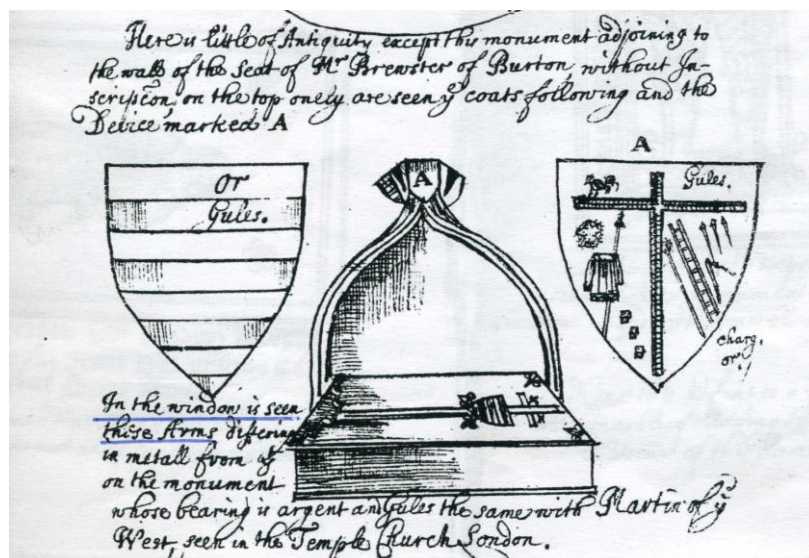


THE ST OWEN FAMILY TOMB  
in the  
south wall of the nave.



*This photograph was taken in late summer 2001.*

A much earlier representation of it dates to circa 1683 when Thomas Dingley included a drawing of it in his *History from Marble*.<sup>12</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Reprinted in two volumes in 1867, published by the Camden Society.

<sup>2</sup> The underlining in blue biro is modern.

Much less conspicuously positioned in the church, right up to the walls where, in the south-east corner of the nave, the south wall abutts the wall of what was once the east wall of the then total extent of the church, before the chancel was built- is an early tomb slab. One's initial reaction might be that it is the one shown by Dingley. However, closer examination clearly shows that this is not the case. For ease of comparison I include a recent photograph<sup>3</sup> of it:



-----  
But to revert to the “St Owen family Tomb”:

In 1890, when the Reverend Barker wrote his *Eardisland it's Church and Antiquities*, the “triangular stone at the top” was “plain and mutilated”. Barker was either not very observant, or inaccurate in recording what he saw, because whilst he clearly later mentions a shield showing *all the instruments of the crucifixion* and *on another shield a coat of arms* as being what Dingley gave in his drawing, as can be seen from the reproduction of Dingley on page one of this, he actually shows three shields heading the tomb recess; Barker mentions only two.

Nevertheless we can accept that in 1890<sup>4</sup> the tomb shields were in disrepair – the tomb slab itself not mentioned; impliedly no longer there.

In 1930 the Transactions of the Woolhope Club recorded that:

---

<sup>3</sup> Taken in 2010 by Graham Simpson, to whom my thanks are due.

<sup>4</sup> nb. that this is well after the 1863/1865 major renovation of the church.

*Against the south wall of the nave is a tomb recess which has three shields on the top of the canopy. These shields have been repainted incorrectly in the last few years.*

This repainting is probably what is still to be seen in the church today<sup>5</sup> and the observant churchgoing parishioner will by now be aware that whilst the middle one of the three shields is still as shown by Dingley, the other two are not.

They are currently blazoned with these arms; in heraldic terminology:

*or three bars gules*



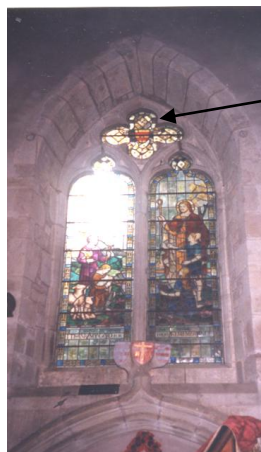
These arms relate to the St Owen family of Burton Court. There are several, fully authentic, variations of these arms extant, and also some which are completely different. I discuss these in a separate Paper.

