

1568

Armigil Waad, died 1568

crest at Snowhill Manor, England

Waad (or Wade), Armigil (d. 1568), styled 'the English Columbus'; native of Yorkshire; BA, Magdalen College, Oxford, 1532; sailed to Cape Breton and Newfoundland, 1536; clerk of the council at Calais, 1540; chief clerk to the Privy Council, 1552-3; MP, Wycombe, 1547-53; granted Milton Grange, Oxfordshire, 1554; envoy to Holstein, 1559; employed on the public service, 1562 and 1566. He then set out on his adventurous travels: "In a ship whose name was 'MINION' went a very virtuous and learned gentleman, one Armigell Waad, afterwards clerk to the counsels of King Henry VIII and Edward VI. Being assisted by the King's favour and good countenance he encouraged divers gentlemen and others in a voyage of discovery to the north west part of America. Mustered in a warlike manner at Gravesend and after receiving the Sacrament they embarked themselves in the end of April 1536 and sailed to part of the West Indies about Cape Breton. Thence to Newfoundland where they suffered from famine to such a degree that the ship's company began to devour one another, but they were at length relieved by the arrival of a French ship well victualled." Hakluyt Voyages Vol. V page 338. In the year 1559 Queen Elizabeth employed Armigell on an embassy. "Having gone through his life in honour and reputation he drew his last breath at his mansion of Belsize in June 1568, and a fair monument was raised in the chancel in Hampstead Church."

The son of Armigell, Sir William Waad had been Ambassador to Queen Elizabeth in many important diplomatic affairs, one of which was to King Philip II of Spain concerning the treasonous behaviour of his minister Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, in England.

The tradition is that on a diplomatic mission to Spain, the King of Spain refused to see Sir William Waad but so as not to offer offence gave him a Chinese rhinoceros horn libation cup, often thought of as a poison detector, and he thereafter adopted the rhinoceros as his crest. (In 1900 William de Vires Wade, a solicitor of the Supreme Court of Judicature in Dunmow, Essex had the original horn cup) (there are also 4 similar cups, purchased by Charles Wade, in the collection at Snowhill).

Later Sir William was sent by Queen Elizabeth to negotiate liberation for Elizabeth's royal prisoner, Mary Stuart. A Scottish Jesuit, being found with guilty papers upon him, tore them and threw them into the sea - "But they were by the force of the wind blowne backe again into the shippe, not without a miracle. The papers being brought to Sir William Waad, with much labour and singular skill hee joyned them together againe and found they contained new practices of the Pope, the Spaniard &c." The Queen of Scots did not therefore enjoy the "faire opportunitie and meanes" with which Elizabeth had been willing to set her free. William Waad, among other positions in the State, held that of counsellor to King James I, who knighted him at Greenwich in 1603. He was also Lieutenant to the Tower during the imprisonment of Sir Walter Raleigh against whom he gained secret evidence for his trial. The Lieutenancy was brought to a close by Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, who, planning the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury in the Tower, found the "integrity and uprightness of Sir William too much inconvenience", he therefore had him removed from his position in 1613. More than a hundred years afterwards some writing of Waad's was found in the Tower, giving an account in Latin of the conspirators in the Gunpowder Plot. He was buried in Manuden Church, Essex.

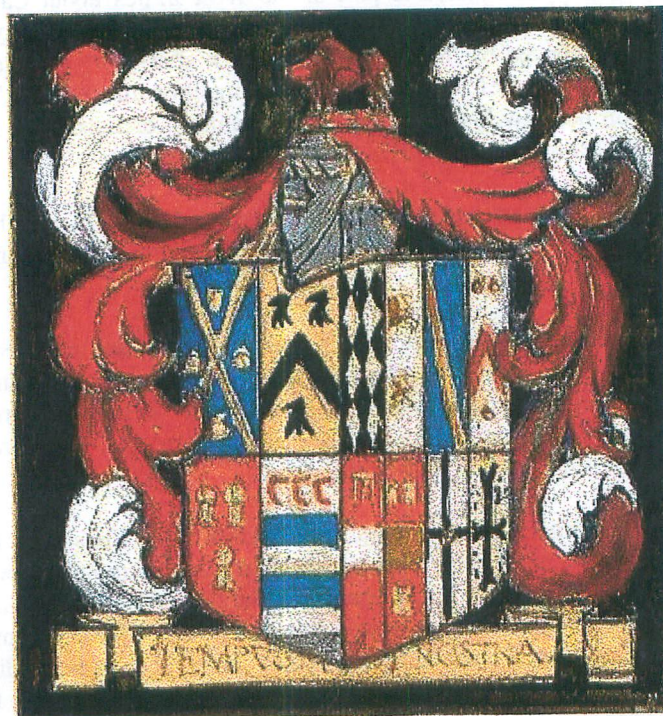
Michael Jessup, Archivist.

By email, 13 Dec 1999

at Snowhill Manor

Cotswolds

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