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Banner of The Cadet Vocational College

The Heraldry Gazette

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In the next issue.....

Articles on Heraldry in the Scilly Isles, Wirksworth in Derbyshire and much more, space permitting.

I look forward to receiving your articles, your heraldic gems from around the country and of course correspondence on heraldic matters.

Editor

Editorial

I do hope you enjoy reading this issue of *The Heraldry Gazette* and have managed to have a break over the summer. I'm now gearing up for a very busy period at work for me as I work at a FE College, our main enrolment weeks before the start of term on 2nd September. Wish me luck!

Since the last *Gazette*, our Congress in Canterbury has taken place and a resume and photos of the event can be found on page 9.

It is also great to see that local and regional heraldry societies have talks planned for late 2024 and into 2025, both in person and by Zoom, see page 20.

STOP PRESS—There is a Winter Drinks Reception to look forward to at the Museum of the Order of St John. Details are on Page 3, with more info on how to book coming out soon.

The Photographic Competition deadline is on 30 September and Jenny Baker eagerly awaits receipt of your entries. It is always interesting to see where the entries come from as our membership is global and heraldry can be found everywhere, if you look.

I am always happy to receive your articles, research queries or correspondence by email, post or in person at a lecture or function. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Jane

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Society News

Winter Drinks Reception

We are pleased to announce that there will be a Winter Drinks Reception at The Museum of the Order of St John on Wednesday 13 November 2024 which will also incorporate our November in person lecture on *Heraldry at the Order of St John* presented by Simone Monti and our Chairman, Robert Harrison.

Details of how to book your place or places will be communicated to members by email.



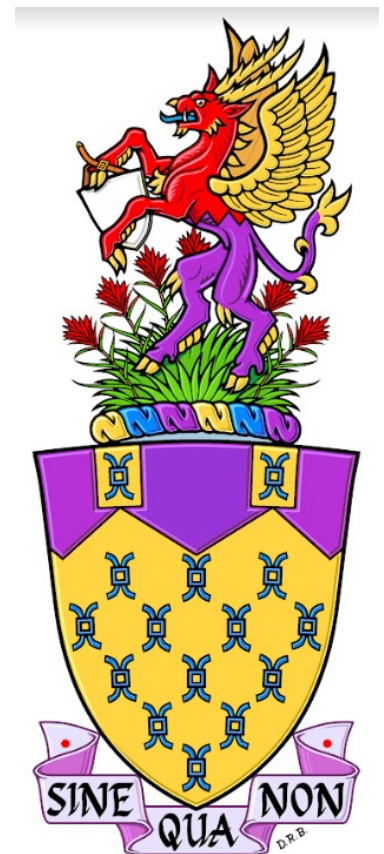
Baz Manning FHS

Baz has recently been presented with his Fellowship Badge and Certificate by Stephen Slater as he was unable to attend the Anniversary Lunch earlier this year.

He has sent in this photograph of his FHS accompanied by a spade shield of his arms.

Baz also thought that members would like to see a recently commissioned rendition of this arms by Roger Barnes in New Zealand.

Illustrations © Baz Manning



News from the Court of the Lord Lyon

Following the recent retirement from service of Mrs Yvonne Holton, Islay Herald and Mr Liam Devlin, Rothesay Herald the Lord Lyon has made the following appointments, which are effective from 1 August 2024.

Sheriff George Way of Plean, formerly Carrick Pursuivant, becomes Rothesay Herald in Ordinary
Mr John Stirling WS, formerly Ormond Pursuivant, becomes Ross Herald in Ordinary
Prof. Gillian Black, formerly Linlithgow Pursuivant Extraordinary, becomes Carrick Pursuivant in Ordinary
Mr Colin Russell, formerly Falkland Pursuivant Extraordinary becomes Bute Pursuivant in Ordinary
Major Neil Cargill to be Falkland Pursuivant Extraordinary.

CASA SOLLIMA A Noble Landed Estate near Troina, Sicily

By Steven Ashley

‘The house was thus a kind of eighteenth-century Pompeii where everything had been miraculously preserved – always a rare thing, but almost unique in Sicily, which through poverty and neglect is the most destructive place on earth.’¹



Fig. 1

In April 2023 I returned to the Sicilian hilltop town of Troina, on the South-western edge of the Nebrodi mountains and around an hour’s drive inland from Catania and Mount Etna. I was going to join friends and colleagues from the University of Cambridge to assist with the final phase of an archaeological research project on which we had last worked more than two decades before.² During the first seasons of field survey in the late 1980s, sites of different periods were discovered and identified along the sides of the valley which runs from Troina to the south-east, flanking the road to Catania (Fig. 1). Amongst the sites selected for excavation were two situated within the ancient olive groves surrounding Casa Sollima, a large house of c. 1700 which had originally formed the centre of a landed estate belonging to the noble Sicilian family of Sollima.

During these first seasons of fieldwork and excavation, the processing, washing, weighing, and cataloguing of archaeological finds took place in the courtyard of the house, and some of the outbuildings became the temporary location for the storage of excavated pottery and tile. Away from the areas of post-excavation activity, the house and its ancillary buildings appeared as if the owners had just left, with wooden carts in the sheds below the central courtyard, fencing foils carelessly abandoned in a barrel next to an old olive press, and appropriately enough for what was

rumoured latterly to have become a safe house for the occasional fugitive from the law, a finely-tooled leather box on a bedside table, which when opened, revealed the negative silhouette of its missing Biretta automatic pistol.

Casa Sollima, although suffering from further years of neglect, still stands, facing out across the valley looking towards the south-west (Fig. 4).³ A track winds its way up the hillside from the main road below, eventually passing through an arched gateway into the courtyard with the main house on the left (Figs. 2-3), and a central well head with a stone basin carved in the form of a shell bearing a crowned rococo cartouche with the damaged arms of Sollima de’ Merli, comprising the head and the outline of part of a *blackbird* (or *Merlo*) close to *dexter* (Fig. 5).



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

Across the courtyard in front of the house there is a low range of buildings with stables facing down the slope of the hillside. On the opposite side of the house from the entrance (Fig. 7) a track continues up the rear slope, passing a barn-like building which houses the olive press (Fig. 8), its gable decorated with a stone cartouche bearing a worn depiction of the standing figure of St Michael vanquishing Satan, and then proceeds on up to a small chapel (Fig. 9). At the apex of the chapel gable there is a broken stone *fleur-de-lis* (missing its central foil), springing from a rectangular base with the incised date: 1702 (Fig. 10).