But to return to Dingley. What he actually shows is not particularly clear. At first glance it may be thought that he has very helpfully provided us, to the left of the tomb itself, an enlarged version of the similar, but not nearly so clearly drawn shields, one at the top of the tomb canopy, the other on the tomb slab itself.

However, attention must be drawn to Dingley's wording underneath the *Or and Gules* shield at the left of his illustration:

*In the window.....Temple Church London.*

From this it can reasonably be inferred that Dingley here refers to the window in the south wall above the tomb canopy. A representation of the St Owen family arms is still to be found there but it is a shield of fewer pieces than the eight pieces that Dingley clearly shows. In heraldic terms it is *or two bars gules* and is part of the overall memorial window design, predominant thereunder, installed in memory of Mrs E.E.Clowes, late of Burton Court, in 1952:



---

<sup>5</sup> Today is 13<sup>th</sup> April 2011.

However, even that shield is not as originally intended. I have photocopies of the original correspondence from which it is clear that this shield was meant to be the same as the St Owen family shield in the East Window of the church (Commissioned by Col. and Mrs Clowes in 1902) viz. *Or three bars gules*.

Back again to Dingley, circa 1683. In full blazon the shield which Dingley drew, at the left of his illustration, of which I show a copy on page one of this, is in heraldic terminology *Barry of eight or and gules*, as depicted hereunder:



Returning to the wording underneath this shield, it can be seen that Dingley writes: *differing in metall from y<sup>se</sup> on the monument...* but whilst he differentiates as to colour, he does not say that the number of pieces in the shield is different. Thus whether the *monument* refers to the tomb slab only, or the left hand quartering of the east-facing canopy shield only, or indeed to the whole assemblage, there is no reason to doubt that Dingley saw, and attempted to draw, shields of eight pieces in each case.

If some of the arms represented in the East Window of the church were based on Dingley, in 1902 they miscounted the number of divisions (pieces) in the shields in Dingley's drawing, both in the shield on the tomb slab and also in the one on the top of the canopy. Under quite high magnification it is possible to make out eight pieces on the tomb slab itself, and also, less easily, but still arguably so, in the east-facing canopy shield. This is not what is in the glass in the East Window.

Dingley's few words of explanation beneath the shield at the left of his illustration now need further discussion. His full wording there is:

*In the window is seen these Arms differing in metall from y<sup>se</sup> on the monument whose bearing is argent and Gules the same with Martin of y<sup>e</sup> West, seen in the Temple Church London.*

Nowhere does Dingley's wording cast doubt on the *gules* (red) which he records for some pieces of the shield shown in his drawing to the left of the 'monument', and impliedly in the other places where he depicts this shield. Thus we can take 'gules' as confirmed for all these places, window, tomb slab and canopy shield (east).

But what of *differing in the metall*?

*Metall* here refers to the heraldic colours *Or* (Gold) and *Argent* (Silver). These are the only 'metals' recognised by Heraldry.<sup>6</sup> Thus in Dingley's time (circa 1683) both the tomb slab shield and the left hand quartering of the east facing canopy shield (but possibly only the former if by *monument* he refers only to the tomb slab) were of alternating red and silver

---

<sup>6</sup> Fox-Davies, page 70.



bands as opposed to the gold and red clearly shown by him for the shield in the window above.

In an article about Eardisland Church in the Transactions of the Woolhope Club for 1930 this point of the colour difference is briefly discussed, the conclusion being reached that:

*the arms are certainly those of St Owen, the gilt<sup>7</sup> on the tomb shields having perished leaving the white ground below.*

For this conclusion to be valid it has to be accepted that Dingley saw, in modern parlance, red and white, and that he described the white as argent, ie. silver. This is however reasonably tenable since white and silver were virtually interchangeable in early heraldic usage.<sup>8</sup> But why gold gilt would leave behind a white residue if it perished rather than the basic colour of the stone itself, is well beyond my expertise to comment on. But were the conclusion not to be valid, then one would be left with an otherwise unrecorded major ‘differencing’ of the well recorded St Owen family arms. I have not so far come across such a blazon ascribed to the St Owens (or indeed any other family) elsewhere.

