Emblems and Enigma
The Heraldic Imagination

An Interdisciplinary Symposium
Society of Antiquaries of London, Saturday 26th April 2014

Programme and Abstracts

Organised by: Professor Fiona Robertson, St Mary’s University, Twickenham
Dr Peter Lindfield, University of St Andrews

Supported by: The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, The Heraldry Society, St Mary’s University, Twickenham, and the School of Art History, University of St Andrews
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9.30 – 10.00  **Registration (Hall and Meeting Room)**

10.00 – 11.15  **Welcome (Meeting Room)**
**Plenary (Meeting Room)**
*chairs: Fiona Robertson (St Mary’s University) and Peter Lindfield (University of St Andrews)*

Vaughan Hart (University of Bath), ‘Sir Christopher Wren and the Heraldic Monument to the Great Fire of London’

11.15 – 11.30  **Coffee/Tea (Hall)**

11.30 – 13.00  **Panels**

1a. **Architectural Heraldry (Meeting Room)**
*chair: Peter Lindfield (University of St Andrews)*

Michael Carter (Courtauld Institute), ‘“From Beyond Memory”: Heraldry at Cistercian Monasteries in Northern England in the Late Middle Ages’

Charles Burnett (Court of the Lord Lyon), ‘The Ecclesiastical Heraldic Heritage of Scotland, c. 1525’

Tessa Murdoch (V&A), ‘The Dacre Beasts: Funerary or Tournament Sculpture’

Susan Gordon (University of Leicester), ‘Castle Howard: A Call to Arms. The Use and Perception of the Heraldic and Emblematic in an Early Eighteenth-Century English Country House and its Landscapes’

1b. **Lines of Light: Archival and Antiquarian Discoveries (Wheeler Room)**
*chair: Elizabeth Roads (Court of the Lord Lyon)*

Bruce Durie, ‘The “Scotch Copy of a Poem on Heraldry”, c.1494’

Timothy Hunter, ‘A Recently Discovered Pair of Fourteenth-Century Gold and Silver Embroidered Heraldic Textiles: The Visual Expression of John of Gaunt’s Claim to the Kingdom of Castile?’

Sheri Chriqui (Royal Holloway), ‘The Romance of Heraldry (1476–1530)’

Oliver Harris (University College London), ‘The Imperial Arms of Elizabeth I’

1c. **Devices and Desire: Heraldry and the Novel (Council Room)**
*chair: Nick Groom (University of Exeter)*

E. G. Stanley (Pembroke College, Oxford), ‘*The Castle of Otranto*, a Lost Medieval World’

Freya Johnston (St Anne’s College, Oxford), ‘Crotchets Rampant: Thomas Love Peacock’

Fiona Robertson (St Mary’s University), ‘Hyperobtrusive Signs: Heraldry in Nineteenth-Century British and American Fiction’

Diana Powell (University of Liverpool), ‘Symbolising Succession: Walter Scott’s and Charlotte Yonge’s Use of Heraldry’
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13.00 – 13.45  **Lunch (Hall)**

13.45 – 15.15  **Panels**

**2a. Creating Identity (Meeting Room)**

*chair: Fiona Robertson (St Mary’s University) and Peter Lindfield (University of St Andrews)*

Penelope Corfield (Royal Holloway), ‘The Tale of a Fake Herald and the Would-be Gentlemen of Eighteenth-Century England’

Michael Snodin and Stephen Clarke (Strawberry Hill Trust), ‘Heraldry and Conscious Display: the Cases of Strawberry Hill and Fonthill Abbey’

Patric Dickinson (College of Arms), ‘Symbolism in Heraldry: Mysterious or Manifest?’

**2b. Portraiture (Council Room)**

*chair: Gregory Dart (University College London)*

Alice Cavinato (Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa), ‘Imaginary Heraldry and Self-Portrayal in Fifteenth-Century Siena’

Jennifer Mackenzie (University of California, Berkeley), ‘The Coat of Arms and the Portrait in the Dynastic History of Renaissance Ferrara’

Jane Eade (National Portrait Gallery), ‘Heraldry, Emblems and Impresa in Sixteenth-Century Portraiture’

Julia McArthur, ‘“More Faithful than Favoured”: Sir Henry Lee’s Impresa Portrait’

**2c. Badges and Belonging (Wheeler Room)**

*chair: Kathryn Will (University of Michigan)*


Lynn Pearson, ‘Of Griffins, Lions and Unicorns: Zymurgical Heraldry in Britain and Abroad’

David Phillips (Kingston University), ‘Kissing the Crest’

Dan McCabe (Portsmouth University), ‘The Graphic Herald: Exploring 21st-Century Applications and Perceptions of Heraldic Language through Graphic Design’

15.15 – 15.30  **Coffee/Tea (Hall)**
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Panels

3a. Heraldry Reguardant: Eighteenth-Century Reinventions (Meeting Room)
Chair: John Strachan (Bath Spa University)

Kelsey Howard (Courtauld Institute), ‘The Apotropaic Army of Alnwick Castle: A Link to the Past’

Miranda Clow, ‘Heralding Insurance: how early fire insurance companies employed the heraldic in the eighteenth century’

Peter Lindfield (University of St Andrews), ‘Enigmatic Antiquary: the Case of Thomas Barritt’

Nick Groom (University of Exeter), ‘“An Emblematical Being”: St George, his Cross, and his Feast Day in the Eighteenth Century’

3b. Political Heraldics (Wheeler Room)
Chair: Fiona Robertson (St Mary’s University)

Kathryn Will (University of Michigan), ‘Heraldic Taxonomies and Early Modern English Satire’

David Bennett (Universities of Essex and Melbourne), ‘French Revolutionary Heraldics’

Kirsi Sundholm (University of Turku), ‘Creating Heraldry? Akseli Gallen-Kallela as a Designer for the Finnish Orders in 1918 and 1919’

