The Heraldry Society

Educational Charity No: 241456

HERALDRY
Beasts, Banners & Badges
FOR BEGINNERS

Heraldry is a noble science and a fascinating hobby – but essentially it is FUN!
J. P. Brooke-Little, Richmond Herald, 1970

www.theheraldrysociety.com

The Chairman and Council of the Heraldry Society are indebted to all those who have made this publication possible
October 2016
The Heraldry Society was founded in 1947 by John P. Brooke-Little, CVO, KStJ, FSA, FSH, the then Bluemantle Pursuivant of Arms and ultimately, in 1995, Clarenceux King of Arms.

In 1956 the Society was incorporated under the Companies Act (1948).

By Letters Patent dated 10th August 1957 the Society was granted Armorial Bearings.

The Society is both a registered non-profit making company and an educational charity.

Our aims

To promote and encourage the study and knowledge of, and to foster and extend interest in, the science of heraldry, armory, chivalry, precedence, ceremonial, genealogy, family history and all kindred subjects and disciplines.

Our activities include

- Seasonal monthly meetings and lectures
- Organising a bookstall at all our meetings
- Publishing a popular newsletter, The Heraldry Gazette, and a more scholarly journal, The Coat of Arms
- In alternate years, offering a residential Congress with speakers and conducted visits
- Building and maintaining a heraldry archive
- Hosting an informative website
- Supporting regional Societies’ initiatives

Our Membership

Is inclusive and open to all

A prior knowledge of heraldry is not a prerequisite to membership, nor is it necessary for members to possess their own arms.

The Chairman and Council of the Heraldry Society

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Please note

The Society does not offer an arms research service and has no direct connection with the College of Arms, to whom enquiries concerning particular English coats of arms should be addressed.

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www.theheraldrysociety.com
From earliest times people have wanted – and often needed – to identify themselves by a personal sign or device. Their first efforts – seen as impressions in the seals on early documents – grew with the addition of further graphical representations of their owner or his family. Eventually the symbols migrated to battlefield shields and from there to the surcoats of men in armour, from which we may derive the term ‘coat of arms’.

It is thought that troubadours (strolling minstrels) formed the first body of messengers for the monarch. They couriered small items, relayed orders and ‘heralded’ the king’s arrival. Landowners too had a use for them. Land acquired by marriage or by grant of the monarch could be scattered about the country and the services of these travelling messengers – soon to be called ‘heralds’ – was essential.

As they became known to one another, the heralds amassed an encyclopaedic knowledge of their masters’ signs and devices. With duplication almost inevitable, it would prove useful. It was in everyone’s interest to achieve unique identification and, initially at an informal local level, the heralds’ persuasion brought about changes and an attempt at regulation. Their knowledge of the craft was respected, sought after – and eventually termed ‘heraldry’.

The first formal appearance of heraldry as we know it was in 1127 when Henry I gave a shield to his son-in-law, Geoffrey Plantagenet, Count of Anjou, as a wedding present. Upon the death of their owner, an eldest son would frequently continue to use the device of his father, thus associating it over the generations with a particular family line. In this instance, Geoffrey’s shield would descend to his grandson, the unfortunately named William Longespée, and then in turn to his great grand-daughter, Adela, Countess of Warwick.

Impetus was given to the development of heraldry by the 12th century Crusades, particularly the Third Crusade in 1189, by which time heraldry had ‘broken out all over Europe’. The earliest shields had been simple affairs in one or two colours and, later, sported geometric shapes in a contrasting colour. With the arrival of the graphical image – animate and inanimate objects in all their potential varieties – the Heralds must have struggled to maintain even a semblance of order.

Their reward came in 1484 when Richard III founded the College of Arms and they were incorporated by royal charter. In the following century, with a set of groundrules formulated and disputes to be settled, they began the Visitations: a series of tours in which they visited families to record their arms or grant new ones. The latter task has been the prerogative of the Heralds ever since, now ably represented by Her Majesty’s College of Arms in London, the Court of Lord Lyon in Edinburgh, and the Office of the Chief Herald of Ireland in Dublin.