Returning to Dingley’s few words under the shield of eight pieces at the left of his drawing, what are we to make of: *the same with Martin of y<sup>e</sup> West, seen in the Temple Church London.*

The notes accompanying the Camden Society Reprint of 1867 of Dingley’s “History from Marble” comment on this shield in the Temple Church, London, which Dingley does indeed describe, and depict, later in his work. The reprint notes say:

*Monument supposed by Dingley to be that of some alderman whose christian name was Martin: with coat of arms, Argent, two bars gules. It was for Richard Martin,<sup>9</sup> sometime Recorder of the City of London.*

Apart from the (broad) similarity of form, and colour, I can see no connection between this and the St Owen tomb slab and shield in Eardisland church in 1683. My view is that it was such a rare blazon (at least in Dingley’s experience) that he remembered the one when he saw the other—there being no other connection in his mind. From the Eardisland point of view it can be ignored.

One further matter remains to be resolved. To which families can these arms be ascribed? Dingley gives no name for either of them.

The three shields of horizontal pieces can safely be assumed, given the colours quoted by Dingley for the shield in the window above the tomb, to be the arms of the St Owen family of Burton Court. They were lords of the manor of Burton from 1091 to between 1405 and 1408. Various very similar versions of these arms are recorded, some in prime sources.



The ‘pile’ which features on two<sup>10</sup> of the shields is less easy to deal with.

Having made quite an issue of the St Owen arms, the Woolhope Club in the 1930 article conveniently skate over the ‘pile’ arms, doing little other than acknowledge that they are

---

<sup>7</sup> Presumably gold gilt being implied.

<sup>8</sup> The point is thoroughly discussed by Fox-Davies at his page 70.

<sup>9</sup> Of interest, but not necessarily relevance to this Paper, it should be noted that Duncumb’s Mss Notes of Circa 1804 record that in 1521 a W<sup>m</sup> Martyn of London...was granted a lease...for 21 years of a Watermill...Erleslande.

<sup>10</sup> The one on the right hand shield, as seen above, is the clearer of the two to see.

there. They (correctly) make no mention of the blazon, Dingley giving no indication as to this, nor do they make any comment as to what family they might relate.

Comment later added to the mounting card of the Architects's original drawing for the glass in the East Window in the chancel is not dated.<sup>11</sup> It suggests that these arms (ie. the 'pile'), whatever the colouring should really be (the drawing shows argent and sable), relate to the Downton family and refer to a marriage with the St Owen family in 1427.<sup>12</sup> But none of the sources in which I have found other details of the Downton family has any mention of them being entitled to such a blazon. Indeed authoritative early sources give completely different arms for them and it is therefore difficult to accept that these (the 'pile') arms do indeed relate to the Downton family.

In the early part of this Paper I recorded that WFC 1930 says that: *These shields have been repainted incorrectly in the last few years*. I then went into much discussion about the arms of the St Owen family. But by so doing I failed to highlight just how very incorrectly the shields were repainted. Whilst the shield in the centre is recognisably similar to that shown in the Dingley drawing, the other two are completely different. An enlarged photograph of them as they still are,<sup>13</sup> set again for comparison above the top part of the Dingley drawing, makes this clear:



---

<sup>11</sup> The drawing itself and the glass which resulted date to 1902.

<sup>12</sup> This is rather later than the likely date of the tomb canopy itself, viz. early 14<sup>th</sup> century.

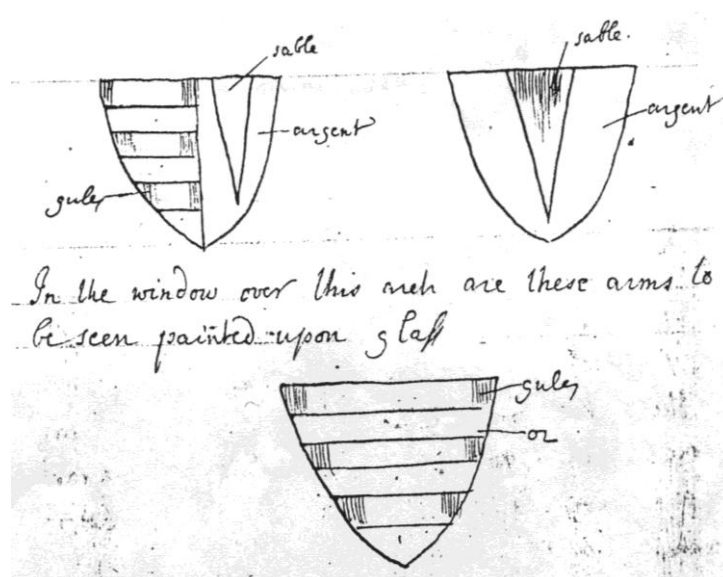
<sup>13</sup> I have seen no suggestion that they have again been repainted since the 1930 WFC publication.