Clive Cheesman (College of Arms), ‘The Heralds’ Swastika’

3c. Heraldic Artificers: Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Practice (Council Room)
Chair: Tessa Murdoch (V&A)

Adrian Ailes (National Archives, Kew, and University of Bristol), ‘Heraldry and Graphic Satire in England, 1500-1800’

Shaun Evans (National Archives, Kew), ‘Gruffudd Hiraethog, Heraldic Display and the “Five Courts” of Mostyn: Projecting Status, Honour and Authority in Sixteenth-Century Wales’

Victor Morgan (University of East Anglia), ‘Heraldry and Visual Culture in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries: East Anglia, with special reference to Norfolk’

Andrew Gray (Heraldry Society), ‘All the World on a Shield: the Encyclopaedic Vision of Randle Holme’

17.00 – 18.00 Reception, hosted by the Heraldry Society (Hall)
Abstracts

1a. Architectural Heraldry (Meeting Room)

Michael Carter, “‘From Beyond Memory’: Heraldry at Cistercian Monasteries in Northern England in the Late Middle Ages’

The profusion of heraldic ornament at Cistercian monasteries in the later Middle Ages is often interpreted by modern scholars as a symptom of the Order’s deviation from its early austerity and as evidence of the increasing influence of external patrons in Cistercian monastic life.

However, there has recently been a wide-ranging reinterpretation of English monasticism in the late Middle Ages, showing its enduring vitality and relevance. Heraldic ornament (extant and recorded in contemporary and antiquarian sources) at northern Cistercian abbeys such as Fountains, Holm Cultram and Sawley, and the nunnery at Swine, can be used to contribute to debates about the character and vibrancy of late medieval monasticism and religion.

This paper will demonstrate that heraldry at northern Cistercian monasteries was entirely uncontroversial to contemporaries. Analysis of the often close juxtaposition of personal and institutional heraldry and sacred imagery provides insights into the nature of Cistercian monasticism in the late medieval period, showing the priorities of Cistercian patrons and the spiritual vitality of the Order. Moreover, the abundance and location of heraldic ornament also demonstrates the continued relevance of the Cistercians to late medieval society and their ability to attract new benefactors until the very eve of the Suppression.

Charles J Burnett, ‘The Ecclesiastical Heraldic Heritage of Scotland, c.1525’

The pre-Reformation Bishops of Scotland were responsible for many building programmes. Many of these can be identified as being their work through the use of personal Arms. These in turn provide identity and a date period for the work concerned. Some of the building projects included the finest heraldic ceiling to be found in the United Kingdom, a bridge, an extensive boundary wall, and additions to cathedrals.

This presentation will feature a selection of personal Arms, along with works by less senior ecclesiastics, and will also include examples of the Arma Christi. Kinloss Abbey, Elgin Cathedral, St Machars’ Cathedral, Aberdeen, St Andrews Cathedral, Fife, and Glasgow Cathedral will be used to demonstrate the range of heraldic carving still to be found. These also provide evidence of personal Arms in the period before the establishment of the Public Record of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland.

Tessa Murdoch, ‘The Dacre Beasts: Funerary or Tournament Sculpture’

Probably commissioned by Thomas, Lord Dacre, in about 1520, the Dacre Beasts were preserved at Naworth Castle, Cumbria, from the early 17th century. They may originally have stood at Kirkoswald, another Dacre family property. Alternatively they may have formed part of the funerary arrangements for the family mausoleum at Lanercost Priory where spectacular table tombs to Lord Dacre and his wife Elizabeth Greystoke, survive. They are rare survivors of heraldic sculpture and demonstrate the importance of heraldry as a status symbol and universal language. This paper will attempt to identify the patron’s original intentions in commissioning these spectacular heraldic sculptures.

The Dacre Beasts will be presented in the wider context of Lord Dacre’s own programme of buildings and furnishings including the three contemporary oak ‘Little Men’ also acquired by the V&A from Naworth. Their significance is further enriched by the later history of the Dacre family and in particular the antiquarian interests of Lord William Howard, who enhanced their setting at Naworth in the early 17th century, developing a fuller programme of family iconography in which the Beasts played a prominent role. The paper will draw on hitherto unpublished manuscript material in the Howard family papers at Castle Howard.
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Susan E. Gordon, ‘Castle Howard: A Call to Arms. The Use and Perception of the Heraldic and Emblematic in an Early Eighteenth-Century English Country House and its Landscapes’

The enigmatic nature of some English country house landscapes in the eighteenth century is well known. Thomas Whately’s 1770s comment that certain devices to be found here are more ‘emblematical than expressive’ is often quoted and used in relation to places such as Stourhead, Rousham and Stowe. But what of Castle Howard? To what extent, if any, does it partake in the perception and of use of such devices? Taking the designs of herald Sir John Vanbrugh as example, this paper argues for an emblematic reading, of certain key printed, painted, sculptural, and architectural decorations relating to its interior, exterior and surrounding landscapes, hitherto not discussed in the scholarly literature. To what extent can the soul of its patron, Charles Howard, the 3rd Earl of Carlisle, be ‘read’ here, as claimed by his daughter Lady Irwin? To what extent is the heraldic imagination of its early eighteenth-century designers still present and puzzling?

Ib. Lines of Light: Archival and Antiquarian Discoveries
(Wheeler Room)

Bruce Durie, ‘The “Scotch Copy of a Poem on Heraldry”, c.1494’

The so-called “Scotch Copy of a Poem on Heraldry” was written by Adam Loutfut, Kintyre Pursuivant, around 1494. It is the first example of a Scottish writer declaring he is writing “in Scottis”.