Associated at the outset with people, arms were soon to be granted to places (towns, cities) and corporate bodies (colleges, societies, the armed forces). Sometimes they have become intertwined; regularly they have called across the centuries to tell of the people who forged our society, the places they lived and the institutions they created: the very history of our islands. For the researcher and genealogist they are truly “the shorthand of history”.

But heraldry isn’t merely a thing of the past, a hangover from a bygone age. It changes with the times, readily incorporating graphical images previously unimaginable, and flourishes still because it “absorbs the new, links with the past and provides continuity with the present”.

Whether we are aware of it or not, heraldry has woven itself into the tapestry of our lives. It is all around us, if we but look – and constantly growing: grants of arms are issued on an almost daily basis. Families, civic authorities, the law, the services, the church: all have seized upon – and continue to grasp – this powerful tool of identity. It features in their letterheads and in their pageantry.

To this day people, places and corporate bodies still seek to identify themselves uniquely – whether by the display of a registered heraldic shield and motto, or a simple trademarked logo and catchphrase. History demonstrates that it has been heraldry which endures.
The Hierarchy of Heraldry

Kings of Arms

- **Garter King of Arms**
  The principal herald whose title is derived from his duties to the Order of the Garter.

- **Clarenceux**
  A title probably originating with the herald of the Duke of Clarence, third son of Edward III. Responsible for matters south of the River Trent.

- **Norroy and Ulster**
  ‘Northern King’ responsible for matters north of the River Trent. His office was combined with Ulster in 1943.

The Sovereign

His Grace The Duke of Norfolk
Earl Marshal
(Head of the College of Arms)

Her Majesty’s College of Arms
(The Monarch’s Kings of Arms & Heralds)
*GRANTS ARMS TO*

PEOPLE

- Barons
- Knights
- Individuals
- Arms attributed to historical figures

PLACES

- Counties
- Cities
- Boroughs
- Towns

CORPORATIONS & INSTITUTIONS

- Armed Forces
- National Services
- Companies
- Ecclesiastical Arms
Although the essential and most important element, the shield is but one part of a coat arms. A full Achievement of Arms can (but not always will) consist of supporters, mantling, a compartment, a motto, a helmet, a wreath, a crest, a badge, a banner, a flag – and more. Designed and painted on vellum by the College of Arms, it can be reproduced in all manner of materials and today the art and craft of heraldry is still a thriving discipline in its own right.

“Quarterly Azure and Gules a lion’s face crowned with an Ancient Crown Or within a tressure /f_lory on the outer edge of the same And for the crest on a wreath Or Azure and Gules A demi /f_igure of a knight in armour habited in a tabard of the arms his hands gauntleted proper the dexter holding the hilt and the sinister resting on the quillions of a sword point downwards also proper hilt and pommel Or on his head a Chapeau Gules turned up Ermine encircled by an Ancient Crown Gold Mantled Azure and Gules doubled Or On either side an Unicorn Sable armed unguled crined and tufted Or wreathed about the neck with a torse Argent and Gules.”

‘Armed’ - beasts’ teeth, talons, horns or claws  
‘Unguled’ - beasts’ hooves  
‘Crined’ - human or beasts’ hair, bristles or mane

The blazon – the written description of the arms – can use a combination of English, Norman French and Latin, often with poor punctuation and abbreviations. The description begins at top left, proceeds to the right and then, moving downwards, passes from left to right. Originally the passport or DNA record of its time, there was no room for ambiguity, since it was used not only to pinpoint identity but also for faithful reproduction. Over the centuries its precision has benefited both historical research and artists and craftsmen demonstrating their skills in accurately reproducing the arms it described.
A year later he also granted a crest: a strawberry roan, an image of Jane's horse, holding a royal crown.

After Charles II's defeated attempt to regain his throne, 25-year-old Jane Lane pretended he was her groom and rode with him to smuggle him out of the country.

On his successful return in 1660, Charles remembered the risks she took and granted her family a canton of the Lions of England.

Unknown prior to the time of Henry VI, the Supporters are a pair of real or mythological creatures standing erect on the compartment and holding or guarding the shield.

Originally attached to the helm, a mantle or small cloak hung down the back probably as protection from the sun. It is now a decorative accessory displayed each side of the crest and shield and, like the torse, reflects the tinctures of the arms: the principal colour on the outside and the principal metal on the lining.