It would be wrong not to mention that Dingley has been cited as having been inaccurate; for example:

“...Dingley's sketch, but he was frequently very inaccurate...”<sup>14</sup>

But in the case of the St Owen family tomb there is confirmation of what he drew. Within Hill's Manuscripts,<sup>15</sup> this particular manuscript being dated (by him) 1718, is a description of this tomb:

*On the south side the body of the Church is a Nich in the Wall upon the point of the arch is a triangular stone, on which are represented in a Shield all the instruments of our Saviours Death, as also the following arms.*



Differences from the Dingley drawing are seen. Hill shows the left hand side of the shield on the left (St Owen family) as being of six parts, the same on the shield he draws underneath the other two, above which he says *In the window over this arch are these arms to be seen painted on glass*. He gives the colours for the window arms as *gules* and *or* [red and gold] with the *gules* at the top: the shield arms are the same but he does not give the second colour. Whether or not this was intentional is impossible to say.

Dingley on the other hand shows the window arms as of eight pieces with *or* [gold] at the top: the drawing is clearly annotated *Or, Gules*.

Hill annotated the 'pile' (in both cases) as being *sable* [black] on a field *argent* [silver].

Dingley gives no colours for these. His drawing could be said to show black on silver, as with Hill, but it should be remembered that he was working with pen and ink (always black in those days) and so it is not safe to assume that to show black and silver was actually his intention, nor indeed that it was not his intention and that he omitted to annotate the colours.

Lastly, Hill does not mention (nor does he even draw the tomb arch and the shields thereon) a tomb slab under the arch of the tomb. Indeed he says that the church is: *not furnished with many monuments of Antiquity* this immediately before *On the south side...* which I have already quoted near the top of this page.

<sup>14</sup> HRO BM81/1/19, page 121.

<sup>15</sup> HRO CF50/114, pages 301-302.

From this it seems likely that the tomb slab was no longer where Dingley draws it when Hill recorded what he saw in 1718, or surely he would have mentioned it even if for some reason he decided not to draw it.

Transcribed and annotated, probably between 1918 and 1939, by George Marshall F.S.A. is an extract from Harleian Manuscript No.6868. I was advised<sup>16</sup> that this manuscript may well date to the mid 17<sup>th</sup> Century. In my own files I therefore listed it at c.1650, but it could be a bit later, in which case it would be quite close in date to Dingley. The transcript as annotated<sup>17</sup> would need many lines of text to describe and discuss: it is therefore copied hereunder:

Harl. Ms. 6868  
 f. 81. "Arrestland or Ordiland belonging to y<sup>e</sup> Earles of Essex, Severewse  
 On y<sup>e</sup> north side of y<sup>e</sup> churchyard is an old moated hill or tump.  
 In y<sup>e</sup> church in a window of a little chapple south belonging to  
 Burton is Barry of 6 G. & O. upon y<sup>e</sup> toppe finishing of an Arch-  
 ed Tombe is that of Barry impaled with A a pile sable<sup>2</sup> & againe.  
 the pile alone all in stone, upon y<sup>e</sup> side of the Tombe is y<sup>e</sup> Barry  
 of 6 G. & O. upon y<sup>e</sup> embowed head of y<sup>e</sup> chapple is 1. G. fesse int<sup>o</sup> 6  
 Bagguidon of Tedstree Delamere had or a pile sa, c.1259. held land in Wellington under  
 the Chandos's who had similar arms, or a pile gules.