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

Below this on the façade hangs a damaged hexagonal carved stone cartouche framing an oval shield with helm and mantling and the remains of *A blackbird close to sinister* (the lower part of the arms is lost). This cartouche is placed above a small window. Below this is a rectangular stone set above the lintel of the door, inscribed: SILVESTER POLITIVS EQVES ABITVS ALCANTERE (Perhaps: Silvester Alcantere⁴ knight, departed more elegantly⁵) (Fig. 10).



Fig. 9



Fig. 10

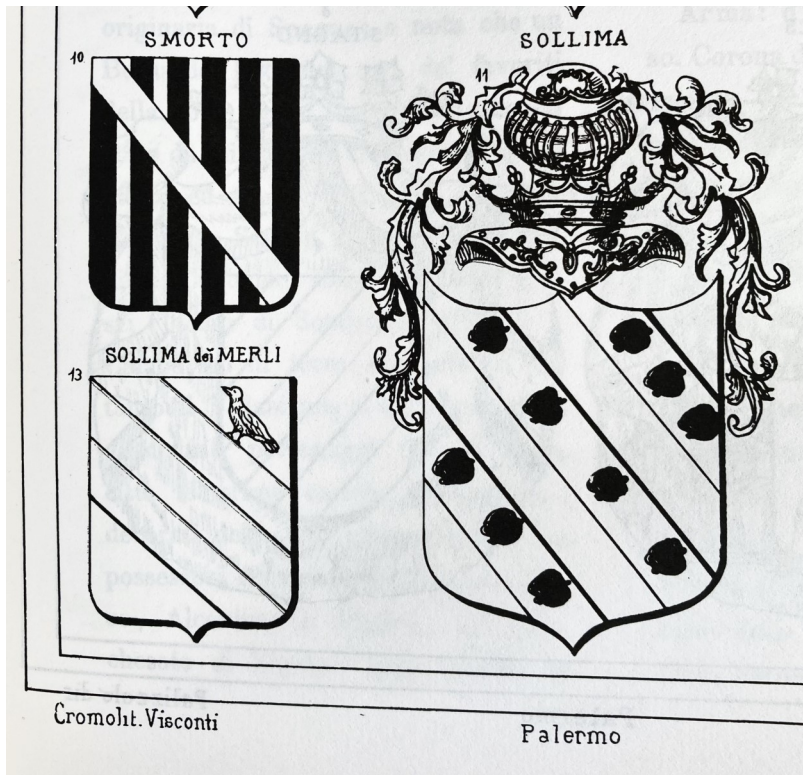


Fig. 11

THE ARMS

Both the arms displayed on the stone basin in the courtyard (Fig. 5), and on the façade of the chapel (Figs. 9-10), display a *merlo*, or blackbird, the first to dexter, the second to sinister. Both are damaged and missing the lower part of the cartouche or shield. However, these arms are variations on those belonging to the noble family of Sollima de' Merli ('Sollima of the blackbirds'): *Or two bends Gules standing on the first a blackbird close to dexter proper*⁶ (Fig. 11, no. 13). The Sollima de' Merli are a branch of the family of Sollima degli Urinali (of the urinals), whose arms are recorded as: *Azure on three bends Argent ten urinals* (or 'Solimato') pots (3, 4, 3), ensigned with a barred helmet gorged with the coronet of a Marquis (Fig. 11, no. 11).⁸ The family is said to have been founded by a German knight in 1232, and 'enjoyed nobility in Messina, and owned the Marquisate of Santa Marina, the Baronies of Castania, Saline di Val Demone, Rosignolo, Verbumcaudo, etc.' The royal titles commission recognized the nobility of the Sollima family with resolutions of 22 January and 10 April 1849.⁹

THE HOUSE

The stuccoed yellow ochre façade of the five bay house is dominated by an external staircase leading to the *piano nobile*, with straight wings which double back in a typically Sicilian manner (Figs. 3-4).¹⁰ The dramatic red painted geometric metal railings recall the Oriental style of Palazzina Cinese in Palermo (Fig. 6).¹¹ Under the stairs, the keystone for the supporting arch has a carved cartouche bearing the inscription: *DOMVS PARVA COR MAGNVM* (Small house big heart) (Fig. 4).

Inside the house, traces of its former rustic grandeur can be found in the Neo-Classical principal salon with its coved ceiling and stuccoed decoration (Fig. 12), and in the painted music room (Fig. 14). In the withdrawing room the door cases, alcove, and cupboards have gaily painted curved Rococo flourishes, floral sprigs, and garlands, and there are naive views painted above the doors to the bedrooms (Figs. 15-17). Amongst the odd scattered chairs, abandoned pieces of *fin de siècle* furniture, peeling wallpaper, and musical instrument (Fig. 13), there is also a more personal reminder of the long-departed family (Fig. 18). Down below, beneath the principal rooms, the service rooms, and kitchens sleep in the cool shade. Both kitchens have ranges covered in the traditional manner with nineteenth-century Sicilian (or Neapolitan) tiles, the better-preserved example providing a riot of glazed floral decoration (Fig. 19).



Fig. 6



Fig. 12



Fig. 13



Fig. 14



Fig. 15



Fig. 16



Fig. 17



Fig. 18



Fig. 19

Standing before the entrance to the *piano nobile* (Fig. 4), the peace broken only by the buzz of insects and distant jangling of sheep bells along the valley, it is easy to summon up the familiar literary shades of Tancredi, Angelica, and Don Fabrizio, Prince of Salina, and the timeless world of the Sicilian nobility.¹²