Covering the join between the crest and the helm, the torse or wreath is a twisted strand of six folds, possibly originating as a lady's favour (love token). It alternates the two principal tinctures (metal and colour) in the arms, the first fold on the dexter side (the viewer's left) being of the arms' metal tincture.

Mottoes, probably deriving from war cries, express pious hopes or sentiments and usually appear on a scroll beneath both the shield and any decorations, orders and medals hanging from it. They can use any language (often Latin) and, since they are not included in the descriptive blazon, can be (but rarely are) changed by the arms' owner. Their tinctures can be independent of the arms.

In 1651 the Lane family bore a simple coat of arms –
The shield, or escutcheon, has changed shape over the centuries but its surface (‘field’) has always been the area on which armorial bearings are usually displayed. Any decorations, orders or medals (except campaign medals) are displayed below the shield, suspended by their ribbons. The shape used is of personal choice.
In an age when literacy was rare, identifying knights in the joust and on the battlefield was difficult, especially with the introduction of their closed helmets. To overcome this, the face (‘field’) of their shields was divided into different blocks of colour.

These blocks of colour were echoed in the development of a variety of shapes which, when arranged on a knight’s shield in a particular and hopefully unique design, were said to be their owner’s ‘arms’. As this peculiar science-cum-art developed and became regulated by the heralds, the shapes were named, described and categorised as the Ordinaries and the less popular Sub-Ordinaries.

**Divisions of the Field**

A shield divided vertically up its centre is described as per pale. Shown far left it is per pale Argent and Sable.

A shield divided horizontally across its centre is described as per fess. Shown near left it is per fess Azure and Purpure.

Only a small selection of the available divisions is shown here.

**Ordinaries (selection)**

The field of the shield is first painted in a single heraldic colour (‘tincture’). Shown near right it is Or.

This is overlaid by a bold geometric shape (‘device’) painted in a contrasting tincture. Shown far right it is a Fess in Azure.

The blazon uses the names of the device and the tinctures in its description of the shield’s contents.
The Divisions of the Field, the Ordinaries and the Sub-Ordinaries can have their edges described by a simple straight line or a repetitive ornamental pattern.

- Invected
- Engrailed
- Raguly
- Dovetailed
- Indented
- Dancetty
- Wavy
- Embattled
Geometric division of the field increased the possibilities of variation; the application of different tinctures brought an almost endless combination. But it was not without its problems. Pigments for dyes and paints were both difficult to produce (making them expensive) and few in colour – the more so if deep, strong tints were required. At the outset this limited the palette to ten choices – five colours (red, green, blue, black, and purple), two metals (silver and gold, represented by white and yellow) and three rarely used stains. More would be added over time.

**Five Colours**
- Gules (Gu)
- Vert (Vt)
- Azure (Az)
- Sable (Sa)
- Purpure (Purp)

**Two Metals**
- Argent (Ar)
- Or (Or)

**Three Stains**
- Tenné (Ten)
- Sanguine (Sang)
- Murrey (Mur)

### The Furs

**Ermine**
- Ermines
- Erminois

Stoats change their coats to white during the winter, except for the tips of their black tails. Known as ‘spots’, the tails are represented by Ermine.

Skins of grey squirrels, sewn alternately belly to back produce a blue impression, represented by the curved or angular forms of Vair.
The numerous combinations of shapes, patterns, sculpted edges, and tinctures were impressive, but they fell far short of a truly personal statement. By 1200 the impact of the melting pot of knightly pan-European culture only intensified the need for something which would more personally identify the bearer of arms.

The solution – graphical charges – opened a vast, less geometric, array of images. Anything seen or imagined could be represented either in its natural colours or in a fanciful, stylised version. In the animate category, animals, birds, fish, reptiles, insects and monsters were all possibilities, as were divine or human beings. As for inanimate objects, everything appeared from an anchor and an axe to a wheel and a woolpack by way of trees, plants, flowers and celestial objects.

Placed over tinctured Ordinaries and Sub-Ordinaries, graphical charges can use Counter-Changing (reversed colouring) and play visual puns on the bearer’s name, a style which came to be known as Canting Arms.

As the graphical charge established itself as one of the key elements of identification, heraldry began to reflect a sense of the period and society in which it was created. Further, its development over time clearly demonstrates heraldry’s infinite possibilities and power to adapt.

