

THE ROYAL MAUNDY:

At St. Albans, Her Majesty, attended by the Bishop of St. Albans, carries on the tradition of history - and, at the same time, makes history. She has come to distribute the Royal Maundy, as Sovereigns have done for at least 800 years; but this is the first time since the reign of Charles the Second that the Sovereign has performed the ceremony in person outside London. Since the 15th Century, the Royal Maundy has been given to as many old men and women as there are years in the Sovereign's age - this year, to 51 of each. Specially minted silver coins, from penny to fourpenny pieces, make up the royal gift, together with a money payment to replace the food and clothing which used to be given.

Children of the Chapel Royal are in attendance at this charming ceremony, the origin of which dates back to the time when England first became a kingdom.