End Notes

1. Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa (Trans. S. Parkin, Ed. A. Gallenzi and G. Lanza Tomasi), *Childhood Memories and Other Stories* (London, 2013), p. 52. In this entry Lampedusa was describing a far grander country house, at Santa Margherita di Belice, which belonged to his family. The house was largely destroyed by an earthquake in 1968.
2. See C. Malone and S. Stoddart, 2000. 'A house in the Sicilian hills' *Antiquity* 74 (285), pp. 471-2, and C. Malone, G. Ayala, M. Fitzjohn, and S. Stoddart, 2001-3 *Under the volcano* Accordia Research Papers, Journal of the Accordia Research Centre 9, pp. 7-21, and for the historical background see L. Walker 'Populating the Medieval Upland Landscape of Troina: a review of published documentary sources for the 9th-15th centuries' in M. Fitzjohn ed., *Uplands of Ancient Sicily and Calabria: the archaeology of landscape revisited*, Accordia Research Papers, Journal of the Accordia Research Centre 13, pp. 116-142. We had returned to excavate a Malpasso site (of c. 3000 BC, the period of transition between the Copper and Bronze Ages) on the shifting and much eroded hillside. The site related to pastoral fixed seasonal transhumance with flocks of sheep that moved between higher pastures in summer and lower pastures in winter. This last phase of the Troina project, directed by Caroline Malone and Simon Stoddart, discovered evidence for an ex-situ stone structure, the production of milk, butter, yogurt, and cheese comprising large pottery milk boilers, and fragments of other material such as flint, chert, lava from Mount Etna, and obsidian flakes from Lipari, in the Aeolian islands.
3. Casa Sollima is currently in the ownership of the Oasi Maria SS, a Catholic medical foundation based in Troina. Over the intervening years some ceilings have collapsed and there is a general air of dilapidation. However, Palazzo Solima, in the city of Troina, has recently been purchased by the Commune, with the intention of restoring it as a museum and exhibition space. It is to be hoped that Casa Sollima can also be saved and restored (whilst preserving its unique atmosphere) before it is too late.
4. The name possibly derived from the Sicilian river Alcantara, which has its source on the south side of Monti Nebrodi. Alternatively, it may refer to the Spanish city of Alcántara, both names being ultimately derived from the Arabic word meaning 'the bridge'.
5. Meaning uncertain, possibly memorial?
6. 'd' oro, con due bande di rosso, la prima portante un merlo del medesimo' V. Palizzolo Gravina *Il Blazone in Sicilia: Dizionario Storico-Araldica della Sicilia* (Palermo, 1871-75), p. 351, Tav. 70, no. 13. The blackbird is illustrated close to dexter and is presumably proper.
7. In appearance like round-bottomed cooking pots with opposed lugs or handles (Op. cit. Palizzolo-Gravina, Tav. 70, no. 11, and See Dott. A. Mango di Casalgerardo, *NOBILIARIO DI SICILIA*, (da Sirchia a Sortino) at <http://docbcrs.bibliotecaregionalepalermo.it/mango/sirchia.htm>).
8. 'd' azzuro, con tre bande di argento caricate da dieci pignatte di solimato, poste 3, 4 e 3. Corona di Marchese', op. cit. Palizzolo-Gravina, p. 351, Tav. 70, no. 11. The tincture of the *pignatte di solimato* is not stated.
9. <http://docbcrs.bibliotecaregionalepalermo.it/mango/sirchia.htm>.
10. Discussed in A. Blunt *Sicilian Baroque* (London, 1968), pp. 40-42, and illustrated by Villa Filangeri (c. 1750) at S. Flavia, near Solunto (plate 128). Other examples in the vicinity of Palermo (shown in S. Requierez *Le Ville Di Palermo* (Palermo, 1997)) include Villa Resuttano (p. 27, plate 1), Villa Mattei-Mercadante (p. 64, plate 28), Villa De Gregorio (p. 94, plate 50), Villa Borsellino (p. 98, plate 53) and Villa Napoli (p. 105, plate 58).
11. A. Zalapì *Palazzi of Sicily* (Cologne, 2000), pp. 254-65.
12. See Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, *Il Gattopardo* (Milan, 1958), first published in English (Trans. A. Colquhoun) as *The Leopard* (London, 1960).

I am most grateful to Caroline Malone and Simon Stoddart for kindly enabling my recent visits to Casa Sollima, to Lottie Stoddart for supplying additional photos to supplement my own, to Enrico Giannitrapani for his photograph of the writer standing on the external staircase of Casa Sollima (Fig. 4), and to Andrew Rogerson for his help with the translation of the enigmatic inscription on the façade of the chapel.

The Heraldry Society Congress 2024

The beginning of August saw the welcome return of the popular Heraldry Society Congress, held this time at Keynes College, the University of Kent. The Congress kicked off on the Thursday afternoon when the organisers welcomed delegates from England, Scotland, Norway, Sweden, Australia and the USA. It is six years since the last Congress so it was great to see long standing members attending again and newer members who were attending their first Congress. In keeping with the theme of this Congress, 'Flying Heraldry', one of the Heraldry Society flags, made for the 35th International Congress of Genealogical & Heraldic Sciences in Cambridge, was on display whilst delegates picked up their delegate pack and signed in. This broad theme was a thread spun throughout the Congress, from the lectures, to the exhibition and the day out.

After dinner in the Dolche Vita restaurant, there was an official Welcome from the Chairman, Robert Harrison, and our first lecture. Thankfully this time the Lecture Theatre has easy to use IT set up and we had no problems throughout the Congress. Chaired by John Tunesi, our first lecture was presented by Geoff Parsons who gave us an introduction to vexillology, *Flags, Banners, Standards and Colours: The purpose, use and shape of each flag*. The lecture was superbly illustrated with photographs and we were shown examples of different types of flag, shapes, material and fastenings. Afterwards delegates visited the Keynes Bar, as is usual at our Congresses, to continue with conversations and to get to know each other better,

Friday brought our first full day of lectures. First up was Dr Richard Baker with his lecture on *The Queen's Beasts and their Standards*, where we learnt about the symbolism and heraldry of the Standards carried by the Queen's Beasts from the 1953 Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, now in Canada, with replica's in Kew Gardens. The lecture was illustrated by artwork by Dan Escott and was chaired by Dr Paul Fox.



L—R Dr Paul Fox & Dr Richard Baker



Mike Scott Rumble

Our second lecture, chaired by Reg Denny, saw Mike Scott Rumble present his talk *Into the Azure: The Flying Heraldry of Civil Aviation*.

The lecture gave us an overview of aviation advances from the early 1900s, airships, the adoption of the Civil Air Ensign, BOAC, and flag based tailfin designs to the thorny question of what flag should a flying boat fly.



Friday also saw the official opening of the members Exhibition. Delegates are encouraged to bring items from their own collection for others to view so this time there were lots of personal banners, table banners, figurines and artwork to be seen in a very colourful and interesting display

After lunch Wendy Ingle gave a fascinating talk entitled *A Brief Excursion through the history of the Flags used by the Girl Guide Association*. We learnt that from the very beginning the girls enjoyed marching and parading with the Union flag and gradually adopted pack pennons and standards which were emblazoned with the trefoil and other heraldic emblems, and were often hand made. Wendy also showed illustrations of the beautiful Standards made for Princess Mary and Princess Margaret when they were President. Nowadays, Flags and Standards come under 'Branding'. The talk promoted much interest and lots of questions from the floor and was chaired by Jane Tunesi.