A graphical charge can appear either in heraldic tinctures or in its natural (‘proper’ – abbreviated ‘ppr’) colour.

The examples of charges shown here are a very limited selection. The list of possibilities is endless.

A graphical charge can throw a line of shadow, the source of the light appearing to be in the dexter chief corner.

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Draw two abutting rectangles. They need not be squares, but their corners must be 90°.

Using any point on the line AB (inclusive) as its centre, draw the lower right arc.

Repeat on the line BC (the point being the mirror image of that used on the line AB) to draw the lower left arc.

As examples –

The lower right arc in red used point A as its centre. The lower left arc in red used point C as its centre.

The lower two blue arcs, forming a semicircle, both used point B as their centre.

The lower right arc in green used a point halfway between A and B as its centre. The lower left arc in green used a point halfway between B and C as its centre.

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Of all the graphical charges in heraldry, animals have always played a large and significant role. And since heraldry is an art form it has never limited itself to actual creatures but let its imagination run riot into the truly fantastical. A 'winged sea horse', for instance, is made up of the front half of a horse with wings stuck on plus the back half of a large fish. Consider also an heraldic sealion: half rampant lion, half fish. In their design of arms over the centuries, heralds have mixed and matched whenever they felt like it – and they still do!

Animals killed for sport and whose various qualities and strengths made them worthy opponents of their hunters soon appeared as graphical charges. All types of deer – stags, hinds, bucks, harts – were popular and were duly followed by bears, boars and wolves. Only later did creatures regarded as vermin – such as foxes, squirrels and rats – make their appearance.

Although they drew him as a true lion, in a prowling lion the early heralds recognised the behaviour of a leopard and called him lion-leopardé. Perhaps this explains early references to the 'leopards of England', now known as lions passant guardant, in the Royal Arms.

During the fifteenth century supporters of the shield began to appear in the designs of coats of arms and larger animals were ideally suited to the job. In the Royal Arms a lion and a unicorn support the shield and in the City of London's arms it is a pair of dragons.

Heraldry has always been about image and propaganda. To this end, an obvious choice – and the only animal to be used in very early heraldry that was not indigenous to Western Europe – was the king of beasts: the lion, symbolising strength and courage. Originally displayed in only one attitude (later known as lion rampant), it was soon represented by further imposing postures which could adequately fill a shield.

Heraldry's love of classification ensured every posture was categorised, described and given the names known today. For instance, a lion rampant is erect, with one hind paw on the ground and the other three paws raised, while its head looks forward in profile and its tail is erect. It is usually shown with red claws and tongue ('armed and langued Gules') but when the background of the charge is red they are more likely to be Azure (blue).

Animals' forepaws are normally on the dexter side of the shield, with the head also facing the dexter. When the head faces the viewer the beast is said to be 'guardant', and 'reguardant' when looking back over its shoulder. A lion is passant when it is walking, three paws on the ground, the dexter one being raised, while its head looks to the dexter and the tail curves over its back.

In the Royal Arms, those of Scotland present a lion rampant, while the arms of England present 'three lions passant guardant in pale Or'. They appear similarly, but in Azure (blue), in the arms of the Football Association.

For Queen Elizabeth II's coronation in 1953, James Woodford RA sculpted ten heraldic beasts (Lion, Griffin, Falcon, Red Dragon, etc), each supporting a badge or arms of a family in Her Majesty's ancestry. The originals are now in Canada while full-size replicas stand before the Palm House in Kew Gardens.

At Hampton Court Palace, another ten heraldic beasts, designed by Grinling Gibbons and representing the ancestry of Henry VIII and his third wife, Jane Seymour, stand on the bridge to the great gatehouse.

Seventy-six similar beasts adorn pinnacles on the roof of St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle.
Feeding the early heralds’ imagination were the Bestiaries – medieval books on animals both real and mythical that many people took for the absolute truth. And why wouldn’t they? For those who had never ventured more than a few miles from home the idea of a unicorn was entirely possible. So too was a panther breathing fire in a coat of multi-coloured spots, or a griffin, or a yale – a creature with horns that swivelled! We know differently now, of course, but that doesn’t stop today’s heralds continuing to indulge their delightfully whimsical flights of fancy whenever they feel like it.