1 written over O  
 2 written over gules

The relevant part of this starts half way across the fourth line: ... upon y<sup>e</sup> toppe.... Whilst all the handwriting is that of George Marshall, it is clear that he has added the smaller wording at a later time.

The basic text is of forty words including the abbreviations. Then by his approaching fifty words of notes he first confirms that *Barry* refers to *barry of six*, the arms of the St Owen family. All his remaining notes are concerned with the colouring of the arms with the 'pile', and to which family they can be ascribed.

The side notes numbered '1' and '2' are crucial to the identity of the pile arms, recording that wording in the document which he had transcribed had been changed from *O a pile gules* [Or a pile gules – viz. A gold field with a red pile upon it] to *A a pile sable* [Argent a pile sable- viz. a silver field with a black pile upon it]. He then intersperses notes about other arms with a pile as the sole charge:

*or a pile az (or az a pile or) is Hopwood of Milton, Pembridge.*

*Begguidon of Tedstree Delamere had or a pile sa, c.1259. held land in Wellington under the Chandos's who had similar arms, or a pile gules.*

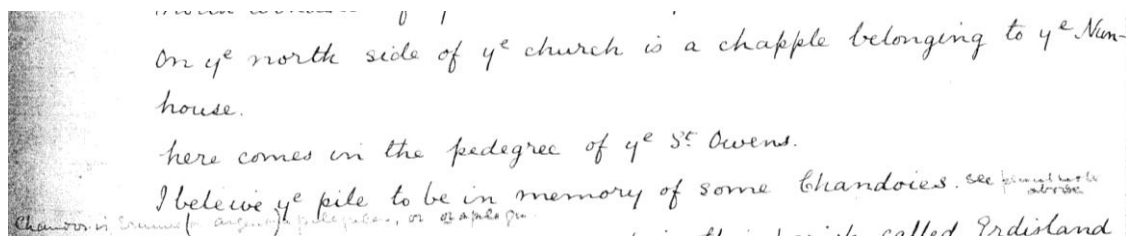
At this stage the transcribed document gives other detail of what was to be seen in the chapel in which the tomb canopy under discussion was situated. After thirteen lines of this and information about the windows in the chancel, in none of which is made any mention of a pile, the text suddenly switches back to the area immediately west of the chancel:<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> By the late Jim Tonkin.

<sup>17</sup> HRO BM81/1/12, page 83.

<sup>18</sup> It is as if the writer has been walking round the church anti-clockwise after entering through the present porch.





Marshall's additional note here reads:

*see pencil note above*

*Chandos is Ermine (or argent) a pile gules, or or a pile gu*

There is no suggestion at any stage that the field of the 'pile' shields on the tomb was 'Ermine' and therefore it can be taken that Marshall was, in effect, saying that those arms were of the Chandos family – *or a pile gules*.

This was also the conclusion reached by whoever it was who compiled 'Herefordshire References Volume I' in (circa) 1786.<sup>19</sup> The wording of this, and the order in which the features are mentioned, is very reminiscent of the Harleian Manuscript transcript which I have just worked through, but the compiler of 'Herefordshire References' does not in this case name a source: he may well have been describing what he saw and not quoting from anything:

#### *In the Church*

*In a south window of a little chapel [.....] near this, on the top finishing of an arched tombe is the same impaled with O. a pile g. by the name of Chaundos – both also repeated on the side.*

Whatever the circumstances of his making this documentary record it seems that he was in no doubt in firmly attributing these arms to the Chaundos family. He is both specific as to colour and forthcoming as to which family the arms relate – unlike the Harleian Manuscript version.

Further research into the St Owen family, about which there is a considerable amount of (sometimes conflicting) information available, may one day find reference to a marriage fitting this heraldry, whether it is indeed St Owen/Chandos or St Owen/some other family. Much remains to be done. In the meantime I consider that the balance of interpretation leans towards the 'pile' arms being those of the Chandos family, 'Or a pile gules'.

In attempting to take this research further forward, the date of the tomb canopy itself is relevant.