Evidence is presented, from heraldic, linguistic and political-historical evidence, plus some computational linguistics, that the original author of the “Scotch Copy of a Poem on Heraldry”, scribed by Adam Loutfut, Kintyre Pursuivant, was John Lydgate, possibly drawing from French heraldic sources. A new transcription from the Harleian MS 6149 is given with a comparison to the text from copies in Queen’s MS. 161, NLS, Adv. 31.5.2 (Scrymgeour of Myres MS) and NLS Adv. 31.3.20 (Lindsay MS), plus a translation and exegesis.

Timothy Hunter, ‘A Recently Discovered Pair of Fourteenth-Century Gold and Silver Embroidered Heraldic Textiles: the Visual Expression of John of Gaunt’s Claim to The Kingdom of Castile?’

This paper examines a pair of recently discovered, and as yet unpublished, embroidered textile fragments, and attempts to place them in the context of Plantagenet heraldic display. The two textiles (approx. 50cm by 40cm) are most probably of English manufacture, datable on technical grounds to the late 14th Century. They are examples of so-called facon d’Angleterre, a later technique that followed the more famous opus anglicanum.

They are embroidered with unusual iconography, incorporating a distinctive three-towered castle, surmounted by a crowned figure. Possible sources are explored and a connection with the arms of Castile is suggested. The crowned figure bears stylistic affinities with royal imagery and the heraldic parallels are considered. The textiles are then placed in a possible historical context: that of John of Gaunt’s claim to the kingdom of Castile (through his marriage to Constance in 1371). Gaunt was to press his claim in two campaigns of 1381–2 and 1386–7. The possible use of these textiles as part of a wider heraldic design to give visual form to this claim is explored and a variety of possible functions is discussed.
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Sheri Chriqui, ‘The Romance of Heraldry (1476–1530)’

The period between 1476 and 1530 experienced a crescendoing interest in the relationship between romance and heraldry. The 1476 establishment of William Caxton’s press saw the translation into English and mass dissemination of a corpus of romance works and military treatises from Thomas Malory (1485) to Ramon Llul (1484) and Christine de Pisan (1489). In 1484, Richard III founded and formally incorporated the College of Arms, which Henry VII annulled after Bosworth and Mary Tudor reincorporated in 1555. It is in this context that Garter King of Arms John Writhe (1478–1504) and his son and successor Thomas Wriothesley (1505–1534) worked, copying and emending earlier rolls of arms and creating heraldic records for the early Tudor period. The manuscripts copied and produced by Writhe and Wriothesley reveal their late medieval antiquarian interest in their heraldic predecessors, their penchant for integrating romance figures (especially Arthurian ones) into their work, and the resulting symbolic link between the nobility of the past with Tudor nobility, embellished with Arthurian romance. It is my intention to discuss this integration of romance into the early Tudor heraldic record.

Oliver Harris, ‘The Imperial Arms of Elizabeth I’

This paper considers an alternative marshalling of the royal arms of Elizabeth I — far more elaborate than the conventional version — which circulated in heraldic and antiquarian circles in the 1590s, and reached a wider public in the form of the frontispieces to John Norden’s published surveys of Middlesex (1593) and Hartfieldshire (1598), and as a triptych painted and hung by Robert Ryece in the parish church of Preston, Suffolk. The arms depict in heraldic shorthand the entire history of England and her dominions within the British Isles — encompassing the medieval and Tudor monarchy, Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian kings, the period of Roman rule, the legendary kings of ancient Britain, the principality of Wales and the kingdom of Ireland. The paper analyses the achievement’s various elements, identifies source materials and precedents, and finds parallels in the heraldry of the Holy Roman Empire and Kingdom of Spain. The coat is located within a broader context of Tudor conceptions of ‘empire’, and the question asked whether it might, however briefly, have ever been a serious candidate for royal adoption.

Ic. Devices and Desire: Heraldry and the Novel (Council Room)

E. G. Stanley, ‘The Castle of Otranto, a Lost Medieval World’

Otranto, at the southern end of Apulia, has as its coat of arms a tower and a serpent wound around it, rich in legend. Horace Walpole, whether or not he knew la Torre del Serpente as the city’s arms, imagines supernatural happenings in The Castle of Otranto, dynastic feuding typical of medieval Italy as invented in eighteenth-century England, involving a gigantic helmet, its plumes shaking in the wind, a trumpet sounding without being blown, a gigantic sabre, and much heraldic colouring. The arms of Otranto are an unexplored possibility in the formation of Walpole’s Gothicized romance.

Freya Johnston, ‘Crotchets Rampant: Thomas Love Peacock’

This paper considers the role of heraldic terminology, genuine and spoof, in Thomas Love Peacock’s novel of talk, Crotchet Castle (1831). In this deft and elegant prose fiction, chivalric codes are invoked within a form of medievalism — in competitive dialogue with that of Sir Walter Scott — that is learned, smutty, and satirical. Central to the novel is an extended discussion about Scott’s misrepresentation of the Middle Ages, either by idealizing them or by depicting them as worse than they really were. The dispute goes beyond the immediate occasion of Scott’s writing and its reception, restaging arguments surrounding the medieval revival of the late eighteenth century. The resulting tale is a curious farrago in which the author appears to be at once forward- and backward-looking, progressive and wittily resistant to progress.
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Fiona Robertson, ‘Hyperobtrusive Signs: Heraldry in Nineteenth-Century British and American Fiction’

In ‘The Purloined Letter’ (1844), Edgar Allan Poe shows how texts, and correspondences, may be hidden by being made conspicuous — by what he calls the letter’s ‘hyperobtrusive situtation’ in a ‘trumpery’ pasteboard card-rack. Beginning with Poe, and with refractions of Poe in Lacan and Derrida, this paper considers the role of heraldic signs in British and American fictions in which, it argues, they are at once hyperobtrusive and hidden from the view of modern critical investigation. Behind collective readerly and critical conventions of overlooking lie patterns of heraldic allusion and refashioning in nineteenth-century British and American fiction: for this paper, a pattern of connection between works by Walter Scott, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Stephen Crane. Reinstating the importance of heraldry in nineteenth-century fiction on both sides of the Atlantic is not only a way of understanding individual texts better, but also of rethinking traditional conceptualisations of literary symbolism (Henry James’s elusive ‘figure in the carpet’), and of recharting imaginative paths in literary history.