Deer are well represented in heraldry and here too their postures and parts are named. Like the lion, a stag can be shown rampant but is more frequently seen salient: hind hoofs on the ground, forelegs raised and bent at the knee. When a stag is walking it is trippant, when running it is courant, and when at rest on its belly, its legs bent under it, it is described as couchant or lodged.

A stag or hart – one and the same in heraldry – is normally shown with a full head of antlers, known as attires, each prong of which is a tyne. When the attires’ tincture is different from that of the stag’s body they are termed attired of XXX tincture.

Animal heads often appear in profile – with the neck cut off straight (couped) or ragged (erased) – but when shown full-face with no neck they are said to be caboshed.

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Over the centuries heraldic devices have been displayed on flags of all sorts – banners, standards, pennons, guidons, gonfanons, and more. Some early, simple standards can be seen in the Bayeux Tapestry’s depiction of the 1066 Battle of Hastings, but it was the 13th and 14th century Crusades that formalised the use of military and national flags, principally as standards, banners and pennons.

Standards

Narrow, tapering, sometimes swallow-tailed and often fringed, their length reflected the rank of the owner – from four yards for a Knight to nine yards for the Sovereign.

Divided lengthwise into two tinctures, they displayed the owner’s badge, heraldic devices, and occasionally his motto on a bend (but not his coat of arms) and appear to have been used solely for pageantry.

No rules seem to have governed their display other than for English standards in the Tudor period when they were particularly popular. At that time standards always bore the cross of St George in the chief, followed by the device, badge or crest of the owner and then his motto.

Today, like the badge, a standard can still be granted to an owner of arms but its layout follows a regular format. The arms occupy the chief and the badge – sometimes with the crest – is placed on the fly which is crossed diagonally by the motto. The background of the fly can be either of a single tincture or of two set out in a shape echoing that of an Ordinary.

Banners

Square or vertically oblong, a banner was borne by Barons, Knights Bannerets, Princes and the Sovereign. It bore his arms and was his ensign and that of his followers as well as any military division in his command.

A Knight Banneret, who ranked above other Knights, was created on the battlefield by the Sovereign personally following an act of extreme gallantry. In the ceremony a pennon had its points torn off, thus becoming a small banner or banneret. But banners of arms were not always confined to Knights Banneret and in the Middle Ages they appeared as sails on ships.

The Royal Banner (not ‘Royal Standard’) belongs to the Sovereign, the earliest known being that of Edward I at the siege of Caerlaverock in 1300. It flies wherever the Sovereign is in residence and appears on whatever mode of transport the Sovereign occupies (car, train, boat, plane).

Today, any armigerous person may have a banner and, although personal banners are rarely seen, local authorities and companies regularly fly their banners above their premises. Quarterings, cadency marks, and differences (as they appear on the bearer’s shield) are allowed on banners but crests, badges, supporters, etc and impalements (two arms brought together on a single shield) are not.

Pennons

A smaller version of a banner, this too was narrow, tapering, and often swallow-tailed and fringed. Borne by a Knight immediately below the head of his lance, it was arranged to be viewed correctly when the lance was horizontal.

It displayed the Knight’s badge, or his heraldic device and could repeat the main item on his shield.
Although not part of a coat of arms, an heraldic badge – sometimes more than one – is granted only to those who possess arms. And while arms are exclusive to one individual (and his heirs), a badge can be borne by any number of his followers. Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, seems to have made a distinction between his bear badge worn by his knights and his ragged staff badge worn by his lesser retainers.

In a pre-literate age a badge expressed the allegiance of many men to a powerful individual, perhaps a feudal lord. He would display it on his personal standard (next to the cross of St George in chief), on the shields of his knights in tournaments, and on the livery of his horses. In effect, it was the forerunner of a company’s logo.

In September 2009 a small silver-gilt object was unearthed in a field in Leicestershire. Unseen for over 500 years, it was the image of a boar, the badge of King Richard III. On 22 August 1485 it must have fallen – perhaps from a knight in the final charge – in the Battle of Bosworth Field where Richard met his death. It is now in the Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre at Sutton Cheney.

Badges were often reproduced in quantity, Richard himself ordering 13,000 copies of his boar badge in ‘fustian’ (heavy cotton) to be worn at the investiture of his son as Prince of Wales.

