



Introduction to Scottish Heraldry

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Armigers

Why should we care?

- 1. Illustrated, colorful history
- 2. As Scots at Games etc. we use it all the time, on clan badges, coffee mugs, jewelry etc. Might as well get it right and know what we're doing.
- 3. Part of everyday life even for non-Scots, of what many men in particular care most about

Sports rivalries





Arms of City of Manchester



Elements of heraldry in sports

- Shield, design e.g. Dallas Cowboys' Star
- Color: crimson tide, burnt orange, maize and blue
- Supporters in livery!
- Motto, slogan: Roll Tide, Superbia in Proelio

Historical origins

- Knights in battle, craving distinction, honor, in classic “shame culture”
- Jousting competition: need for recognition.
- Role of heralds evolving from messengers to introductions to keepers of logs and registers to arbiters and granters of arms.

The Lord Lyon King of Arms

- England has three (Garter, Clarenceaux and Norroy and Ulster), Scotland just one King of Arms, one ultimate authority
- Unlike English Kings of Arms, who need permission from Earl Marshall, Lyon can grant arms himself
- Keeps Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland
- Junior officer of State. Judge with own court and right to rule on all matters relating to Scottish heraldry, impose fines, imprison etc.

Arms of Lyon Sellar



Arms of the Office of Lord





Officers of Arms

- Lord Lyon, King of Arms
- Pursuivants in ordinary: Bute, Carrick, Dingwall, Kintyre, Ormond, Unicorn
- Pursuivants Extraordinary: Linlithgow, Falkland and March
- Lyon Clerk
- Procurator Fiscal (not an officer of arms, but responsible for prosecutions)

Why Lyon/heraldry matter to Scots of Diaspora

- We tend to identify with Scotland through clan affiliation
- (with exceptions) clans don't have arms, mottos etc., chiefs do. Clans show allegiance by wearing chief's insignia encircled with strap and buckle
- To be a clan you need a chief
- To be a chief you need to be recognized as such (chief of the name) by Lyon
- A clan is a group of people who recognize a specific armiger as their chief

Arms of the Society of Scottish Armigers



Society of Scottish Armigers

- People care about this stuff, and because they care, they want to get it right.
- Our goal is to be a resource, to provide “guidance,” and to help people find the right answers, where they exist.
- Most chiefs are honorary members
- Lyon is always President

Sample questions

- How should I address a chief, an earl, his wife? What shoulder should I wear my sash? What flags can I display? Am I a lord if I buy a square foot of land in Scotland? Can I create my own arms? Under what circumstances can I display my chief's arms? Can I wear feathers in my bonnet? If so, how many?
- Send us your questions and we'll try to put them and the answers on the website.

Elements of heraldry

- Shield
- Language of color, tinctures
- Ways to divide shield: ordinaries, cadency etc.
- Differencing
- Helm, coronet, mantling, supporters
- “Canting” or punning
- Flags, banners etc.

Heraldic Achievement

- Blazon (verbal description): this is primary, not visual representation, which must comply with blazon.
- Always contains a shield and motto. Other features granted based on rank.
- The language of heraldry is quaint and certainly old-fashioned, but with a little French, can be fairly quickly mastered.



Arms of Morrison of Ruchdi



Shield

- Field – background
- Tinctures: 2 metals (or and argent) and 5 colors (gules, azure, vert, sable, purpure)
- Ordinaries: large geometrical figures in shield (cross, chief, pale, fess, bend, chevron, saltire). (on my arms, a bend sinister)
- Diminutives and partition (smaller repeating patterns)
- Sub-ordinaries: shapes within field (lozenge, escutcheon etc.)

Charges

- Figures (non-geometrical) on shield, e.g.
- Animals, e.g. lion rampant; birds, fish etc. described by posture, color, whether full or partly depicted.
- On Dunrossil arms, a castle or dun is shown.
- Canting or punning arms: Fraser shows strawberry flowers (Fraises); arms of Queen Mother (Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon) and Princess Beatrice of York



Differencing

- Within a family or clan, an individual's arms may be distinguished from the primary armiger or chief in various ways:
- Temporary Cadency marks: show immediate descent, as first, second, third child etc.
- Bordures: vert bordure in mine shows descent from 6th son.
- Altering tincture
- Adding Charges or an ordinary
- Quartering, often used if mother is armigerous, to bring both arms into one new shield.

Above the shield: Helms

- Royalty: gold, affronte (face on)
- Peers: Silver barred with gold
- Knights and baronets: steel with open visor or tilting helm
- Feudal barons: tilted helm or pot helm, garnished in gold
- Gentlemen: pot helm or knight's armet with visor closed, both of plain steel

Above the shield, below the helm: Crowns and coronets

- Royal crowns, with top frame
- Duke: crown with no top frame: no baubles
- Marquis: coronet with two baubles on points
- Earl: five baubles
- Viscount: nine baubles
- Lord of Parliament: four

Above the shield cont.

- Crest: Figure placed on top of helm. Unlike coronet, which is personal to peer, these may be used by an armigerous clansman
- Mantling: cloth flowing from join of crest and helm, displaying livery colors. Peers' mantling is always Gules doubled ermine. Royals' are or doubled ermine. Others are Gules doubled argent.

Beside the shield

- Supporters: usually a pair of figures (human or animal) on either side of shield, standing on grass or motto scroll, e.g. Lion and Unicorn in royal arms.
- Most armigers don't have supporters. Peers, knights Grand Cross or of the Thistle and some feudal barons and chiefs do.

Royal Arms of the UK



Royal arms (Scotland version)



Mottoes

- Motto usually on scroll over crested helmet, or if no helm, below the shield.
- Sometimes secondary motto or slogan listed below shield. My motto and crest are the same as my chief's, but my secondary motto is different.
- Can be war cry (Hold Fast), rallying place (Loch Moy), historical comment (fuimus), pun (Set on!), etc.
- Chance to recognize different branches of clan (Teaghlach Phabbay and Dun Eistein).

Banners, flags etc.

- Standard: 7m long for sovereign, 5 for viscount, 3.5 for baron or chief. Long, thin and tapering. Marks home base.
- Personal Banner or house flag: again size determined by rank: 1.5m square for sovereign, 1 m square for viscount, smaller for non-peers. Flown only if present.
- Carrying flags: peers 1.2m x 1.5m high for peers, .85 x 1.1 for chiefs who aren't peers
- Guidon, Pennon and pinsel: These are smaller flags like standards, but for armigers who are not entitled to standards
- Ensign, shaped like banner
- Pipe banner: again, rules apply

Royal Standard of Scotland (personal standard, not national)



Corporate arms

- Church/ecclesiastic: dioceses and bishops etc.
- Civic arms
- Schools and Universities
- Companies, associations and guilds
- Clubs and societies

Arms of Heraldry Society of Scotland



Petitioning for your own arms

- While it is not common for a non British citizen to receive arms, it does happen. Most commonly by matriculating a differenced version of a relative's arms.
- Forms through which one might petition for arms are to be found on Lord Lyon's website.
- Once a grant of arms is made, and entered in the Public register, a parchment is sent to successful petitioner.



An example of a Grant of Arms
Courtesy of the Court of the Lord Lyon

Sources, links

- The Court of the Lord Lyon www.lyon-court.com/lordlyon/CCC_FirstPage.jsp
- The Society of Scottish Armigers www.scotarmigers.net
- The Heraldry Society of Scotland www.heraldry-scotland.co.uk
- Scottish Heraldry, an invitation by MD Dennis
- Scottish Heraldry Made Easy by G Harvey Johnston