Diana Powell, ‘Symbolising Succession: Walter Scott’s and Charlotte Yonge’s use of Heraldry’

Walter Scott was seen by the Oxford Movement as an effective ‘guard’ and ‘guide’ of the idea of succession and thus of the ancient faith. In novels such as Waverley and The Bride of Lammermoor, heraldry and other representations of the landed gentry (estates, portraits and arms) communicate an inherited set of ideals that an heir must strive to adapt to the times or face being consigned as relics of the past. Edward Waverley’s successful adaptation is shown through his marriage to the Lowland Scot, Rose, joining two estates and two coats of arms and reinvigorating both in the process, whereas the ill-fated heir of Ravenswood first meets his beloved when he kills a bull, the symbol of his family’s crest, in order to save her and her father, Ravenswood’s sworn enemy. In this paper I will argue that Scott used heraldry to show the relationship of an heir to their inherited ideals, a formula that was utilised by the Tractarians to show the difficulty of embodying their faith in hostile times. An admirer of Scott, Charlotte Yonge spiritualised the heir’s relationship to heraldry. In Pillars of the House, the Underwood coat of arms communicates the Christian principle of suffering, and for the dispossessed heirs, the ‘pillars’ of the house are not the family seat, but its older members, the family’s spiritual and moral backbone.
2a. Creating Identity (Meeting Room)


In 1727, a man purporting to be a herald from the College of Arms toured through eastern England. He scrutinised gentry pedigrees and coats of arms, adjudicating on their validity. But he turned out to be a fake. In this presentation, Penelope Corfield assesses the implications of this episode — which happened 40 years after the College of Arms had actually conducted regional visitations. She highlights the joint themes of how the eighteenth-century’s rampant demand for gentlemanly status far outran the capacity of the College to adjudicate upon social claims; and how, nonetheless, the College of Arms managed to survive.

Michael Snodin and Stephen Clarke, ‘Heraldry and Conscious Display: the Cases of Strawberry Hill and Fonthill Abbey’

One quality shared by Horace Walpole and William Beckford was a certain genealogical insecurity that manifested itself in the decoration of the Gothic houses they created. For Walpole, Strawberry Hill was ‘the castle, I am building, of my ancestors’. It was filled with heraldry, a subject closely linked to his antiquarianism and his approach to history. The arms of the Walpoles, of his mother’s family the Shorters, and of their ancestors, appeared all over the building, starting at the front door with carved stone shields of Walpole, Shorter and of the Robsarts, his best known medieval forebears. Inside, family arms (or their elements) appeared painted on walls and ceilings and in modern glass and added to book cases, chimney-pieces, staircase newels, furniture and portraits. In 1776, with the building work in the house completed, Walpole produced an engraved and illustrated ‘Pedigree of Walpole to explain the Portraits and Coats of Arms of Strawberry Hill’. Backing up and complementing this display was a collection of armorials in old stained glass, both English and continental. Their effect of the former was to place Walpole’s family into a national historical context, while the latter were presented as arms of the ‘Counts of Strawberry’. In all this Walpole was assisted by his fellow antiquarians, notably the Reverend William Cole, who compiled a manuscript account of the arms in the house.

At Fonthill, starting some fifty years after Walpole, Beckford’s more ambitious, more emotionally charged vision ensured that the Abbey was “bedecked with all the heraldry he could command in plaster, stone, and glass.” Rarely can heraldry have played such a central and consciously programmatic role in the interior decoration of a private house. King Edward’s Gallery, sixty-eight feet long, was designed to display the arms of King Edward III and seventy one of the Knights of the Garter from whom Beckford claimed descent, while the adjoining Vaulted Corridor was designed to show the descent of both Beckford and his wife from King Edward I. A fantasia on the theme of the Latimers, the Mervyns, the Bohuns, the Seymours and the Mortimers and the Hamiltons, the Abbey reflected both the industriousness of Sir George Beltz, the Lancaster Herald engaged by Beckford to expound his lineage, and beneath that the frustrations that surfaced in his Liber Veritatis and his doomed campaign for a title. This paper considers how the heraldic aspirations of both Walpole and Beckford were represented in and helped to shape the Gothic buildings for which they are celebrated.

Patric Dickinson, ‘Symbolism in Heraldry: Mysterious Or Manifest?’

Over the centuries, the reasons for the inclusion of specific elements in any given coat of arms have gone largely unrecorded. Unless a heraldic device contains a visual play on the surname concerned, or alludes to a readily identifiable aspect of family history, any claims made about its possible symbolism are almost always speculative. And this surely accounts to a considerable degree for the enigmatic quality so often attributed to heraldry.

It is of course a mistaken notion that every coat of arms had an intended imagery or meaning in the first place, especially in the case of medieval heraldry where the principal aim was to produce distinctive
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devices rather than complex symbolism.

Since Tudor and Stuart times there has been an ever increasing tendency in English heraldry for newly granted coats of arms to incorporate references to the grantee’s life and background and nowadays it would be unusual for this not to be done (though often in a subtle and ingenious fashion). Which begs the question of whether the reasoning behind new designs should be set down for the benefit of posterity — or the symbolism should remain camouflaged in order to preserve the essential mystery of heraldry.