Earlier, Richard II had been just as liberal with his white hart (stag) badge. In 1393, when he completed the rebuilding of Westminster Hall, he subtly tucked 83 copies of it into its architecture. And on his portable altar piece, the Wilton Diptych, even the angels wear it!

With so many copies of badges being made at the time, it is hardly surprising that a number of museums are able to display examples of those original copies.

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Echoes

Unlike arms, badges are not hereditary, yet many have passed down the generations, coming to represent a family rather than an individual. Some of them resonate still, for the lands held by feudal lords eventually sprouted pubs and inns with the names of local badges on their signboards.

The Feathers often refers to the badge of the Prince of Wales, The White Hart to that of Richard II and The Blue Boar to the de Veres family (an heraldic pun: ‘verres’ is Latin for ‘boar’).

The Rose and Crown has particular significance. A rose was used as a badge by both the House of York (in white) and the House of Lancaster (in gold or red) during the Wars of the Roses that culminated at Bosworth.

The victorious Henry VII, in overlaying one with the other, created the Tudor Rose, a royal badge used by English monarchs ever since. Subsequently, the two roses became emblems of their respective counties.

Knots

Knots are a particular type of badge.

The Stafford knot originated as a badge of the Earls of Stafford and is still widely seen throughout Staffordshire. It is a charge in the arms of the County Council, appears on their flag and is used as a county badge by Girlguiding Staffordshire.

Today, badges can indicate ‘belonging’ or ‘location’ and many sports, clubs, societies, and schools use them. They can also denote ‘achievement’.

Guides and Scouts will be familiar with both their own County badges and the Challenge badges that recognise their abilities, skills and knowledge.

Although not part of a coat of arms, an heraldic badge – sometimes more than one – is granted only to those who possess arms. And while arms are exclusive to one individual (and his heirs), a badge can be borne by any number of his followers. Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, seems to have made a distinction between his bear badge worn by his knights and his ragged staff badge worn by his lesser retainers.

The Stafford knot originated as a badge of the Earls of Stafford and is still widely seen throughout Staffordshire. It is a charge in the arms of the County Council, appears on their flag and is used as a county badge by Girlguiding Staffordshire.

Echoes

Unlike arms, badges are not hereditary, yet many have passed down the generations, coming to represent a family rather than an individual. Some of them resonate still, for the lands held by feudal lords eventually sprouted pubs and inns with the names of local badges on their signboards.

The Feathers often refers to the badge of the Prince of Wales, The White Hart to that of Richard II and The Blue Boar to the de Veres family (an heraldic pun: ‘verres’ is Latin for ‘boar’).

The Rose and Crown has particular significance. A rose was used as a badge by both the House of York (in white) and the House of Lancaster (in gold or red) during the Wars of the Roses that culminated at Bosworth.

The victorious Henry VII, in overlaying one with the other, created the Tudor Rose, a royal badge used by English monarchs ever since. Subsequently, the two roses became emblems of their respective counties.

Knots

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Originally, for the purposes of the tournament and the battlefield, heraldry was about the unique identification of those men who bore a coat of arms. Consequently, it has been heraldry’s abiding principal that no two coats are the same.

Cadency Marks

With the guidance of the College of Arms and the impressive array of charges now available to heraldry plus the natural assertion of individuality, there is little need today for the imposition of differencing.

In heraldry’s early days the duplication of arms was not uncommon. In some cases it came about accidentally simply because the number of divisions of the field, ordinaries, tinctures and charges available to decorate a shield was limited. Over time, as these items (particularly charges) were augmented, this situation eased.

Not surprisingly, the heralds’ demand for differencing occasionally led to arguments. These were usually settled amicably at a local level and only exceptional cases resorted to law for a pronouncement by the Court of Chivalry (still in existence today, although rarely used). If that failed to settle the matter, an appeal could be made to the monarch.

Differencing

Arms descend through the male line of a family and sons (‘cadets’) of an armigerous head of a family can use and display his arms. This immediately brings about duplication so here too heraldry demands a distinction – not only between the sons’ arms and their father’s but also between each of the son’s arms.

Very early heraldry used a number of methods to achieve this until the 16th century saw the present system of differencing for cadency allocate a special mark to each son in order of seniority.