Our final Friday lecture, chaired by Dr Adrian Ailes, was presented by Dr Andrew Gray. Andrew's excellent talk was on *Barnet 1471: the Battle lost by Heraldry*, where we learnt how the similarity of the banners on a foggy day in Hertfordshire in 1471 impacted on this battle in the Wars of the Roses.

After dinner on Friday, by way of an introduction to the day out in Canterbury the next day, our Librarian, Jane Tunesi presented *The Saga of the Heraldry Society Library*, an overview of the history of our Library and its many homes, and Dr Paul Fox gave a introduction to Canterbury Cathedral and the Great Cloister heraldry to whet our appetite.



Saturday morning, after breakfast, we gathered by the College 'bus stop for a short 'bus ride to the centre of Canterbury. After a short walk through the shopping centre, we reached the splendid Christchurch Gate, with the coats of arms newly repainted, where Dr Richard Baker was on hand to answer questions before we entered the precincts of the great Cathedral.

Once inside the Cathedral precincts, Dr Paul Fox led the group to Great Cloister where he gave us a tour of the magnificent heraldic shields and told us a little of their significance. His definitive work *Great Cloister: A Lost Canterbury Tale. A history of the Canterbury Cloister, constructed 1408-14, with some account of the donors and their coats of arms.* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2020) is recommended to all who wish to learn more.



After the tour there was time for the delegates to roam at will in the magnificent Cathedral. Some went in search of the heraldic tombs of The Black Prince and King Henry IV, whilst others went to see the place where St Thomas Becket was martyred. There was also the tranquil crypt to see the Treasures of the Cathedral, or to see the beautiful stained glass and the Warriors Chapel.



© Edward Mallinson

We also posed for the traditional 'class photo' outside the Cathedral.

After the Cathedral there was a short walk to Northgate to The Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies where we were warmly greeted by the staff and enjoyed our packed lunch, and tea and coffee, in the glorious sun trap of a garden before delegates enjoyed tours of the IHGS Library and our own Library at the Institute. Both of these Libraries are hidden gems for the heraldic researcher and should be used more.



© Edward Mallinson

On our return to the college campus, there was time for a rest before we all gathered for a photoshoot before we went in for the Congress Banquet, where delegates can don their 'glad rags', gongs and Fellowship badges, if they wish, and show off their table banners.



© Lucy Drew



The College provided a lovely 3 course meal with wine which was enjoyed by all. Over coffee our Chairman gave another short address, followed by the Loyal Toast, and Toasts to the Royal Family and The Heraldry Society.

On Sunday morning delegates with flags to fly, Society or personal, foregathered for a memorable photograph which encapsulated the theme of the this Congress—Flying Heraldry. Can you identify the flags and banners?



On our last day, there was a further lecture by Geoff Parsons, chaired by Robert Harrison, on *Flag Protocol & Flag Flying Regulations* in which we learnt more about flying the Union Flag and County Flags, what 'Half Mast' means, the different types of flagpole and the precedence of types of flag and designated flag flying days, for example St George's Day. This well presented lecture was illustrated throughout with photographic examples to illustrate the points made.

Did you know that anyone can fly a Union Jack or County flag from a flagpole in their garden or attached to the house and if you have got one, you could also fly your own personal banner? Geoff also provided all delegates with the useful Guide produced by The Flag Institute, *Flying Flags in the United Kingdom*, which has more information on this subject.

As in previous Congresses, the final session was an Open Forum, led by the Chairman, Robert Harrison, where the Congress and The Heraldry Society were discussed freely by those present. An online feedback form would be sent out to delegates after the Congress to help the organisers plan the next one.

If you didn't manage to attend this one, we hope that you will be able to come in 2026.

John & Jane Tunesi of Liongam
Congress Committee

STOP PRESS

The Heraldry Society Biennial Congress for 2026 has been provisionally booked

Date: Thursday 6 August until Sunday 9 August 2026.

Venue: Hatfield College, University of Durham.

Watch out for further announcements in the *Gazette* and on the website.

The Heraldry Society Exams

We are pleased to report that there has been more student success in The Heraldry Society Examinations administered by the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies.

Ian Newton, on the left, and John Norris on the right, were presented with their Intermediate Certificate in Heraldry Examination Certificates by our Secretary, John Tunesi of Liongam at the recent IHGS Open Day in Canterbury.

Both are looking forward to continuing their studies with the Advanced Certificate in Heraldry.



The Armorial Bearings of the Cadet Vocational College

By The Rt Hon the Lord Lingfield Kt KStJ DL

I have the great privilege of having been the Chair for the past ten years of the Cadet Vocational College which was founded as the Cadet Vocational Qualifications Organisation (CVQO) in 2001. Its name change came last year, the better to reflect its present role and at that time its Council decided to petition for Arms. In consultation with Colonel Horridge OBE OStJ, the College's Principal and Chief Executive, I submitted a design to Mr Robert Noel, Norroy and Ulster King of Arms and, with one minor adjustment, it was accepted, and the Patent issued this year.



The blazon is as follows:

Arms: Or on a Pale Azure between on the dexter a Sea Lion erect and on the sinister a Winged Lion rampant a Lion rampant all guardant in chief a Dance of three points downwards all counterchanged.

Crest: Upon a Helm A Chapeau Or turned up Azure semy of Mullets and Crescents Or statant on the forepart a Lion Cub maned Or and statant on the rear part a Lion Argent; Mantled Azure doubled Or.

Motto: STUDIIS SEMPER SURSUM

The Cadet Vocational College is a charity dedicated to improving the lives of young people by providing vocational qualifications for members of the cadet services and other youth organisations and also for their officers and adult volunteers. It works closely with The Army Cadet Corps, the Combined Cadet Force, the Sea Cadets, the RAF Air Cadets, St John Ambulance Cadets, Police Cadets and the Volunteer Fire

Service Cadets and every year some 4000 participants gain valuable qualifications which can lead to higher educational achievements and better employability.

A four-year independent study into the work of The Cadet Vocational College by Northampton University showed that, for the £3.5M grant that the government gives each year, the college returns to the tax-payer over £140M worth of value. The college not only works across the United Kingdom but also provides valuable access to vocational qualifications to those in commonwealth countries, in particular the Caribbean, the Far East and Gibraltar.

The rationale of the Arms is as follows: The three lions represent the three armed services which sponsor cadets: The Royal Navy, The Army and The Royal Air Force. In chief are three Vs for Vocation. The College annually runs the prestigious Westminster Awards to identify the UK's most accomplished cadets, the winner of which is presented with a huge sterling silver lion (which alas, must go back into its cabinet), a smaller edition being given to each year's winning cadet to keep. These two appear as a crest on a chapeau turned up semé of molets and crescents. The motto means: *study leads to higher things*.