2b. Portraiture (Council Room)

Alice Cavinato, ‘Imaginary Heraldry and Self-Portrayal in Fifteenth-Century Siena’

Thanks to its intensive use and display in the context of the late medieval Italian Commune, heraldic language was familiar to citizens of all social classes. I intend to show two examples of Sienese merchants who adopted an imaginary coat of arms as a means of self-representation. The first one is the painter and paint seller Bindino da Travale, who composed a chronicle and dictated it to his two sons, painters as well (Siena, Archivio di Stato, ms. D 153). His son Giovanni also decorated the book with penwork initials and portraits of his father. In this codex an imaginary coat of arms appears three times, connected with portraits of Bindino. The second one is the pizzicaiuolo (paint and wax seller) Niccolò Ventura. In one of the two manuscripts he personally copied and illustrated, he drew a self-portrait in the opening page, and a shield with his own coat of arms next to it (Siena, Biblioteca Comunale, ms. I.VII.12). This coat of arms is otherwise unattested in the Ventura family. Most likely, Niccolò, like Bindino, being a common citizen and a merchant, didn’t have his own coat of arms: so he imagined one.


This talk stems from my dissertation (in progress) about the transformation of the heraldic image in the Italian Renaissance. It takes its title and theoretical point of departure from Hans Belting’s chapter “The Coat-of-Arms and the Portrait: Two Media of the Body” in An Anthropology of Images: Picture, Medium, Body (2011). It focuses on two sixteenth-century genealogies of the House of Este, the ruling dynasty of Ferrara from the thirteenth to the closing of the sixteenth century. The first genealogy is organized around a portrait gallery. The second, and most ambitious, takes as its organizing principle a massive coat-of-arms that supports the various arms borne by the male line of the family from roman times to the present. Both approaches attempt a “modern” approach to genealogy and I will emphasize the (surprising?) role played by the coat-of-arms in a self-consciously humanist historiography in the age of print. I will take the occasion to discuss, more broadly, how the coat-of-arms and the portrait intersected to shape textual as well as visual culture. Enlightenment critiques of these Renaissance genealogies may provide a fruitful link between this and some of the other papers on heraldic revivalism at the conference.

Jane Eade, ‘Heraldry, Emblems and Impresa in Sixteenth-Century Portraiture’

Coats of arms were extremely common in English portraiture of the sixteenth century, used principally to advertise lineage and dynastic membership but also for political, pious and even playful purposes. Using key case studies, including miniatures and funerary monuments as well as independent oil paintings, this paper explores the use of heraldry and emblems in sixteenth-century portraiture. It focuses on the visual correspondence between the naturalistic representation of a sitter and ideals of likeness on the one hand, and the depiction of heraldic symbols on the other, and asks what impact the Protestant Reformation in England had on the visual articulation of ‘the patriarchal principle of genealogy’.
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Julia McArthur, “‘More Faithful than Favoured’: Sir Henry Lee’s Impreza Portrait’

Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger’s portrait of Sir Henry Lee from the 1590s, known by its painted motto, “More Faithful than Favoured,” which hangs in Ditchley House, Oxfordshire, has been imperfectly described as a portrait commemorating a dog’s saving of his master’s life, a celebration of canine faithfulness. While this anecdotal identity has held sway for over two hundred years, my paper proposes that the actual emblematic meaning of the portrait is richer and more complex. My paper argues that together, the written and the visual components of the portrait form an impreza, a heraldic emblem that conveys an intentional message about the aspirations of the author/subject of the portrait at a particular historical moment. The image of the dog is stressed by the motto “More Faithful than Favoured,” while new meanings for the dog are suggested by the vernacular sonnet’s reference to Homer’s Odyssey. Seen in this way, the portrait conveys Sir Henry’s petition for acknowledgement of faithful but unrewarded service, combined with a reiterated recognition of the authority of his monarch, Elizabeth I, and an emphatic declaration of his own loyalty.

2c. Badges and Belonging (Wheeler Room)


Although heraldry sprouted on medieval battlefields mainly for military reasons, it is admitted that its largest social expansion in Western Europe occurred during the XVIIth century, at a time when coats of arms were almost completely obsolete at warfare. The aim of this paper is to deal with this apparent paradox by discussing the social and symbolic reasons which led people to create and assume arms for themselves and their families in modern France, and how this process is reflected in the content of the shields. Who are the commoners who adopted them? Bearing in mind that coats of arms were created to be displayed, what message did they carry, and for whom? The answers to these questions lie not only in armorial records, but also in situ: the widespread use of heraldry in public and private spaces, in urban and rural landscapes, in profane or sacred contexts, still brings us valuable information to understand the visual role and language of heraldry. The choice of valorizing — often canting — charges by the bearer of the name reflects a claim for a specific social status. However, a close study of symbolic allusions ranging from professional and dynastic to religious or even apotropaic, suggests a far more subtle combination of meanings, in close interaction with social, cultural, political and vernacular context.

Lynn Pearson, ‘Of Griffins, Lions and Unicorns: Zymurgical Heraldry in Britain and Abroad’

Zymurgical heraldry, or the heraldry of beer and brewing, merited an entry in the recently published Oxford Companion to Beer and has been the subject of occasional website mentions, but is otherwise little noticed. This is curious, as heraldic symbolism can be found throughout the brewing world, usually in the form of specific elements such as a supporter or crest, and sometimes a shield or motto, rather than a complete achievement. A brewery building might display an image derived from the local town’s coat of arms, or a supporter-like symbol relevant to the brewery’s name. Beer bottle labels and other advertising material carry similar images, while inn signs make even greater use of heraldry.

This paper surveys the use of heraldry throughout the brewing industry in Britain, and compares its occurrence here with zymurgical heraldry abroad. German breweries, in particular, frequently display their geographical connections through heraldic elements, while their intricate iron pub signs also incorporate similar imagery.

