

Infosheet No. 28 Coat of Arms

In 1956 the General Committee of Lloyd's Register decided that after nearly 200 years in business it was time the Society had a Coat of Arms.

An appointment was made with the Rouge Croix Pursuivant at the College of Arms, and a year and many interviews later a warrant was granted by the Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshal and Hereditary Marshal of England. Meanwhile, drawing after drawing was prepared and submitted to Rouge Croix. If a design survived his critical scrutiny it was handed to his assistant to carry out a search of the 'Books of Ordinaries'. These huge tomes contain a complete record of the components of all Arms registered at the College since the beginnings of Heraldry, and no detail may ever be duplicated. For instance, there are several dolphins and lions guardant as supporters, but we placed the Society's classification cross ✠ on the dolphin and a sun on the lion, which had not been done before.

If the hidden mysteries of the 'Ordinaries' failed to sink the design, it then went to Garter King of Arms who did his best to find a lapse from good taste or a hidden meaning, or some other deviation from the strict Laws of Heraldry. Most failures came at this stage, which meant scrapping the design and starting again. No wonder it is called an 'Achievement' of Arms.

The illustrations of the Arms and Badges herewith were photocopied from the Letters Patent, prepared by a heraldic artist on calfskin vellum. The Royal Arms are at the head of the parchment, with those of the Duke of Norfolk and the College of Arms. The three English Kings of

Arms have signed at the bottom and their seals are attached.



The Arms granted to Lloyd's Register of Shipping in 1958

The text of the Patent reads:

'To All and Singular to whom these Presents shall come, the Honourable Sir George Rothe Bellew, Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, Garter Principal King of Arms, Sir John Dunamace Heaton-Armstrong, Knight, Member of the Royal Victorian Order, Clarenceux, King of Arms and Aubrey John Toppin, Esquire, Member of the Royal Victorian Order, Norroy and Ulster King of Arms, Send Greeting! Whereas Kenneth Raymond Pelly, Esquire, upon whom has been conferred the Decoration of the Military Cross, Chairman of Lloyd's Register of Shipping hath represented unto The Most Noble Bernard Marmaduke, Duke of Norfolk, Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order, Earl Marshal and Hereditary Marshal of England and One of Her Majesty's

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Most Honourable Privy Council that Lloyd's Register of Shipping is an Association of Members of the shipping community which had its origins in a Committee formed by Underwriters, Merchants and Shipowners in the year 1760.

That the said Association was reconstituted in the year 1834 and is a non-profit making organisation formed for the purpose of maintaining for the use of Merchants, Shipowners and Underwriters a faithful and accurate classification of Mercantile Shipping. That the superintendence of the affairs of the Association is under the direction of a General Committee which Committee is desirous of having Armorial Ensigns duly assigned with lawful authority and he therefore hath requested the favour of His Grace's Warrant for Our granting and assigning such Arms and Crest and in the same Patent such Supporters and such Device or Badge as may be proper to be borne and used for Lloyd's Register of Shipping on Seals or otherwise according to the Laws of Arms and forasmuch as the said Earl Marshal did by Warrant under his hand and Seal bearing the date the Twenty-first day of July last authorise and direct Us to grant and assign such Arms and Crest and such Supporters and such Device or Badge accordingly. Know ye therefore that We the said Garter, Clarenceux and Norroy and Ulster in pursuance of His Grace's Warrant and by virtue of the Letters Patent of Our several Offices to each of Us respectively granted do by these Presents grant and assign the Arms following for Lloyd's Register of Shipping, that is to say :- Argent a Cross Gules surmounted of an open book proper edged Or bound also Gules thereon a Lymphad sail furred pennon and flags flying of the last the Book ensigned with a Mercantile Crown Azure. And for the Crest on a Wreath of the Colours A

Woman proper habited Argent crined and Murally Crowned Or the dexter Arm supporting a Caduceus Gold the sinister Hand resting on the Anchor Azure Cabled Sable as the same are in the margin hereof more plainly depicted. And by the Authority aforesaid We do further grant and assign the following Device or Badge that is to say.

On a Cartouche Gules environed of a Torse of Rope Argent and Or a Lymphad sail furred pennon and flags flying Also Argent the whole ensigned with a Mercantile Crown Azure as here depicted to be borne and used upon Standards or otherwise. And by the Authority aforesaid I the said Garter do by these Presents further grant and assign the Supporters following for Lloyd's Register of Shipping that is to say:- On the dexter side a Dolphin guardant Or charged with a Cross Paty Sable and on the sinister side a Lion guardant Gold charged with a Sun in splendour Gules as the same are also in the margin hereof more plainly depicted the whole to be borne and used for ever hereafter for Lloyd's Register of Shipping on Seals or otherwise according to the Law of Arms. In witness whereof We the said Garter, Clarenceux and Norroy and Ulster Kings of Arms have to these Presents subscribed Our names and affixed the Seals of Our several offices this Tenth day of December in the Sixth year of the Reign of Our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth the Second by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Her other Realms and Territories Queen Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith and in the year of Our Lord One thousand nine hundred and fifty-seven.'

