

ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL OLD CHORISTERS' ASSOCIATION.

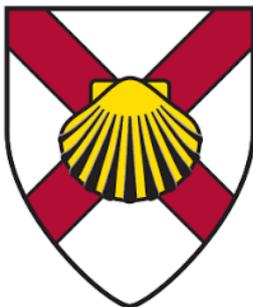
Article by James Strike
Kings' School 1946-55
Chorister 1950-52.

SCHOOL BADGES

The January 2022 edition of *The Old Roffensian* magazine included an article by Andy Ratcliff recalling the memory of school badges. I, like many of us, have a few old badges stored in a box. I have found them and was interested to see amongst them an old 'cigarette card'. It is one from the Series '*School Emblems*' showing KING'S SCHOOL ROCHESTER with a blue, black, and white striped cap with a school badge based on the City of Rochester coat of arms.



We are familiar with the present red *St Andrew* school badge but less knowledgeable about the former *City of Rochester* badge. This challenged me to re-visit some known history.



The origin of the St Andrew Cross for the KING'S SCHOOL badge dates back to the foundation of the Cathedral in AD 604. Justus was consecrated first Bishop of Rochester as part of the mission sent to England by St Gregory the Great. The monks for this mission came from the monastery Gregory had established, away from the Vatican, on the Caelian Hill in Rome. This monastery was dedicated to St Andrew, and so, consequently, the early Cathedral at Rochester was likewise dedicated to St Andrew.

St Andrew is associated with the cross *a saltire* in recognition of his martyrdom, bound and crucified on a diagonal cross. The scallop shell recalls St Andrew as fisherman and *a fisherman of men*. The scallop shell is also a symbol of pilgrims, used on their long journey to drink from streams of water.

The *St Andrew* badge is used by the Cathedral and Diocese of Rochester, so it was natural for it to be used by the school set up for choristers trained and educated to sing in the Cathedral. This, THE CATHEDRAL CHOIR SCHOOL existed in its various forms from the early use of Gregorian Chant, through the Middle Ages, to the nineteenth century when, in 1887, a fine new building was built for the CHOIR SCHOOL in Minor Canon Row (*now named Garth House*). The CHIOR SCHOOL continued until just before the Second World War when it was closed in 1937. The Choristers were transferred to KING'S and the Building in Minor Canon Row taken over by KING'S for Middle School Classrooms.

KING'S SCHOOL ROCHESTER was established, as we know, following the Dissolution of the Monasteries, as part of the New Foundation of 1542. So, between 1542 and 1937 there were two schools related to the Cathedral Chapter; the CHOIR SCHOOL, which used the *St Andrew* badge and KING'S, which used the *City of Rochester* badge. It is interesting to note that whilst the *City* badge for KING'S held the motto *SCHOLA REGALIS* it also demonstrated its part of the Cathedral Chapter with the continuation *ECCLESIA CATHEDRAL ROFFENSIS*.

It was after the CHOIR SCHOOL closed in 1937 that KING'S adopted the *St Andrew* Cathedral badge.

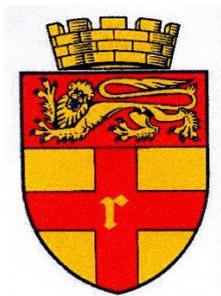
And a few additional notes:

St Gregory the Great was well versed in music and is known as the founder of 'Gregorian Chant'. He is also recognised for promoting the introduction of choristers into monasteries to assist the singing of the services. This, the origin of *SCHOLA CANTORIUM* was brought to Rochester in AD 604.

There is a sixteenth century oil painting of the crucifixion of St Andrew by Juan Correa Vivar which shows the martyr bound to a diagonal wooden cross.

The *St Andrew* cross has, from time to time, be centred with a fishhook recalling his life as a fisherman. (*but not used, to my knowledge, by the Cathedral or School*). The shape and size of the scallop shell on the school badge has changed over the years and, in recent years, has become much larger; maybe pilgrims now drink more !

The arms of the City of Rochester were first Recorded in 1574.



It is recorded that the CHOIR SCHOOL colours were red and black; which explains the apparently unusual colours for the Cathedral Old Choristers' tie. Does anyone have an original red and black Choir School tie, cap, or boater band ?



There is an excellent publication, *Roffensian Dress and Regalia*, NOLAN, Brian, 2002, *Old Roffensian Society*, which gives a full description of 'the elaborate and attractive regalia code' of the school. It is interesting to note the early photographs show that the school badge was not worn on the school jacket; restricted as they were to the school cap and sports regalia.

The cigarette card dates from about 1929.

James Strike

Archivist for Rochester Cathedral Old Choristers' Association.

June 2022