

THE CORONATION COPE AND COPE CHEST

The Coronation Cope

From the time of the Coronation of Richard I in 1189, the Bishops of Bath and Wells have supported each Monarch at their Coronation.

This cope was commissioned for Bishop Kennion to wear at the Coronation of King Edward VII in 1902.

The ladies of the diocese opened a public subscription list for a new cope. The cope was designed by Mr Micklewaite, architect and surveyor of Westminster Abbey.

The main body of the cope is made of cream silk damask powdered with a floral design and overlaid with sun bursts in couched gold thread. The embroidered shields surmounted by a **Bishop's Mitre** on the dark blue velvet orphrey, (the wide band at the top edge of the cope), depict the cross of St Andrew and the keys of St Peter with the sword of Saint Paul. At each end of the orphrey are shields containing three fleuree crosses.

At the neck of the cope is a detachable figurative hood; in earlier times this would have been a real hood. Made of velvet, it is embroidered with couched gold thread and coloured silk threads. It features the **letters IHS bordered with a curvilinear design. IHS is a 'Christogram', an abbreviation of Jesus's name. IHS comes from the Latinized version of the capitalized Greek name for Jesus: IHSOUS. These same letters, with the 'h' shaped to form a cross, are also embroidered on the velvet morse, the name given to the fastening that fastens the two sides of the cope together across the front of the body.**

The cope has been altered through the years to suit the stature of successive Bishops: approximately eight inches from the lower edge a seam is visible and the gold thread embroidery has been re-worked over the seam to keep the "sun-ray" motif uniform. It is believed that the cope was shortened for Bishop Bradfield.

The cope has been worn for these Coronations:

King Edward VII	1902	Bishop GW Kennion
King George V	1911	Bishop GW Kennion
King George VI	1937	Bishop Wynne Wilson
Queen Elizabeth II	1953	Bishop HW Bradfield

Bishop Peter Hancock wore the cope for his Service of Welcome and Enthronement as Bishop of Bath and Wells in 2014. Given the volume of fabric which the cope is made of it is not **surprising that the Bishop says: "It is certainly heavy to wear"**. Bishop Peter Price wore it for his Enthronement (2002) and **also for a special service for the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2012**. Bishop Bradfield chose to wear the cope for his official portrait which can be seen in the Long Gallery

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The Cope Chest

The Cope Chest was made for Bishop Kennion in 1902 to contain the Coronation Cope.

The people of Wiveliscombe Parish Church had the cope chest on loan for more than 40 years but it finally returned to the Palace in 2012 for its Coronation Connections exhibition (showcasing Coronation ephemera), to celebrate the **Queen's Golden Jubilee**.