The overall aim of the paper is to open up discussion on the topic, and to suggest further avenues of investigation, while providing a useful history of zymurgical heraldry.
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David Phillips, ‘Kissing the Crest’

Heraldry and quasi heraldry has played a central role in the identity of the game of association football. From its origins at the public schools through to the modern global professional game, heraldry and heraldic images have been used to identify teams.

My paper will discuss the influence heraldry has had on the development of the club ‘crest’. In particular I want to draw attention to the relationship between football fans and ‘crests’. These devices are one of the primary areas where thousands of football fans encounter heraldic imagery. Fans attach great importance to their team’s ‘crest’; this is especially evident when teams make or plan changes. Players demonstrate their loyalty and respect by symbolically kissing the ‘crest’.

My paper will also discuss football at the College of Arms. This starts surprisingly early as in 1622 a football was supposedly granted as a crest to Sir William Jordan. In the 19th century grants of arms were made to organisations connected to the governance of football, including those granted to the Football Association in 1948 and those to the Football League in 1973. Sadly no professional team has yet applied for a grant of arms; however, a number of heraldic badges have been granted to the FA for use by clubs.


Heraldry is a visual language found within a rich variety of graphic guises and contemporary contexts; from castle walls to shopping malls, fashion brands to council vans, street signs to fine wines, football clubs to local pubs. But just how relevant and understood is armorial language in modern British society? And to what extents can the heraldry that we encounter within these various contexts be perceived as being genuine? Whether authentic or faux, how are societal perceptions and misconceptions shaped by these various forms of heraldic language? And what of the role and responsibility of the contemporary visual communicator in creating and disseminating these forms of heraldic language?

This paper will present and critically reflect on the journey of the author as he set about responding to the aforementioned thoughts within the context of the following research question: can graphic design explore, expose and challenge the usage and perception of heraldry within 21st Century British Society? The aim was to use Graphic Design as a methodological tool for examining, communicating and challenging the way in which society engages with heraldry. The paper will not present and discuss the designer’s experimental outputs as offering definitive answers. It will instead discuss the creative academic journey with the intention of encouraging dialogue and debate within the heraldic community.
Emblems and Enigma: The Heraldic Imagination

3a. Heraldry Reguardant: Eighteenth-Century Reinventions (Meeting Room)

Kelsey M. Howard, ‘The Apotropaic Army of Alnwick Castle: A Link to the Past’

The silhouettes of stone warriors among the battlements of Alnwick Castle incite visions of combat, baronial splendour, and romantic antiquity as they have for hundreds of years. In the early 1750s the ancient ruin of Alnwick Castle was rebuilt in a fashionable neo-Gothic style for Elizabeth Percy and her husband, the Duchess and Duke of Northumberland. Amidst this transformation, they decided to not only preserve many of the remaining battlement figures, but to refashion new ones as well. Alongside weathered apotropaics, new Georgian statues still challenge onlookers with swords, stones, spears, and even a shield bearing the Percy heraldic charge — a crescent — in a three-part arrangement specifically representing the current owners. The mid-eighteenth century witnessed the rebuilding of many medieval-inspired homes, which in many cases incorporated ancient material into a new framework to legitimize fabricated antiquity. The statues incorporated at Alnwick, however, uniquely served as a display of authentic antiquity and a reiteration of powerful ancestry, as the three-crescent shield communicates. By consulting the diaries of travellers, guests, and the Duchess of Northumberland herself, I will examine how the battlement figures contributed to the message of ancestry and antiquity at Alnwick Castle, and how this message was received.

Miranda Clow, ‘Heralding Insurance: How Early Fire Insurance Companies Employed the Heraldic in the Eighteenth Century’

This paper presents the various uses of heraldic forms of imagery made by early fire insurance companies in London from the beginning of the eighteenth century. Insurance companies such as the Sun Fire Office not only identified themselves consistently by emblems commonly found in heraldry, but they also embellished their policy documents with engraved illustrations of scenes of their firemen. These illustrations can only be understood with reference to coats of arms. While it is common for histories of branding to make a link to heraldry, the role of insurance companies in developing this visual language in a new context appears not to have been appreciated. It is argued that the nascent fire insurance industry adopted certain heraldic practices wholesale, but in other ways it was innovative, for example in the way that the earliest companies of the late seventeenth century took their names from their emblems. By this appropriation of imagery, insurance companies strove to communicate trust. Communicating trust was crucial to the growth of this new industry, given that its product was immaterial — until the moment that disaster might befall a policy-holder. This presentation, coming from the discipline of the history of design, will be directed by images of the wealth of printed ephemera from the fire insurance industry in the eighteenth century, in particular policies, advertising and newspapers.

Peter N. Lindfield, ‘Enigmatic Antiquary: the Case of Thomas Barritt’

Thomas Barritt was born in Manchester in 1743, and died there in 1820. He worked throughout his life as a saddler, but was a staunch antiquary and, even in his teens, was fixated by heraldry. He probed its history, conventions and terminology, and recorded thousands of coats of arms. He was an early and important member of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, to which he contributed lectures that, in turn, were published in the Society’s Memoires, including his ‘Essay on some supposed Druidical Remains, near Halifax in Yorkshire’. He also wrote critical pieces for The Gentleman’s Magazine. My research has revealed Barritt to be an important antiquary-researcher-collector who deserves a higher profile in current scholarship, not least for his sustained investigation of heraldic material, but also his fine illustrations. I wish to address, in this short space, his role as an antiquary, and the place heraldry had within it.
Emblems and Enigma: The Heraldic Imagination

Nick Groom, “An Emblematical Being”: St George, his Cross, and his Feast Day in the Eighteenth Century