Each year a graduation ceremony is held in the Chapel of The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst when officers and adult instructors receive awards, some at graduate and post-graduate level.





A banner has been painted for display on this occasion.

It was the work of the outstandingly accomplished artist Mrs Shirley Mann who, aged 16, started work as a banner painter for Messrs Turtle and Pierce at the time of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

During her long career she has been responsible for many wonderful works including Bath and Garter banners, all the pennons of the Knights Bachelor at St Paul's Cathedral and the banners of the Sovereign and The Princess Royal at the Chapel of the Royal Victorian Order at the Savoy.

Arms of Bishop Donal Roche

On the 26th of May this year, Father Donal Roche was ordained an Auxiliary Bishop of Dublin at St Andrew's Church in the city. Bishop Roche, a priest and a vicar general of the Archdiocese of Dublin, was ordained by Archbishop Dermot Farrell. He received the titular see of Cell Ausaille from Pope Francis.

On the day of the ordination, the new Bishop Roche's coat of arms – granted by the Chief Herald of Ireland, Dr Colette O'Flaherty – was used for the first time.

The two roaches on the shield are taken from the traditional canting Roche arms. The alpha and omega and the lamp reflect Bishop Roche's emphasis on scripture, in particular a passage from Psalm 118 (119).



Bishop Roche explained his motto, which is in the Irish language, during his ordination address. He said: "The motto I have chosen as a bishop is inspired by a line from the Psalms: 'Your word is a lamp for my steps and a light for my path.' I have shortened it to *Do Bhriathar Mo Sholas* – Your Word is my Light."

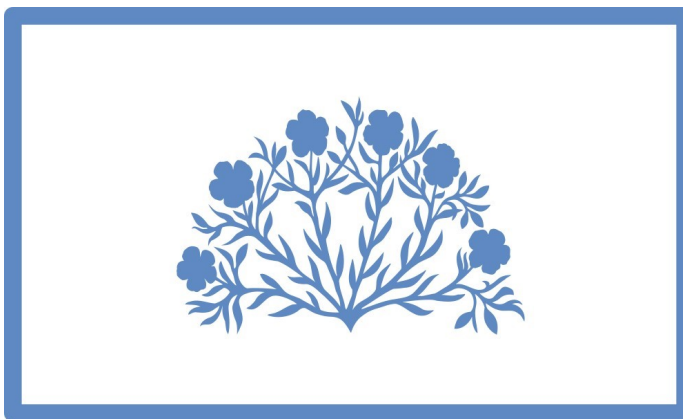
The blazon of the arms is *Gules between two roaches naiant Argent in pale an ancient lamp Or flamant Proper on flaunches of the second on the dexter Alpha and on the sinister Omega of the field*. The golden processional cross and the green galero with twelve tassels are the usual ornaments used by a Catholic bishop.

Bishop Roche's agent for the commissioning of the grant of arms was Peter Henry. Peter is a member of the Heraldry Society and an officer in the Dublin diocesan curia, the staff of the Archbishop of Dublin. He is the author of *The Heraldry of Johnstown Castle: A Wexford Estate's Armorial History* (2019).



Stormont and the Wee Blue Blossom

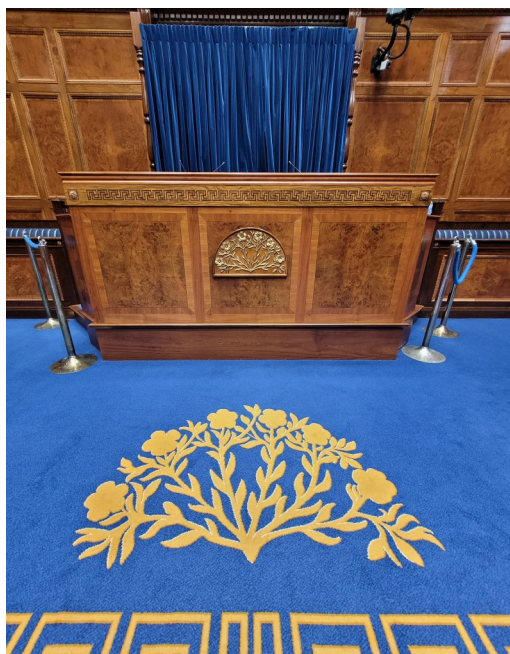
When Michelle O'Neill became First Minister of Northern Ireland on 3rd February 2024, she was photographed with a blue dispatch box bearing in gold the words "FIRST MINISTER" and a semi-circular spray of flax plants, the official badge and flag of the Northern Ireland Assembly since 1998. The six flowers in the design represent the six counties of Northern Ireland; Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry and Tyrone.



Flax (*linum usitatissimum*) is the source of linen, one of the earliest textiles used by humans. It is known to have been grown in Mesopotamia in Neolithic times and to have been used in the burials of ancient Egypt. Linen production was well established in Ireland and a major industry grew up in the north. Flax was sometimes referred to as "the wee blue blossom" after the colour of its flowers.

The six flowered semi-circular spray appeared, with a coronet, as a symbol of Northern Ireland on the £1 coin issued in 1991. It was designed by Leslie Durbin (1913-2005) an eminent silversmith who had co-designed and made the Stalingrad Sword presented in 1943 to the citizens of the Soviet city to commemorate their hard-won victory during the Second World War.

The Parliament Buildings of Northern Ireland, often referred to as Stormont, were completed and opened in 1932. The bright Portland stone exterior with the clear delineation of the landscaping made the site an easily seen landmark from the air so during the War years it was camouflaged with a supposedly easy to remove mixture of bitumen and cow manure. After 1945 seven years of labour finally left the building clean but failed to return it to its original hue.



Inside the building the chamber of the House of Commons of Northern Ireland had blue benches while the Senate chamber had red. After the lower chamber was destroyed by an electrical fire in 1995 it was reconstructed in a less confrontational horseshoe form. Blue was retained for the carpets and seats and the only symbolism present was a large gold flax semi-circle in the carpet design at the centre of the chamber and a smaller version in gold and wood on the front of the Speaker's desk.



By contrast the Senate Chamber which has not been damaged or rebuilt retains the Royal arms above the Speaker and the arms of the Government of Northern Ireland on the Chair and the red leather tops of the dispatch boxes.

These arms were granted to the Government of Northern Ireland in 1924. They were designed by Major Sir Neville Wilkinson, Ulster King of Arms, at Dublin Castle in 1923, the final design being completed by his deputy Thomas Ulick Sadleir. The Royal Warrant was signed by King George V and the arms registered in Dublin.

