

SOMERSET HERALDRY SOCIETY

Newsletter Spring 2003



EDITORIAL

I am not the editor. I am not even an editor. However, I would still like to say welcome to this new society. I hope that the Somerset Heraldry Society will grow and prosper, but whether it does depends entirely on how many and how keen the members are. So, if you like the idea, join and come.

We have arranged a programme for the Spring to start things off. It is not meant to set a precedent, so please do fill in the questionnaire and indeed the joining form. We propose that there should be a charge of £1 per person to cover the cost of tea and buns (or should it be cakes and ale?). I hope that's okay.

Please submit articles for future newsletters. Anything of heraldic interest is welcome. After all the Beatles had nothing to do with the West Country, but I hope that most readers will welcome the article on Paul's arms.

So welcome, please join, please come to any or all meetings, please write articles. Thanks.

Alex Maxwell Findlater

SIR PAUL MCCARTNEY'S ARMS

It was recently reported that Paul McCartney has been granted arms. These are:



Arms: Or between two Flaunches fracted fesswise two Roundels Sable over all six Guitar Strings palewise throughout counterchanged.

Crest: On a Wreath of the Colours A Liver Bird calling Sable supporting with the dexter claws a Guitar Or stringed Sable.

Motto: ECCE COR MEUM (Behold my heart)

The four bits of beetle-back made by the flaunches, represent the four Beatles. The discs and strings represent a

Gibson guitar with two sound holes. The Liver Bird sits on the top of the Liver Building in Liverpool, as it does in the arms of the city. The Motto refers to the oratorio written while his first wife Linda was dying. It was first performed in November 2001 by the choir of Magdalene College, Oxford.

Interestingly, the College of Arms only put the illustration of Paul McCartney's arms on their site after the news broke in the Sunday Times. When I read the paper, I checked on their site for the arms, before writing it up. It is also curious that it took over eighteen months for the news to break, as the arms were granted on 18th June 2001.

Their website says:

“The design of these arms (granted on Sir Paul's 59th birthday) clearly recalls Sir Paul's principal instrument, the guitar. In addition the cormorant or ‘liver bird’ in the crest is a reference to his native city, Liverpool. The helmet is left-facing and has an open visor as is customary for knights; Sir Paul was made a knight bachelor in 1997.

The result is a simple and distinct design that makes a clear reference to the grantee's career without departing from the standard vocabulary of the English heraldic tradition.”

Perhaps one might take issue with this last, in that a flaunch fracted is hardly traditional vocabulary. Indeed fracted means broken, surely it does not mean “broken in a straight line by the width of a barrulet”? It is also noteworthy that the new(ish) rule that the direction of the helmet should be determined by the needs of the crest is quite obviously observed in the illustration.

However, the coat of arms is a satisfying design, with an elegant and tasteful reference to his career.

MAY ARMS AT CHARTERHOUSE



As a member of the Charterhouse Environs Research Team (CHERT), we visited Lower Farm to produce a measured drawing and architectural survey. We hoped to find evidence of the original grange established by the Carthusian monks of Witham Friary in the 12th century. The farm provided evidence of many phases of building and renovation. The façade had clearly been remodelled in the 17th century when these arms were added over the main front door. I was asked to see if I could establish

whose arms they were.

I was advised that I should start at the Local Studies Library in Taunton, where David Bromwich directed me to various volumes including Burke's General Armorial and Papworth's Ordinary of British Armorial. I immediately understood the value of the 'grammar' of heraldry; how else could you produce any kind of index of arms without one? I found the section based on the single chevron and scanned all the entries until I found a chevron between three roses, which were clearly visible on the stone carving. The entry which closely matched the arms was – *Sable, a Chevron Or between three Roses Argent a Chief Or*. Clearly the arms had been repainted in the wrong colours (or tinctures) as you can see the blue background (which should be black) and the green roses (which should be silver). These were the arms granted to Robert May in 1573 and the Harleian Society's 1623 *Visitation of Somersetshire* provided the family tree. Other evidence supports the May family's presence at Lower Farm over a fairly long period. Knowing little of heraldry I was pleased at my success. We are still looking for the grange!

With many thanks to the owner Mrs Y Trimm.

Barry Lane

SOMERSET HERALDRY SOCIETY

APPLICATION FORM

AIMS

The aims shall be to promote and encourage the study of heraldry, especially in the historic county of Somerset.

I wish to become a Member of the Society

I (full name).....

of address.....

.....Postcode.....

Email address.....

Day time telephone number.....

Evening telephone number.....

DECORATIONS, DEGREES, etc.....

TITLE(Mr, Mrs, etc).....

SIGNED DATE.....

This form should be sent, completed and with a full year's subscription (£5), to:

The Somerset Heraldry Society
The Grammar House, The Hill, Langport, Somerset TA10 9PU 01458 250868

Membership subscriptions are due on 1st January each year.

Please notify us if you change your name or address.

QUESTIONNAIRE

We have a few questions for you, if you like answering personal questions:

What time do you like meetings?	Evening
	Week-end: Saturday / Sunday
	Mid-week
What type of meeting would you like?	Lectures/talks
	Visits to places with good heraldry
	Social events
How much do you know about heraldry?	Be honest!! (or say nothing.)
Where would you prefer meetings?	
Are you happy to pay £1 at a meeting?	
What questions should we have asked you?	

Please cut out this page and send it back, with an application form, even if you have already paid and joined, so that we have your vital statistics. Thanks.

SPRING 2003 PROGRAMME

February, Thursday 27th: Talk by Ron Gadd, an Introduction to Heraldry, with slides, preceded by a brief business meeting to approve the Constitution and to elect officers.

7.15 for 7.30 pm, The Grammar House, Langport

March, Thursday 27th: Informal workshop with John Uncles: the Basics of Heraldry: a look at fields, ordinaries, charges and other things of like kind, for beginners: bring paper, pencil and felt-tips.

7.15 for 7.30 pm, The Grammar House, Langport

May, Saturday 3rd: 2.30 pm Visit to Dunster Church to look at the Luttrell hatchments, introduced by Joan Jordan, with a talk on the significance and usage of hatchments. Tea afterwards at the home of Mr and Mrs Jordan. For those interested in making a day of it, Dunster Castle should be open and there are a number of good pubs and restaurants in Dunster. Park: Priory Court, opp. Luttrell Arms garages.

June, Saturday 7th: 2.30 pm Visit to Wells Cathedral and Bishop's Palace. Meet in the Cathedral Choir. Armorial series of many bishops.

September, Saturday 6th: 2.30 pm Visit to Tony and Margaret Wood, to look at all their wonderful armorial art and collection of armorial things and to admire Quillion House, Over Stratton, Ilminster.

DIRECTIONS: THE GRAMMAR HOUSE, THE HILL, LANGPORT

Coming from Taunton, after the town square, go straight ahead up the Hill, where the road does a sharp left turn. Coming from the east or the north, come into Langport and after Tesco, LOOK OUT. At a sharp right-hand corner, turn left round the Post Office, up the Hill; park; walk back down until you come to the first house on the left (coming down) on the incline of the hill. Go down the alley next to the house and knock!

HOLCOMBE ROGUS

I recently went to visit a house on the Devon border at Holcombe Rogus. While there I saw this plaster armorial, which Anthony Bruce kindly photographed for me. I have not been able to identify the arms, so this is by nature of a quiz as well. I suspect that they date from the 16th century, when a junior branch of the family inherited the manor. The answer may well be in an armorial monument in the Church, which I noticed but did not remember. The mantling is interesting with its fine tassels; I imagine the blue on the helm and mantling is not original.



Alex Maxwell

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