Small and of any colour, cadency marks are normally added in the chief of the shield (the rules of tincture usually being upheld). An exception to this location is a quartered shield which combines two or more coats of arms. Here the mark is displayed centrally to overlap all four quarters – unless the mark relates solely to one of the coats in which case it is placed in that quarter.

An eldest son’s arms bear his cadency mark until his father’s death whereupon it is discarded and he reverts to his father’s ‘plain arms’ since he himself has become head of the family. Cadency marks for all other sons are permanent and descend as part of the arms to their own sons who duly add their own differencing for cadency.

From this it will be seen that, with successive generations adding cadency marks to cadency marks, the system can easily get out of hand, causing more confusion than it resolves. Consequently, nowadays brothers rarely difference their arms during the life of their father, but often take up the mark when they become heads of families in their own right.

Differencing & Cadency

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Daughters are allowed to use their father’s arms but are omitted from the cadency system. Single women display their arms on a lozenge shape. Married women can now use a shield (with a lozenge for difference) which must include any cadency mark borne permanently by their father.

The mark must also be included when a daughter marries and transmits her arms to her husband. Her arms are then ‘impaled’ in the right-hand (sinister) half of her husband’s shield, alongside his own arms on the left (dexter).

If, when their father dies, one or more daughters have no brothers, they become heraldic heiresses. On marriage, their own family arms are placed in the centre of their husband’s shield inescutcheon of pretence.
From identifying a single person, heraldry moved to speak of his relationship with another party: an armigerous family (by marriage), or a notable official position (by appointment), or two or more lordships (by inheritance). In each instance his own arms would be ‘marshalled’ with those of the other party to produce a new design for his shield.

A daughter, when single, is entitled to display her father’s arms on a lozenge but on marriage they are impaled with those of her husband on a shield. This is the simplest form of marshalling, the husband’s shield being halved vertically to place his squashed arms into the dexter half and her squashed arms into the sinister. Their children would display only their father’s arms.

Arms descend through a family’s male line. Consequently, upon the death of her father, a daughter does not inherit his arms unless she has no brothers in which case she becomes an ‘heraldic heiress’. Here, upon marriage, her arms are marshalled with those of her husband’s, inescutcheon of pretence: a small version of her shield placed in the centre of her husband’s shield. This arrangement is designed to show that, although the lady is armigerous in her own right, her husband pretends to the representation of her family. Upon her death, their children are entitled to display another form of marshalling: ‘quartering’ her arms with those of their father.

Of recent date it has become fashionable for non-armigerous couples to combine their surnames upon marriage: Miss Fox and Mr Brown marry and become Mr and Mrs Brown Fox. This has nothing to do with heraldry but does echo a 200-year-old ‘name and arms’ eccentricity of English law. Under this, the will of an armigerous father can dictate that, upon marriage, not only shall his daughter’s and her husband’s arms be impaled but also their names shall be joined, thus producing a hyphenated double (or even triple!) barrelled surname.

King Edward III’s mother was the daughter and heiress of Philip IV of France. When Philip died in 1340 Edward believed he was entitled to be recognised as King of France and promptly quartered his shield of England’s lions with France’s lilies (fleur-de-lis), their royal emblem. He did not, however, put the lions in the dominant top left quarter. Instead, acknowledging the seniority of France as a kingdom, he placed the lilies there. Although no such recognition ever took place (which never prevented Elizabeth I from styling herself Queen of England, France and Ireland), the Royal Arms remained quarterly France and England until 1801.
Identifying and recording arms is detective work and, as an ‘Heraldic Incident’ can occur anywhere at any time, you should be prepared for a case to appear quite unexpectedly. If nearby information identifies the arms, you may want to confirm that it is correct and note how the heraldic blazon describes it. But when no such information is present – a ‘cold case’, as it were – it will be necessary to start from scratch and, like all good detectives, you’ll need a system and a plan.

**The system –**

- To record the evidence, you’ll need a notebook, or clipboard with paper, and a pencil
- Also a map to pinpoint the incident’s location, a camera for shots of the heraldry and its surroundings, and a magnifying glass for close-up examination of the evidence
- A scrapbook or ring binder is useful as a case file to hold all the statements and background information about the case
- From time to time you’ll want access to the Internet and/or the reference department of a local library in order to gather background intelligence about the evidence (such as whether or not any previous incidents are to be taken into consideration).