The supporters were granted in 1925 and consisted of a red lion rampant to represent the Ulster Scots and an Irish Elk to represent, in the language of the day, "the native element". The elk's head appears as a decorative motif on the street lamps and gateposts at Stormont.



The grant has not been rescinded but the arms are considered historical as the body to which the arms were granted, the Government of Northern Ireland, was dissolved in 1972.

As late as 1971 the College of Arms in London added the compartment on which the supporters stand: *On a grassy mount two flax plants each with three flowers on stems proper.*

This brief display of six wee blue blossoms may have been the forerunner of the current Assembly motif.

Martin Davies



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The Royal National Lifeboat Association

2024 marks the 200th anniversary of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution founded by Sir William Hillary, 1st Baronet after witnessing wrecks in the inhospitable waters off the Isle of Man. He was moved to issue 'An Appeal to the British Nation on the Humanity and Policy of forming a National Institution for the Preservation of Lives and Property from Shipwreck' in 1823. The appeal was successful and on 4 March 1824, at a public meeting convened under the chairmanship of the Archbishop of Canterbury (Charles Manners-Sutton), the Royal National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck was founded under the patronage of King George IV. The Institution's name changed in 1854.

Sir William Hillary, 1st Baronet

Sir William (1771 – 1847) lived a full life. Coming from a ship and slave owning Liverpoolian family, he became equerry to Prince Augustus Frederick, Duke of Sussex. He came into funds due to his marriage to heiress Frances Elizabeth Disney Fytche in 1800 and inherited more wealth following the death of his brother, Richard, and father's business partner, John Scott.

Upon the commencement of the Napoleonic Wars with France in 1803, he raised - at his own expense - the 1,400 strong First Essex Legion of Infantry and Cavalry. Whilst this almost ruined him financially, he was rewarded with a baronetcy in 1805. As well as founding the RNLI, Hillary frequently went out in the boats himself and at the age of 60, took part in the rescue of the crew of the packet *St George*.

There is, to me at least, an heraldic mystery associated with Sir William. Burke's Baronetage gives the arms of the Hillary baronets as: Arms: *Argent three fleurs-de-lis each between six crosses crosslet azure a bordure of the second (i.e. sable); Crest—Out of a mural crown gules a cubit arm armed proper, garnished and the joints embattled or, the gauntlet holding a cheval trap of the last, round the arm a scarf vert; Supporters: Two lions argent each gorged with a collar or, fimbriated sable charged with a fleur-de-lis between two crosses crosslet of the last.*

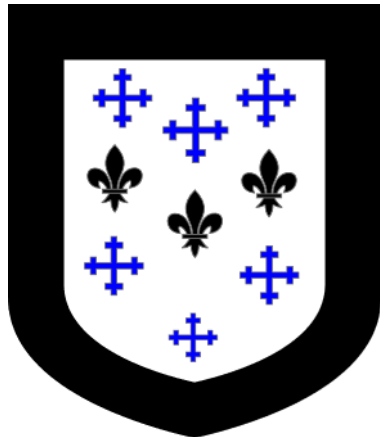


Fig. 1 - The Hillary coat of arms, drawn by the author.



Fig. 2 - The Hillary arms from Burke's Baronetage

The shield and crest are perfectly normal, but Supporters are usually limited to Peers and Knights Grand Cross of certain orders of chivalry. Whilst Sir William was a Baronet and a Knight Grand Cross of the (pre 1888 Royal Charter) Order of St John of Jerusalem, that would not normally be sufficient to permit the granting of supporters. If any readers know why the Hillary baronets have supporters, please let me know.

Sir William's first wife, Frances, whose wealth indirectly bought his baronetcy, was the daughter of Lewis Disney Fytche (1738 – 1822). Lewis was originally plain "Lewis Disney" but added Fytche by Royal Sign Manual eleven days after his marriage to Elizabeth Fytche. Around this time he bought Syerston Hall, Nottinghamshire, from Lord George Manners-Sutton, the father of the Charles Manners-Sutton, Archbishop of Canterbury, noted above.

Lewis's grandfather was John Disney, a priest whose 1710 engraved portrait by Robert White shows the Disney arms of *Argent, on fess Gules, three fleur-de-lys Or*.

Lewis' name change seems to have been driven by an age-old reason: the Fytches were wealthier and more prominent than the Disneys. Elizabeth was the heiress to her father William Fytche (1716 - 1753), an administrator of the English East India Company who served as President of Bengal, and her uncle Thomas Fytche of Danbury Place. William and Thomas's father, also William, was an MP, and his father was a knight.

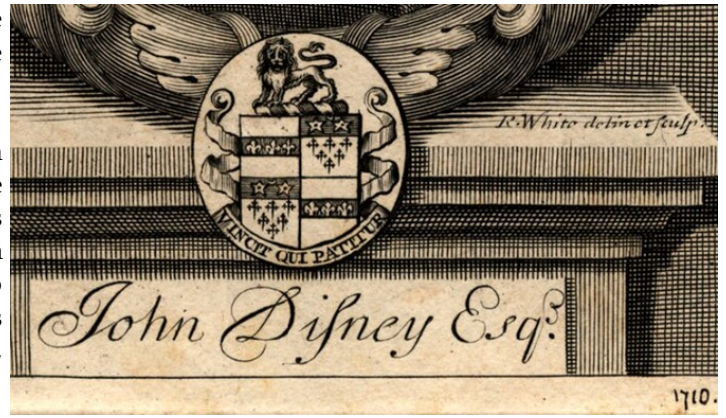


Fig. 3: John Disney's arms from a 1710 engraving by Robert White. National Portrait Gallery Creative Commons.

Portraits of 'Bengal William' and 'MP William' show variations of the Fytche arms¹ *Vert, a chevron between 3 leopards' heads, or*.

RNLI Logo

I am not aware of any formal heraldry granted to the RNLI. However, the flag logo of the RNLI could easily be heraldic: *Argent on a cross gules fimbriated azure between the letters "R", "N", "L" and "I" gules a crown proper above a foul anchor or*. It was designed in 1884 by Leonora Preston after her brother was rescued by Ramsgate lifeboat volunteers and formally adopted by the RNLI in 1908. It originally featured the Tudor style crown but that changed in 1953 to the St Edward's crown worn by Queen Elizabeth II. Although British Army cap badges now have been modified to reflect Charles III use of the Tudor crown, it does not appear that the RNLI has (yet?) changed its logo or flag.