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The Blazon

The Blazon, as it is known, may require explanation. It begins with the tincture of the shield, which is Argent (silver), followed by the different symbols. The Cross Gules (red) is taken from the Arms of the City of London, the Society's birthplace. The foundation is again symbolised by the open Register Book proper (meaning natural colours) edged Or (gold) with red binding.

A Lymphad, or heraldic ship, of the last (meaning of the last named colour) depicts the nature of the book, and in recognition of the Society's services to merchant shipping a Merchant Crown Azure (blue) ensigns, or is placed over, the Register.

The Wreath below the Crest follows heraldic practice in its tinctures, which are silver and red, the principal metal and colour of the shield. The Mantling flowing from the wreath is also red, lined with silver.

The Crest has been adapted from the Society's old badge. It is described in the Patent as a Woman proper, and perhaps one should remember that this means 'natural colouring'. She is clothed in silver (habited Argent) and her hair (crined) and mural crown are gold (Or). A mural crown is a circlet of bricks in the shape of an embattled wall, representing city connections. The woman supports a gold Caduceus (a staff with intertwined serpents) on her right arm, and her left hand rests on a blue Anchor, symbol of security. A black rope (cabled sable) is attached to the anchor.

The Crest is fixed to an Esquires helmet. This type is always borne by Corporations, while royalty and different grades of nobility and knighthood each have their own style of helmet.

Having described the Shield, Wreath and Crest, the Patent digresses for a brief look at the badge, which may be used for a cap badge, title pages of books and for office forms, in fact, wherever the full Achievement would be too ornate.

Garter King of Arms is responsible for approving the Supporters. We have chosen the king beasts of sea and land. On the dexter side (on the right if one is standing behind the shield) there is a gold Dolphin guardant (facing front) charged with the black Cross Paty from the Society's Classification symbol, often erroneously called a Maltese Cross; while on the sinister or left side there is a gold lion guardant, charged with a Sun in splendour, a new heraldic device for representing atomic and other power. The Supporters are standing on a mound, or compartment, which is half sea and half land, specially designed to depict the Society's amphibious activities.

Although in Scottish Heraldry the motto is always quoted in the blazon, it is no concern of the English Heralds, and for this reason the newly adopted motto 'Without Prejudice' (from 1956) is not mentioned in the Patent.

The Beginnings of Heraldry

As far as we know from history, shields were always decorated in some fashion. Those made from wood and leather, reinforced by metal bands and bosses, had the metal parts painted, and the frequent appearance of crosses, chevrons and roundels in heraldry is a result of this early influence.

Simple designs gave way to paintings of warlike beasts, of which the lion was easily the favourite. The aim of this was, no doubt, that while your adversary was gazing in admiration or horror at the fearful apparition

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there was plenty of time to clout him over the head. Incidentally, few of the early shield-painters had seen the animals they tried to depict.

They worked from fables or traveller's tales, and this accounts for the queer beasts which have become accepted by tradition in heraldry.

Purists maintain that the science of heraldry owes nothing to the daubed shields of earlier times, but the custom of decorating shields was firmly established long before the introduction of full armour and the closed helmet made identification impossible without a label of some kind. So knights adopted a design for their own personal use which was painted on their shield and embroidered on their surcoat. This coat was worn over the armour and is the origin of the term 'Coat of Arms'. Knights also wore a quest, at first cut out of flat metal, later modelled in leather or wood, and laced or bolted to the helmet. The joint was covered by a wreath of twisted silk. Men-at-arms wore the badge of their leader.

The hereditary principle of heraldry began when sons adopted their father's Arms - sometimes with a slight difference - to preserve the family identity. The earliest recorded shield of this kind is dated A.D. 1127, but it was nearly 100 years later before heraldry had fully acquired the rules and terminology which are the basis of its present laws and language.

In the Age of Chivalry, tournaments were occasions of colour and pageantry, popularising the use of heraldry in pennons, banners, shields, surcoats and horse mantling. Heralds were responsible for the proclamation and conduct of

tournaments and for the marshalling of ceremonies; and they had to be able to identify any knight from his insignia.

They became the recognised authorities on the subject, which is why this fascinating science is called heraldry. Rolls of Arms were compiled by the heralds and unauthorised persons displaying Arms were heavily fined.

The great movements of knights and their armies in the Crusades spread the practice of heraldry across Europe, and it was from the Holy Land that the Mantling on Coats-of-Arms originated. This was a short cape, often scalloped, hanging from the top of the helmet to protect the wearers head and shoulders from the heat of the sun. Fighting in the heat, encased in a sort of tin-can, must have been unpleasant.

The first Mottoes were war cries and many famous examples have survived in heraldry. Supporters did not appear on full 'achievements of arms' until about A.D. 1450. When artists were designing seals which contained a Shield of Arms, they were often faced with a blank space around the shield, so they filled it with a pair of animals, and these were kept as permanent supporters. In modern Arms, the supporters stand on a mound, or compartment, as it is known in heraldry.

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