This paper, building on my work on the symbolism of national identity in *The Union Jack* (2006), investigates eighteenth-century representations of St George, his significance to the nation, and his place in heraldic revivalism and the cult of medievalism. The paper will focus in particular on the celebration of St George’s feast day, approaching these cultural practices using techniques developed from memory studies and authenticity studies. The aim is to treat the festive calendar as effectively a sequence of ‘memorial palimpsests’. The economics of commemoration will be examined by arguing that dates are a form of ‘cultural marking’ to make certain commodities and activities appear more significant to individuals and in communal ‘biographies’. Consequently, the paper, as part of a larger project on British saints’ days, will specifically respond to Pierre Nora’s ‘lieux de mémoire’ thesis. Nora’s emphasis on the physical situation of memory (‘realms’ or ‘sites’ of memory) will be reworked by adding a calendrical dimension, considering the significance of anniversaries of remembrance. This will in turn complement Schwyzer’s current work, which addresses Nora’s claim that the manifestation of memory in specific places is a predominantly modern phenomenon: Schwyzer et al. argue that the relationship between memory and place has a history which can and should be recovered. Accordingly, the paper will conclude with reflections on the role of St George in the heraldic imagination today.

3b. Political Heraldics (Wheeler Room)

Kathryn Will, ‘Heraldic Taxonomies and Early Modern English Satire’

This paper discusses heraldic blazon as a convenient and highly political form for early modern English satire. Near the end of the sixteenth century, the Dutton brothers of London became the butt of a vicious mock-heraldic joke. The brothers were notoriously corrupt actors, tradesmen, and brothel-keepers, but in public, they “compared themselves to any gentlemen.” Their presumption was seized upon by an anonymous critic, who devised a mock coat of arms that includes “A lyther lad scampant, a roge in his ragges,” and “A whore that is rampant, astrythe wyth her legges.” In 1635, the poet John Taylor used a heraldic taxonomy to argue that prostitutes exist to fit any man’s appetite: “Some Rampant, & some Couchant, and some Passant, Some Guardant, & some Dormant, & some Cressant.” Blazon allowed writers to mock other institutions, as well: in 1587, junior herald William Segar dedicated a poem to Queen Elizabeth that used heraldic attitudes to critique Catholic perfidy. In each case, heraldic blazon is a familiar system that both bestializes and contains the objects of writers’ derision—and often concludes ominously in the form of a pendant, or hanging, figure.

David Bennett, ‘French Revolutionary Heraldics’

This paper considers the systematic destruction and effacement of blasons heraldiques, aristocratic and ecclesiastical, in buildings and furnishments during the first French Revolution. A decree issued in October 1793 (Second Year of the republican calendar) by la Convention nationale de la République française ordained that ‘all fireplace plaques bearing signs of feudalism’ be destroyed — a decree soon superseded by another ordaining that all such firebacks be ‘retournés’, or turned around, in order to conceal their coats of arms, until foundries could produce sufficient replacement firebacks free of the trappings of the ancien régime. This paper focuses on the history of the plaques de cheminées as bearers of coats of arms, and on what happened to them during and after the 1789 Revolution. The great houses and families had their own arms cast on one or more plaques, but there were also relatively mass-produced plaques propagandising the symbolism of monarchy and nation, often bearing the date of their casting. One rare plaque depicts a bare-chested revolutionary insurgent brandishing a bottle and a pistol with some enigmatic symbols above.
his head: variant explications of this suggest the republican calendar symbolism, dating it in Year 2 of the Revolution, and the opposite of this explanation, claiming the figure as a Vendéen counter-revolutionary insurgent. The question of what kinds of symbolism might have replaced ‘signs of feudalism’ in the French production of firebacks following the revolutionary decrees, and the question of what arguments were mounted within the revolutionary movement itself for the preservation, rather than destruction, of arms-bearing firebacks, will be central to the paper. It will aim to show how the Enlightenment rehabilitation of heraldic firebacks as bearers of national history and aesthetic value entailed a fundamental transformation of their signifying functions.

Kirsi Kaisla Sundholm, ‘Creating Heraldry? Akseli Gallen-Kallela as the Designer for the Finnish Orders in 1918 and 1919’

During the Finnish civil war in 1918 the painter of the national epic (1865–1931) was invited to the H.Q. and nominated as the designer for the first honorary emblems of the new state. The painter having contemplated over two decades on suitable community building emblems for independent Finland suggested the rose (a relative of the Lancaster and York roses) as the order’s main emblem.

The sketches were received as outbursts of romantic revivalism and the colours appreciated as fantastic and imaginary rather than as accurate according to the grammar of heraldry by the H.Q. officers. The swastika was chosen for the main emblem in the Order of Cross of Liberty. Less than 12 months later the State Guardian Mannerheim commissioned the painter to design emblems for a new civilian order that was named the White Rose of Finland and in which the heraldic rose is included.

My doctoral study is about exploring the possible connotations the painter wanted to attach to the heraldic emblems but also about demerging the so called artistic creation from the heraldic laws. Simultaneously the making of myth of the ‘national artist’ is revealed.

Clive Cheesman, ‘The Heralds’ Swastika’

Under different names (cross gammadion or fylfot) the swastika is consistently present in English-language heraldry manuals of all eras. In reality it was hardly ever seen in English heraldry until the first two decades of the twentieth century, when it was widely used in new coats of arms, with some heralds apparently having a particular penchant for it. On one level, it is scarcely surprising that heraldic designers should be influenced by the general European vogue for the swastika dating back to the 1880s, and the symbol’s brief armorial efflorescence exemplifies the arbitrary nature of heraldic design, the magpie approach of those responsible for it and the precarious nature of any ‘meaning’ that it might attempt to encode. These are timeless and salutary, if slightly disappointing, features of heraldry. But this is the swastika: the ‘symbol of the century’, in Steven Heller’s memorable phrase. Its rise and fall — even more starkly than that of the fasces, that other crushing laden image of twentieth-century totalitarian ideology, also much used by heralds between 1900 and 1920 — reveals the situated nature of the apparently arcane practice of heraldry, forcing it to confront the same issues of reference and, indeed, meaning as any other symbolic system.
Adrian Ailes, ‘Heraldry and Graphic Satire in England, 1500–1800’