Within my first, handwritten, version of this Paper<sup>20</sup> I pointed out the similarity between 'our' tomb canopy and one towards the east end of the north aisle in Worcester Cathedral. At Worcester the apex of the tomb arch is damaged and a better photograph than the one I took then (which follows hereunder) would show support for my belief that it once had a coat of

<sup>19</sup> HRO CF50/106. In the catalogue the volume is not ascribed to anybody, but before and after it are items of W.H.Cooke. CF50/106 is not dated either by HRO or the compiler, but one item written into the manuscript volume is dated 1786.

<sup>20</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> October 1999 to late summer 2001.

arms there on a stone shield, as with ours. The notice board explaining the tomb, which can be seen to the right of the tomb in my photograph, dates it to *circa 1320*:



If the broad similarities can be accepted as representative of that style of construction then we have a tentative date for the tomb here in Eardisland.

This conjecture is supported by the report of the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (1934)<sup>21</sup>:

*In nave – in N.wall, with moulded jambs, segmental-pointed head and label; in S. wall, similar recess, with finial to label having three shields, two with ‘three bars’ and the third with the emblems of the Passion; both 14<sup>th</sup>-century, shields repainted, probably tomb recesses.*

The same dating is used in “A Short Guide”<sup>22</sup> where the wording sounds as if it was taken from the RCHM report: ...*and in the South wall (possibly a tomb) – both 14<sup>th</sup> century.*

It would be wrong to leave the subject of date without recording one dissenting opinion. This is again from George Marshall’s papers, now at Hereford Record Office:<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> RCHM: Herefordshire, Volume 3, page 45.

<sup>22</sup> The information leaflet provided in Eardisland church. It is thought to have been compiled by the Reverend S.Thomas, Vicar here in the 1990s. It was updated c.2001 (and again more recently) by Mr B. Freeman.

<sup>23</sup> HRO BM81/1/19, page 121(L).

*One would be inclined to date this tomb about 1500 more or less. but the Owens by then had ceased to own the manor<sup>24</sup> for nearly a century. It passed to the Downtons & then the Cotes but these arms are not theirs.*

This is a marginal note to his own discussion of *Dingley's sketch*, immediately after where he says Dingley was frequently very inaccurate. It will be seen that he is uncomfortable about the date he (Marshall) puts on it (the tomb) because of the dates of the St Owen family as Lords of Burton. I am inclined to think that these notes were made by Marshall before he made the transcript of Harleian Ms.6868 and his later annotations to it. This is because in the margin above the extract I have quoted as the last paragraph of this he has also written:

*Arms of St Owen Barry or and gules. These were in the window but Dingley says on the tomb was arg. & gules. I have not identified the pile coat.*

Possibly later still, clearly his handwriting but this time very faint, is added:

*The arms are now repainted all wrong both with St Owen arms only.*

#### SUMMARY.

Marshall himself sounds uncomfortable with his dating the tomb canopy to about 1500. My inclination is to stick with my initial thoughts and say that I believe that it dates to the early to mid 1300s.

As to the arms on the East and West facing shields, the St Owen element has never been called into doubt. The 'pile' arms, on the balance of interpretation of all available material, I believe to relate to the Chandos family and to have been *Or a pile gules*.

If that was so then at the outset the shields would have looked like this:



*An Addendum follows overleaf.*

---

<sup>24</sup> He is referring to the manor of Burton. The absense of a capital letter after "less" is how he wrote it.

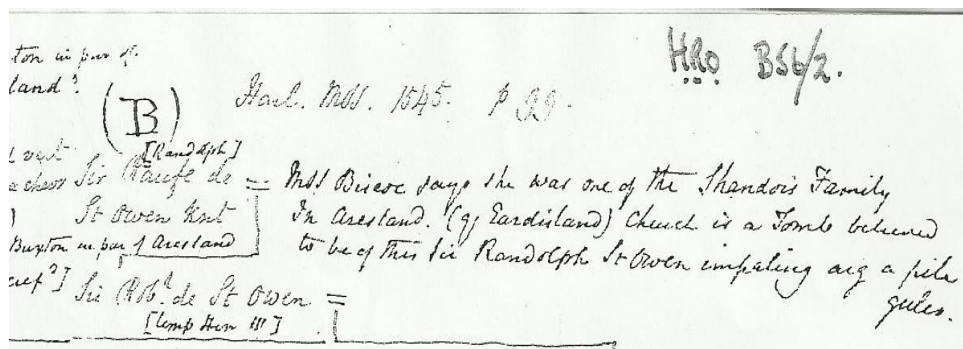
## ADDENDUM

I have come across a further handwritten transcript from the Harleian Manuscripts, this one an extract from Manuscript No.1545.<sup>25</sup> This adds further support to the *Pile Arms* being those of the Chandos family.