Fig. 4: Examples of Fytche arms from portraits. Wikipedia Creative Commons.



Fig. 5: The current RNLI flag. Wikipedia Creative Commons.



Fig. 6: an impression of the RNLI flag with a Tudor crown, by the author

Colin Lafferty-Smith

End Notes

1. More examples of Fytche arms - including the 'ancient' and canting Fytche arms of *Or a torteaux between three crosses pattée fitchée gules* can be found in the stained glass windows of the east wall of St. Stephen's Chapel in St James's Church, Upgate, Louth, Lincolnshire.

Library Acquisitions

All the books, pamphlets and serials are now at the IHGS.

Please contact the Hon. Librarian if you have any queries at: librarian@theheraldrysociety.com

Books, Pamphlets & Serials:

Journals:

Blazoen, Tiende Jaargang Nr 2, April-Mei-Juni 2024

Der Herold, Jahrgang 66, Neue Folge, Band 21, Heft 3-4, 2023

Flagmaster 168, Summer 2024

Gens Nostra, Jaargang 79, nummer 3, Meo Juni 2024

Gens Nostra, Jaargang 79, nummer 4, Juli Augustus 2024

Heraldicum Disputationes, Jaargang 29, Nummer 2, 2024

Heraldry in Canada, Volume 58, No 1-2, 2024

Le Parchemin, 89^e annee, No 471, Mai – Juin 2024

Le Parchemin, 89^e annee, No 472, Juillet-Aout 2024

Tak Tent, Newsletter No 103, Spring 2024

The Heraldry Society Library: How to arrange a visit

The Heraldry Society Library, at either the Society of Antiquaries in London or The Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies in Canterbury can be visited by members for research.

A new catalogue of all our holdings with location is available on our website. We hold not only published material but original research by many past members.

To arrange a visit, all you need to do is contact each repository and make an appointment using guidelines at the links below.

Society of Antiquaries - <https://www.sal.org.uk/library/visiting-and-using-the-library/>

IHGS - <http://www.ihgs.ac.uk/library>

Contact the Hon. Librarian if you have any queries about our holdings.

librarian@theheraldrysociety.com

Local and Regional Societies and Groups

Members, please support your local heraldry group or society. We realise that not everyone can get to London for meetings, but local and regional societies need new members to continue.

Active groups in the UK can be found in the following locations: City of Bath, Cambridge University Heraldic & Genealogical Society (CUHAGS), Lancashire Family History and Heraldry Society Heraldry Group, Midland Ancestors, Norfolk, Oxford University Heraldic Society, Suffolk, Yorkshire and of course The Heraldry Society of Scotland, amongst others.

Lack of new members, or members who are unable to continue post covid, is a repeating theme that we have encountered when speaking to regional and local Heraldry society officers and members.

If you would like more information about local groups and societies nearer to you please get in touch or check out this link -

[Links | The Heraldry Society](#)

Dates for your Diary

Saturday 7 September

Suffolk Heraldry Society - A Community of Antiquaries in Seventeenth Century Suffolk : Compiling Armories presented by John Pelling. Margery Kemp Room at the Quaker Meeting House, Bury St Edmunds. 2.30pm. Refreshments provided.

Wednesday 11 September

The Heraldry Society, Mark Elvin Lecture - A Griffin Proper presented by Dr Andrew Gray, FHS, a.i.h. This talk will examine the nature and form of the griffin in heraldry. By Zoom. 6.00pm.

Sunday 15 September

Yorkshire Heraldry Society - Visit to Methley Parish Church, nr. Castleford. Heraldry on tombs and Monuments plus a display of medieval armed combat by 'Frei Compagne'. 2.00pm

Saturday 21 September

City of Bath Heraldic Society - Fish and Ships: A look at some maritime heraldry presented by Michael Furlong. Manvers Street Baptist Church, Manvers Street, Bath. 2.30pm

Saturday 28 September

The Heraldry Society of Scotland – AGM & Presidential Address. The Soutar Theatre, AK Bell Library, Perth, Scotland. 2pm. TBC

Wednesday 16 October

The Heraldry Society - Civic Splendour: The use of Civic Insignia in Heraldry presented by Dr Duncan Sutherland. This talk will explore the use of civic insignia such as maces, swords and collars of office dating back over 200 years. It will examine the origins of such civic traditions and showcase arms granted to mayors, local authorities and other corporate bodies featuring these historic symbols of office. By Zoom. 6.00pm.

Thursday 17 October

Suffolk Heraldry Society - Honour in the eyes of others?: 'Pseudo' Heraldic Motifs in medieval personal seals and church graffiti presented by Vicky Fletcher. Margery Kemp Room at the Quaker Meeting House, Bury St Edmunds. 2.30pm. Refreshments provided.

Saturday 19 October

City of Bath Heraldic Society - Heraldic Gems hiding in plain sight presented by Ann Ballard. Manvers Street Baptist Church, Manvers Street, Bath. 2.30pm

Saturday 26 October

The Heraldry Society of Scotland - "Four Legs good – two legs better" presented by George Way of Plean. Royal Scots Club, Edinburgh. 2pm.

Wednesday 13 November

The Heraldry Society - Heraldry at the Order of St John presented by Simone Monti and Robert Harrison. The Museum of the Order of St John, St John's Gate, St John's Lane, Clerkenwell, London, EC1M 4DA. In person. An examination of the heraldic records, artefacts and installations at the Museum at St John's gate. This lecture will take place in conjunction with a Winter drinks reception, details and booking info to follow.

Thursday 14 November

Suffolk Heraldry Society - How not to design Civic Heraldry presented by Dr Andrew Gray. By Zoom. 7.30pm. All are welcome to join us. Contact suffolkheraldrysociety@gmail.com for the link.

Saturday 16 November

City of Bath Heraldic Society - Kith and Kin in Heraldry: Fawkes' Memorial Window presented by Lucy Bailey. Manvers Street Baptist Church, Manvers Street, Bath. 2.30pm

Calling all Regional Heraldry Groups and Societies:

Don't forget to send us your 2024-2025 lecture programmes for inclusion in the next issue.

