



The ARMIGER'S *News*

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THE ARMORIAL BEARINGS OF THE SOCIETY OF HERALDIC ARTS

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Little did I know, when friends met at my Dorset home to discuss the formation of a guild of heraldic artists, that we would meet together in London nearly thirty years later to receive letters patent granting armorial bearings to the Society of Heraldic Arts.

The history of the design is a fairly brief one. The founding of the Society I have dated to October 1987. My original suggestion for what was essentially a logo was simply: An Escutcheon Argent en soleil but when the first Newsletter was published in April of the following year this had acquired lines extending from the sunburst to form the outline of a shield (see *The Heraldic Craftsman* No. 81, December 2012 p.3). This was John Ferguson's original interpretation to which, in due course, were added further versions by Anthony Wood and Kevin Arkin-stall among others. And it is essentially that which is depicted in the Society's new shield of arms: Azure an Inescutcheon Argent enflamed of sixteen points and irradiated throughout of sixty-four lines all Or. The original blazon which was submitted for Garter's approval in July of last year included sixty-four points Or but he observed that 'I would prefer to say 'lines' or 'beams' – they don't really have 'points' (and 'rays' would imply something more substantial).'

Of course, before the Society received Ralph Brocklebank's extraordinarily generous offer to underwrite a grant of arms, the Society had not considered the matter of a crest. Ralph's proposed crest, which in most essentials has been accepted by Garter, attempts to recognise the wide range of crafts that may be applied to heraldry: On a helm with a Wreath Argent and Azure a Semi-Circle of Artists' Implements from the dexter a Stonemason's Mallet

and Chisel a Glasscutter a Calligrapher's pen seven Paint Brushes on the bristles Purple Black Blue Red Yellow White and Green paint a Draughtsman's Pen an Embroiderer's Bodkin threaded with red wool and a Woodcarver's Gouge and Mallet all proper Mantled Azure doubled Argent. This is a good example of where the practice of omitting punctuation from legal documents, intended to avoid ambiguity, may actually cause confusion. Again,

there were a number of changes made to the original blazon: Semi Circle of Artists Implements was substituted for Panache (in my view, correctly so: a panache is by definition composed of feathers) and the paint brushes were said to have paint on the bristles rather than charged with... The motto *SYMBOLS HONOUR ARMIGERS* is self-explanatory and singularly apt. Letters Patent confirming the arms and badge were conveyed to the Society by Lancaster Herald on behalf of Garter King of Arms in April 2017.

When visiting the Society's website (www.heraldic-arts.com) members will observe that the coat of arms now features prominently on all pages and the colours have been changed throughout from red to blue to reflect the Society's new livery colours. The representation of the arms in the website has been painted by David

Hopkins, an eminent Fellow of the Society to whom we are most grateful.

Finally, one cannot conclude without recording the Society's immeasurable gratitude to Ralph Brocklebank for his generosity. The Society has grown significantly in both numbers and stature over the past thirty years and this has been recognised by the granting of armorial bearings which we may display with pride.