**The plan –**

- First of all, record the location of the incident together with the date and time
- Next, sketch or photograph the evidence. Pay particular attention to designs, shapes, colours and charges
- Examine the evidence for any small pieces of information (such as an artist’s name). Be sure not to touch it. Evidence must not be damaged or contaminated in any way
- Check around for other outbreaks of heraldry. Frequently, the ‘Heraldic Incident’ does not occur in isolation. Then leave the scene exactly as you found it
- Later, establish to which group of suspects the evidence belongs: is it the arms of a person, a place, or a corporate body (such as an organisation or institution)?
- Are the arms a pun on their owner’s name (known as Canting Arms)?
- Examine and identify the charges on the arms. What particular relevance, if any, do those charges have to the owner of the arms? These clues will go a long way towards framing the owner.
- Do the charges relate to any other arms (e.g. in the owner’s family)?
- Use the Internet’s many heraldry and history websites, and the library’s local and national history books, to draw up a list of suspects. Printouts and photocopies of your findings can be useful
- When were the arms first obtained?
- Try to find the blazon for the arms. Or write the blazon yourself
- How many versions of the arms can be found? (Artists’ depictions of arms can vary while still remaining true to the blazon).
- Write or e-mail people for information but avoid pestering them: cover all points in your first letter. If they are local to your area, you might be able to meet them for informal ‘questioning’ when they could accidentally reveal something important
- Remember to record the results of all your research in your case file. If you are working on two incidents at once, make sure they are kept separate
- In reviewing a case, avoid contaminating the facts by imposing assumptions onto them. Hopefully, you will be led towards a conclusion backed up by proof.

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**Magna Carta**

In 1215 King John sealed the Great Charter in front of 25 Barons. All of them would have displayed their arms.

- Henry de Bohun
- William d’Augbiny
- William de Fortibus
- Roger de Montbegon
Cut out or trace one of the three shields shown here.

Turn it over and draw one of the Ordinaries or Sub-Ordinaries on it.

Paint the Ordinary (or Sub-Ordinary) in one colour and the field around it in another colour, always obeying the Rules of Tincture.

Find and cut out a picture to use as a graphical charge (or draw and colour one of your own) and paste it onto the shield.
In medieval times, why did people want a personal sign or symbol?
Where were these signs and symbols first used?

Invent your own personal sign. It doesn't have to be a shield.

Why were the signs and symbols painted on shields?
Why are the shapes on shields so large, and their colours so strong?

Look at the heraldic shapes called Ordinary and Sub-Ordinary. Draw a shield showing the one you like most. Then add two graphical charges which you think say something about you.

Why was the introduction of the graphical charge so useful?
A shield is painted Argent and Vert. What do we call those colours today?

You are a knight in a joust on the tournament field. You are facing your opponent who is holding his shield by its sinister chief corner. From your viewpoint, which corner is he holding?

What is the heraldic term for the surface of a shield?
What is the heraldic term for the written description of a coat of arms?

Canting Arms display a visual pun on their owner's name. Draw a shield for someone whose lastname is Oakfield-Littlemouse.

Where would you go to see your town's coat of arms?
Why does the shield in your town's coat of arms display the items that it does?

Two crossed keys appear in chief on a Purpure field of a shield. One is Azure, the other is Gules. The keys also appear in base on the shield, but with their colours counter-changed. Draw and colour the shield, its field and the keys.

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Where can I find out about heraldry?

www.theheraldrysociety.com
www.college-of-arms.gov.uk
www.civicheraldry.co.uk
www.heraldic-arts.com
www.whitelionsociety.org.uk
www.heraldry-scotland.co.uk
www.europeanheraldry.org
www.gg.ca/pdf/Heraldry-Kit-EN.pdf
www.ngiv.nl

Where can I see heraldry in real life?

Cathedrals and old churches
Local and national government offices (town halls, libraries, registry offices)
Local history museums
Stately homes and castles (including those in the care of preservation bodies, such as the National Trust and English Heritage)
Shire Hall, Lancaster Castle
Royal Armouries, Leeds