The bold, exaggerated forms of heraldry lend themselves to strong graphic imagery especially caricature, providing readily recognisable representations of individuals, institutions, professions, political entities, and nations. The end of the so-called ‘age of chivalry’ and the practical necessity of arms in battle and tourney gave way to a new civilian Tudor obsession in which arms where swiftly adopted by the rising gentry as symbols of status. The upheavals of the Interregnum and Glorious Revolution may have temporarily banished the popular use of such devices to carriage doors and china plates, but the advent of popular print, new nations and empires, political parties, and the rise of the moneyed professional often replacing the old established and armigerous classes provided heraldry with a new lease of life albeit in an unexpected quarter. The Burlesque heraldry of the early modern period, be it cutting such as in Hogarth’s Company of Undertakers targeting doctors, or humorous as in Horace Walpole’s design of arms for his club, or propagandist as in the Hanoverian horse licking the blood of a British Lion stabbed in the back as a Gallic cock crows can reflect contemporary public opinion, notions of national identity, political tensions, and sometimes even radical undertones.

Shaun Evans, ‘Gruffudd Hiraethog, Heraldic Display and the “Five Courts” of Mostyn: Projecting Status, Honour and Authority in Sixteenth-Century Wales’

This paper focuses on the Mostyn dynasty during the sixteenth century. For centuries, the Mostyn dynasty was one of the most powerful and influential gentry forces operational in north Wales society. The primary focus of the paper will be the interrelationship between the Welsh bardic order and the Mostyn family’s strategy of heraldic display. Gruffudd Hiraethog (d.1564) was one of the most prolific Welsh poets of his generation and through his praise poems — his elegies and eulogies — played a critical part in propagating and promoting the high status of his patrons, including the Mostyns. Gruffudd Hiraethog was also the earliest known person to be appointed a deputy-herald for Wales and he frequently employed heraldic imagery in his compositions. For the Mostyn family he invented a new heraldic identity — based on the concept of the ‘Five Courts’ — as the primary means of celebrating their claims to status, honour, legitimacy and authority. This bardic construct referred to the family’s inheritance of five noble courts, lineages and estates during late-medieval times. The Mostyn family appropriated Gruffudd Hiraethog’s ‘Five Court’ construct, parading it in its heraldic guise, in an omnipresent material and visual cultural manner, as the primary signifier of their position in society.

Victor Morgan, ‘Heraldry and Visual Culture in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries: East Anglia, with Special Reference to Norfolk’

The context: this paper is part of a larger argument to do with the way in which, during the course of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, there emerged a new type of visual culture in England — and possibly elsewhere in Europe. It was a distinct phenomenon that survived until the ‘English Resolution’ of the late-seventeenth century. It replaced but also drew on and reinterpreted the rich visual culture of the late-medieval period. But it also added into the mixture new elements, largely derived from the renaissance reinterpretation of the residues of classical antiquity, such as the personification of virtues. The result was an eclectic amalgam. Within this amalgam there were distinct strands but there were also borrowings and interpenetrations. The visual manifestations of heraldry were very much part of the mix. The prominent presence of heraldry was driven both by strategic monarchical policies but also by sociological changes among the main ‘consumers’ of the ‘new heraldry’, the gentry. (This wider argument will be dealt with only summarily.)
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This broader argument is grounded in the detailed evidence largely drawn from one region, East Anglia, and more particularly Norfolk. Archival materials, and antiquarian notes and drawings will be invoked. In addition, use will be made of the surviving material culture in the form of monuments, glass and paintings produced in and for the provinces. I will glance at the local ‘support services’ for the heraldic presence in the form of local painters and antiquaries. The evidence for what amounted to an ‘heraldic frenzy’ will be placed in the context of other elements of the local visual culture that came to prevail such as the craze for emblems and the use of rebuses, merchants’ marks and urban signage. Furthermore, all of these themselves absorbed elements of heraldic practice. One aspect of this was the contribution of heraldry to an elaborated colour theory. Thus, in this period heraldry needs to be seen not isolation but as an important part of wider social and cultural practices.

Andrew Gray, ‘All the World on a Shield — the Encyclopaedic Vision of Randle Holme’

Post-mediaeval heraldic design uses a limited vocabulary of pattern and content. If Randle Holme had had his way, it might not have been so.

Holme was the third in a seventeenth-century dynasty of heraldic craftsmen based in Chester, each a deputy to Kings of Arms for the region. His misfortune was to succeed his father during the Commonwealth, leaving his work vulnerable to the hostility of the Restoration heralds. However, he became a notable heraldic artist, antiquarian and chronicler of church heraldry, and much of his memorial artwork can still be found around the region.

But his magnum opus was the Academy of Armoury, latterly described as “a fantastic encyclopaedia masquerading as a book of heraldry” (as witness British Library’s disc of Holme’s illustrations, which omits any specifically heraldic material). I shall show that Holme’s real intention was to put the whole world, material and immaterial, at the disposal of the heraldic designer — a manual and a source-book.

Randle Holme was unable to publish more than half of the Academy in 1688. Most of the remainder survived in manuscript and was published by the Roxburghe Club in 1905. It could easily be reunited in digital format to realise Holme’s vision.

A Note on Panel Chairs not giving papers:
Elizabeth Roads is Snawdoun Herald of Arms in Ordinary, Lyon Clerk and Keeper of the Records for the Court of the Lord Lyon, Edinburgh.

Gregory Dart is Senior Lecturer in English, University College London, and Chairman of the Hazlitt Society.

John Strachan is Professor of English and Associate Dean, Bath Spa University.