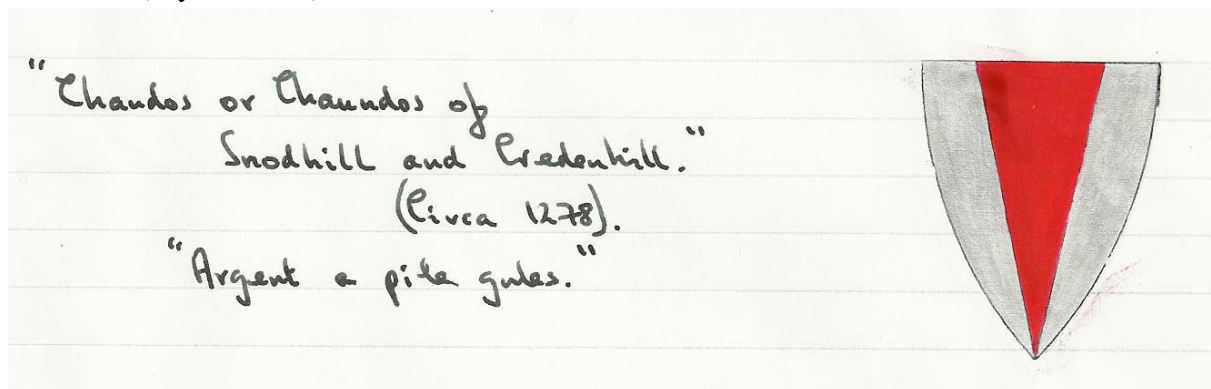
The first side of the transcript shows six generations of the St Owen family starting with Sir Raufe de St Owen Knt, a later note saying: *Lord of Burton in par. of Aresland Co Herefs* No date is ascribed to him but under the name of his son, Sir Robt de St Owen, has been noted *temp Hen III* King Henry III reigned from 1216 to 1272.

A later addition to the transcript is a comment relating to the wife of Sir Raufe de St Owen. It suggests, source quoted, that she was of the *Shandois Family* and goes on to say:

*In Aresland (q Eardisland) Church is a tomb believed to be of this Sir Randolph  
St Owen impaling arg a pile gules.*



If the source document quoted was correct then a St Owen/Chandos marriage is established. I have been unable to discover the date of either the *Mss Biscoe* or the comment *In Aresland (q Eardisland) Church.....pile gules* The date of the Biscoe Mss is unimportant but it would be very interesting to know when the Arms *St Owen impaling arg a pile gules* were to be seen in the church here in Eardisland, impliedly on the St Owen Tomb. I have seen other references to such a blazon of the Chandos Arms, for example, from WFC 1946, pages 45 and 48 (My art-work) :



<sup>25</sup> HRO B56/2.

It is of more than passing interest to note that in Foster “Two Tudor Books of Arms” at page 122, the very same Arms are mentioned and noted as:

*Argent, a pile gules – S.Andoyes*

If “S.Andoyes” is derived from “St Owen” then the implication is clear.

That there is only the one mention of the Arms in Eardisland church being silver with a red pile does not mean that the reference is erroneous, particularly bearing in mind that the date of it being recorded there is unknown and therefore the sequence of reports of the colouring not established. It is perfectly possible that all the ‘eye-witness’ descriptions are in fact accurate, but that what they saw was not a clear depiction of the Arms. As a conjecture, if a ‘Pile gules’ had been a dull red when first painted, and had it become soiled over a period of time, might it not, in a badly lit church, appear to be ‘Argent a pile sable’ and not what it actually was, viz. ‘Argent a pile gules’ ?

.....*Finis*.....