

BLOCKED DOORWAY, SOUTH QUIRE AISLE

The doorway situated on the external wall between the Roman Plaster display and the Chapel of Christ the Light of the World carries two carved heads. These have always been regarded as representations of King Henry IV and his Queen. Now Henry Bolingbroke was married twice: firstly, to Mary de Bohun, who bore him six children, including the future Henry V, and then to Joan (sometimes Joanna) of Navarre, whom he married in 1403 at Winchester.

Henry IV reigned from 1399 until 1413. Thus, since we have always maintained that it is very specifically his Queen, she must be Joan of Navarre. The head is identified as Henry IV because a double S can be discerned on the collar (meaning Spiritus Sanctus, a device which appears on the Livery Collar of the House of Lancaster).

Whenever we pass the doorway and look at the heads, we have to ask ourselves: why? Why should these rather fine carved heads have been placed there? To try to answer that, we have to consider the purpose of the doorway and its date.

It seems clear that the doorway was not put in as a part of the rebuilding of the Quire during the period 1233 to 1240 approx, after the original Norman Romanesque Quire had been demolished. The door was inserted later, in a similar way to the insertion of an archway leading to the Chapter House Passage on the north side of the Quire.

It seems most likely that the door was to allow the Archbishop of York and his entourage to enter the Quire directly, using the shortest **route from the Archbishop's Palace. Since the heads are an integral part of the arch (and not added later), one has to suppose that this entrance was created during or after the reign of Henry IV - that is, after 1399.**

Norman Summers (A Prospect of Southwell) gives a detailed description of the now ruined **"Bishop's Palace", as it came to be known, but he is vague on dates. It is known that the Archbishop of York established a residence from the earliest times, but the present ruins, says Summers, are those of a building constructed "in the 14th and 15th centuries". This is hopelessly imprecise, but a page later he narrows the date down to the late thirteen hundreds and the early fourteen hundreds. This period brings us much more into line with Henry's time on the throne.**

If the Archbishop of York was building a new Palace, he could well have taken the opportunity to make a new route into the Minster. Summers thinks that the Archbishop concerned was Alexander Neville, in post from 1374 to 1387. Neville was implicated in a rising against Richard II and accused of treason. He fled to Scotland in 1386 and died there, so it seems unlikely that he completed the Palace at Southwell. The likelihood is that Neville ordered the work to be started, but construction dragged on for many years under subsequent Archbishops. The next two, Thomas Arundel and Robert Waldby had very short reigns and probably did not even visit Southwell, so they are unlikely to have played any part,

The next Archbishop, however, was Richard le Scrope (1398 to 1405). It is possible that he was interested in finishing the Palace, but unlikely, because he was very busy plotting

against Bolingbroke. He assisted at the Coronation of Henry IV, but was soon embroiled with the Percys and their rebellion. After the defeat of the rebels at Shrewsbury, Scrope was arrested and executed at York. He is buried in the Minster there.

So Scrope cannot possibly have been responsible for honouring Henry IV at Southwell! Maybe it was the next Archbishop, Henry Bowett, who held the See from 1407 to 1426. I have been unable to find anything useful about him in the literature. One assumes, **however, that he was a "King's Man", carefully chosen by Henry** for his loyalty and to root out the Scrope faction at York. Bowett, therefore, seems the most likely person to have ordered the installation of the heads of the King and Queen at Southwell.