SOMERSET HERALDRY SOCIETY

Journal No 21 Spring 2012

NEW ARMS FOR MR SPEAKER BERCOW

We learned recently that John Bercow, Speaker of the House of Commons, has commissioned an official portrait and a Coat of Arms. These were unveiled on Monday 28 November and they were said to have cost £37,000, of which £22,000 was for the portrait by Brendan Kelly. Later it transpired that this excluded some bills, but there is a little confusion over these, which are stated to have been £5,400 for the grant of arms and another £1,600 for preparation of the panelled area, in the Palace of Westminster, for the display of the arms. What the precise cost of the arms was is therefore somewhat unclear. One must wonder whether all this amount would in the past have been allowed as surely a grant of arms is a personal expense.

The arms have the following explanation, that blue and red are the colours of the main political parties, representing John Bercow's own journey. The ladder (regressing right to left) represents his ascent from humble beginnings to one of the highest offices of state. The balls represent his fondness for tennis: they are four to represent the constituent countries of the United Kingdom – England, Scotland, Wales (contd on back)

HERALDRY OF THE SEA Ron Gadd

Introduction

This work is based upon an article published in the RUSI journal in 1880 by J K Laughton who was considered the first historian to specialize in naval history and who taught Naval History at the Royal Naval College. Where appropriate other sources have been used and are noted. This article discusses flags used by British ships only.

There is evidence of the use of flags on land as early as 330BC, although the earliest use of flags at sea seems to have been merely as signals; by moving coloured pieces of cloth up or down or left or right instructions or intentions could be signalled. The Greeks were said to have used the red flag as the signal for battle and seeing a red flag flying was the excuse the Cinque port vessels gave for attacking Norman ships in 1293.[1]

The device signalling leadership or power was a carved figure in wood or metal carried on a staff or pole, for example the well known Roman Eagle. In time it was realised that a device on a flag was recognised from greater distances and was much more flexible. The earliest flags used were in China, from about 1500BC flags bearing symbols including, dragons, hawks, snakes and tigers.[2] The Roman Eagle was later accompanied by a flag which because of its being better seen from distance, began to supersede the solid figure of the eagle.

The modern use of flags emerges from the dark ages following the break up of the Roman Empire. They were adopted by kings and leaders as personal distinctions and used by their followers as both livery and flags. In early feudal military organisations each lord or knight had his own distinguishing mark flag which he would use when serving on land or sea. If on a ship each knight would show his own banner, which would usually be a version of his arms.

From medieval times until the late 17th century ships and seamen would more often identify with a port rather than with a country. Accordingly, up until the revolution French ships flew the flag of their port of origin, Marseilles ships: *white with a blue cross*; Dunkirk: *Barry of six white and blue.* The Baltic states had in the same way a flag for each port as did the Dutch and the free towns of Germany.[3]

The earliest form of national flag was usually the device of the king, such as the white horse of the Saxons or the Raven of the Danes. Later the Normans used the lions or leopards, first William Rufus and then in the form we know Richard I. Edward III, on laying claim to the French crown quartered the lilies of France with the three lions, with the lilies in the first quarter and of course different Kings and Queens have quartered or impaled the arms of husbands or wives on a temporary basis. (figs 1-8) The present Royal standard as flown at sea is that of the United Kingdom. (fig 9)

English Naval Flags

It is generally accepted that the cross as a military emblem first came into use in the crusades, although the Bayeux tapestry shows William's ship carrying at the main-

mast a flag with a cross of gold on a blue field.[4] It is uncertain when the red cross became associated with England and the white cross with France but in any event by the time of Richard the First's crusading (1189) this arrangement was recognised. And certainly by the middle of the 14th century and during the Hundred Years War the St George's Cross was distinctly marked on English Ships and recognised as the badge of English nationality.[5] (fig 13) A copy of 'articles of war' from the time of Richard the Second (1377-1399) recognises the cross of St George as the mark of the English:

> "Every man of what estate or condition, or nation he may be of, so that he be of our party, shall wear a sign of the arms of St George, large both before and behind, upon peril that if he be slain or wounded to death, he that has done so to him shall not be put to death, for default of the cross that he lacketh. And no enemy whether prisoner or not, shall wear the said sign of St George upon pain of death" [6]

Although a number of other flags were flown at sea, for example the Tudor colours worn in the 26th century (fig 25) and the Stuart flags of the 17th century (fig 26) and a flag bearing the red cross and blue white and yellow bars was used for a short time. In 1606, by order of James the First (also James the Sixth of Scotland) the flag was changed to the first of the 'union' flags. (fig 12) On 12th April 1606 it was ordered:

> "Henceforth all our subjects of this isle and Kingdom of Great Britain and the members thereof shall bear in their maintop the red cross, commonly called St George's cross, and the white cross commonly called St Andrew's cross, joined together in a form made by our heralds and sent by us to our Admiral, to be published to our said subjects. And in their fore-top our subjects of South Britain shall wear the red cross only as they were wont; and our subjects of North Britain, in their fore-top the white cross only as they were accustomed."[7]