New Members

A warm welcome to:

| | | |
|-------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 24559 | Mr James Juliano | FL, USA |
| 24560 | Mr Sergio Fernandez de Cordova y de Veyga | NY, USA |
| 24561 | Mr Clifford Hoy | Surrey |
| 24562 | The Hon. Frank Gregg | NJ, USA |
| 24563 | Dr Sebastian Koga | MS, USA |
| 24564 | Mr William Done | CA, USA |
| 24565 | Mr David Thornton | Nottinghamshire |
| 24566 | Mr Charlie Middleton | Suffolk |
| 24567 | Lt Col Gordon McWhaw | Abu Dhabi |
| 24568 | Mr James Robinson | S. Glamorgan |
| 24569 | Mr David Ruthven-Murray | Surrey |
| 24570 | Mrs Julie Belcher | KY, USA |
| 24571 | Dr Thomas Williams | London |

Recently Deceased Members

23555 Mr John Wilson Cheshire

If you have recently changed your address, telephone or your email please let us know by emailing the Membership Secretary on membership@theheraldrysociety.com or by contacting the registered office at 53 Hitchin Street, Baldock, Hertfordshire SG7 6AQ.

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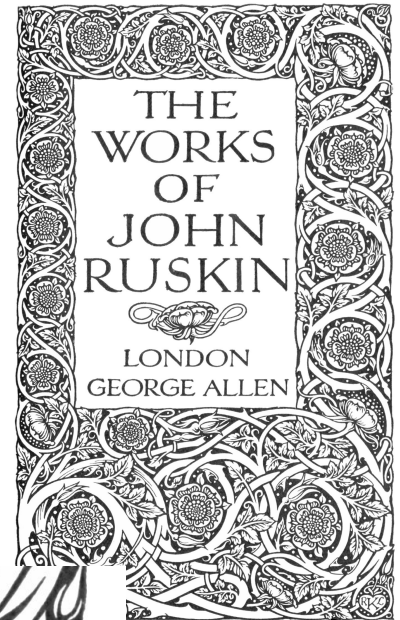
Correspondence

Who was RLK?



I would be grateful if any of your readers could tell me who "RLK" was. He or she did the cover illustration for *In Praise of Westminster Abbey* (London, Frederick Muller Ltd, 1950), and the title page of *The Works of John Ruskin* (London, George Allen & Sons, 1910), both of which are shown here. The initials are just above the lowest portcullis and at the lower right corner respectively. The latter could be taken for "RKL", but another illustration that I have seen, and the layout of the letters here, strongly suggest "RLK".

Roger Barnes,
Auckland, New Zealand.



The Crest of Bond

Further to the request in the last issue of *The Heraldry Gazette*, here is my study of the Crest to the Arms of Charles Geoffrey Bond DL OBE, and authority on Lord Byron.

He has the original sketch I made about 7 years ago in order to make the Mermaid look more glamorous than in the image on his Grant of Arms and to add interest to the book.

Henry Blagg



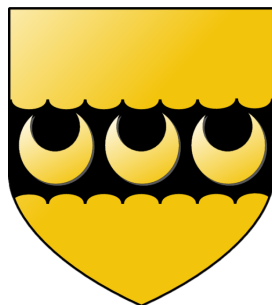
Correspondence

The Earliest Grant to a Woman

On page 23 of your esteemed *Gazette*, there is the second claimant to be the earliest grant of arms to a woman. I now append one from seven years prior to that, for Mary Justice, daughter and co-heir of William Justice; as found on page 160 of Vol 2 of the Four Visitations of Berks of 1532, 1566, 1623 and 1665-6, published by the Harleian Society in 1908, opposite.

I only happen to know about it because the College told my grandfather in c.1927 that he could carry the arms of William Justice as he, and now me and a few siblings, are descended from the other heir to William, Bridget Justice who married a Richard Lybbe who is definitely an ancestor if you glance at my surname.

William Justice carried these arms: *Or on a fess engrailed sable three crescents of the first.* I append my rendition of that.



So Mary Justice retained the core charges and their tinctures but changed the field and added a few trinkets.

My transcription of the paragraph on page 160 is:

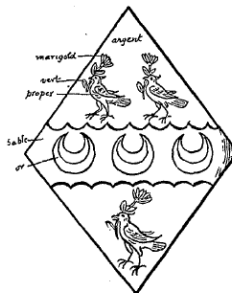
“The armes of Mary dowghter & heyer of William Justyce of Reding in the Count of Barke gentillwoman and at this pnte tyme wif to John Yates, gentleman of Lyvorde in the saide Count. she beareth a lozenge silv on a fesse engrailed sable three Cressaunts golde betwene thre Turtle Doves in ther prop couler beked and membred geules holding in every beke a Marygolde stalked and leved vert as more plainly appereth here depicted. Yeven & graunted by me Thomas Hawley als Clarenceux King of Armes the xxt daye of februarye in the vth yere of the Reigne of or sovreyne Lorde Kinge Edward the vith [1551].” But I have not managed to include some of the ancient English letters and abbreviations.

160

NOTES: VISITATIONS

Justice, of Reading.

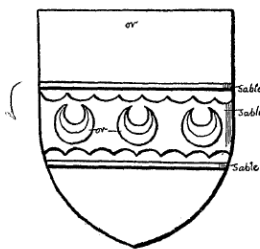
Grant of Arms to MARY JUSTICE of Reading, co. Berks, wife of John Yate of Lyford, gent., 20 February 1551, by Thomas Hawley, Clarenceux. Extract from MS. College of Arms, 2 H. 5, 84.



Mary Justice.

The Armes of Mary dowghter & heyer of William Justyce of Reding in the Count of Barke gentillwoman and at this pnte tyme wif to John Yates, gentleman of Lyvorde in the saide Count. she bereth a lozenge silv on a fesse engrailed sable thre Cressaunts golde betwene thre Turtle Doves in their prop couler beked & membred geules holding in every beke a Marygolde stalked & leved vert as more plainly appereth here depicted. Yeven & graunted by me Thomas Hawley als Clarenceux King of Armes the xx^t daye of februarye in the vth yere of the Reigne of o^r sovreyne Lorde Kinge Edward the vjth [1551].

Grant of Arms to MARIE JUSTICE of Reading, wife of John Yate, 1574, by Robert Cooke, Clarenceux. MS. College of Arms, Vincent, 161, 2.



Marie d. & heire of W^m Justice of Readinge in barkshire, p C6 [Robert Cooke] Claf 1574, wif to John Yate [of Buckland] [See Vol. I., pp. 60, 149].

Harl. MS. 1532, fol. 55, gives these Arms with the note: Thomas Justice of Reading Clarke of the law, 1526.

In the lower half of the appended page it indicates that she was regranted her father’s original arms around 1574. I don’t know what was going on there, perhaps a thorough disapproval by a later herald of ladies doing their own thing? Can we now say that she has two arms?

Tim Powys-Lybbe

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Meg loves to sit in the cardboard box containing Heraldry Society ties. If you purchase one you can guarantee it has passed 'quality control'.