Roll. The name of Nicolas de Criol (#61 on the Roll) was erased and the name of Edward's fictitious ancestor, Richard fitz Dering, added in his place. And there they remain to this day.

Image is everything ...

- In his effort to boost his ancestral cachet, Sir Edward also had his family name carved into the baptismal font of St. Nicholas Church in Pluckley, Kent, and added the Dering name to a window.

Another Side of the Dering Story

- Sir Edward was an antiquary who amassed a large library, now part of the Kentish Archives. Included in Dering's library was his ms. of Henry IV, Part I, the earliest surviving ms. of a play by Shakespeare.
- He held a copy of the "Charter of King John," which he gave to Sir Robert Cotton, 10 May 1630.
- With Sir William Dugdale, Sir Christopher Hatton, and Sir Thomas Shirley, Dering founded "Antiquitas Rediviva," a society dedicated to the collection and preservation of armorial mss.

The Dering Window

Some buildings in the village of Pluckley, Kent (the Dering family's seat), are graced by the so-called Dering windows. The story goes that Dering designed these to make for an easier escape from Cromwell's army. (Dering supported the King in the English Civil War, 1642-1651.) But another story says that the windows made it easier for him to escape his creditors!



A brief biography of Sir Edward

- 1598-1644; born in the Tower of London, where his father was deputy-lieutenant
- Son of Sir Anthony Dering of Surrenden Dering in Pluckley, Kent -- reputed to be the most haunted village in England.
- Educated at Magdalene College, Cambridge.
- thrice-married: Elizabeth Tufton, Anne Ashburnham, and Unton Gibbs
- Had a number of children; through his son Edward (3rd marr.), he is the 10th great-grandfather of Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall
- Created baronet 1 Feb. 1626/27 due to influence of mother-in-law Ashburnham, connected to Lord Buckingham.
- Became Lieutenant of Dover Castle in 1629.
- After his term ended, he devoted himself to antiquarian pursuits.
- Died in poverty.

A last look ...





Sources

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- Identification of arms: *The Reliquary, Quarterly ...* Ed. Llewellynn Jewitt, F.S.A. Vol. XVIII (1877-78), pgs. 23-28, 89-92, and 171-75.
- Dering genealogy: *Genealogical Memoranda Relating to the Family of Dering of Surrenden-Dering. From The Records Of The College Of Arms ...* Collected by The Rev. Francis Haslewood, A.K.C. Self-published, 1876.
- Dering arms: Kimber, E. and R. Johnson. *The Baronetage of England ...* Vol. 2. (London: published for Woodfall, Fuller, Johnson et al., 1771).
- Other:
 - Sir Henry Ellis. *Original Letters Illustrative of English History Including Numerous Royal Letters*. Series 3, vol. 4. (London: Richard Bentley, 1846). Sir Henry was principal librarian of the British Museum.
 - Correspondence with curators and staff of the British Library.