The blazon for this flag is given as *azure, a saltire argent, surmounted of a cross gules, fimbriated.* Heraldically a fimbriation is a narrow border to prevent the unpleasing effect of metal on metal or colour on colour, and it should be as narrow as possible to mark the contrast. (figs 12, 28)

The Admiralty flag (fig 10-11), more properly called the flag of the Lord High Admiral, became known as the admiralty flag because from 1710 the office was put into commission and remained so, with a brief intermission when the Duke of Clarence was created Lord High Admiral in 1827, until the Board of Admiralty was abolished 1964. The title of Lord High Admiral reverted to the crown and the Queen became her own Lord High Admiral.[8] In 2011 the title of Lord High Admiral was granted to the Duke of Edinburgh on his 90th Birthday.[9]

The flag was flown in the form shown in Fig 2, that is horizontally, except during the reign of James II (1685-1688) when he assumed the office himself and flew the flag

in the form shown in fig 11. After the Glorious revolution in 1689, it reverted to its old form.

During the 17th century the tactical necessities of large fleets led to their divisions and subdivisions being distinguished by a separate flag. The fleet was divided into three squadrons, centre (red), the van (blue) and the rear (white) commanded by an Admiral, Vice-Admiral and a Rear-Admiral, each flying the appropriate flag. (figs 14-16) However, as the commander of the red squadron was also the commander of the fleet he flew, not the red flag but the union flag. The Royal standard was originally flown as the flag of command when the Lord High Admiral personally commanded the fleet, but this is now only flown by the Sovereign in person.

In order to more fully distinguish the squadrons (and to prevent confusion with enemy vessels, the French flew both white and blue flags) a further change in the flags was made; these were to be in the colours mentioned, but with the upper corner next to the staff was a white canton charged with St Georges cross. Early evidence of this practice was shown by the capture by the French of no fewer than forty flags, paraded before the people and then deposited in Notre Dame[10] (figs 29-31) following the disastrous expedition in 1627 by the Duke of Buckingham against the Isle of Rhé, near St Rochelle.

With the execution of Charles the First in 1649 and the start of Parliamentary rule the flying of the union flag was discontinued, one reason being that Parliament professed to rule England and Ireland only and the saltire was removed from the flag, The national and naval flag became:

"the arms of England and Ireland in two escutcheons, on a red flag. within a compartment or" (fig 18)

Pepys, when Secretary of the Admiralty, described this flag as encircled by a laurel wreath for the Admiral, but plain for the Vice and rear Admirals. (fig 17)[11]

At the restoration the union flag was re-introduced, and as early as May 11th 1660, Pepys was noting that:

"we began to pull down all the states arms in the fleet--having first sent to Dover for painters and others to set up the King's," [12]

On the political and constitutional union with Scotland in 1707 the union flag ceased to be used as a flag of command and was worn on a flag-staff and not at the mast head or topsail. Also as naval tactics developed, large fleets of 90-100 ships were no longer gathered together, and the colours red, white and blue ceased to have any meaning other than marking degrees of seniority.

In 1800 the union with Ireland brought another change to the flag. On 1st January

1801 the union flag was altered to include a red cross, often called the cross of St Patrick. St Patrick never had a cross, and the cross saltire in so far as it belongs to any saint, belongs to St Andrew. The cross may have come from the arms of the Fitzger-

alds, who came to Ireland with the Norman invaders. The Fitzgerald arms are *argent, a cross saltire gules*. There is some evidence that these arms were used as the flag of Ireland in the early 18th century[13] and this was felt to be sufficient usage for the cross to be included in the union flag and combined with the saltire already in the union. The two saltires are counter-changed, the white representing the senior member of the union uppermost in the first quarter and the red edged with white as a fimbriation.

There was still a measure of confusion about which flags Admirals of the various grades should fly and the matter was finally resolved by Admiralty Order of 9th July 1864:

"*Admirals, Vice-Admirals and Rear-Admirals shall in future wear respectively a white flag with the St Georges therein at the main, fore, or mizen top-gallant masthead.*
All Her Majesty's ships of war in commission shall bear a white ensign with a red St George's cross, and the union in the upper canton." [14]

Since then ships and vessels employed in the public service fly the blue ensign, ships commanded by members of the Royal Naval Reserve and having one third of their crew of the Reserve may also fly it. Yachts and other vessels under special authority may fly distinguishing flags, but all other British ships are to fly the red ensign.

One last note, fig 21 shows the flag as flown by Rear-Admirals now, a Vice-Admiral flies the flag with a red ball in the third canton and an Admiral the plain cross of St George.

Notes

1 Laughton, J. K. 'The Heraldry of the Sea; Ensigns, Colours and Flags' *RUSI Journal 23* (1880) pp 116-148, on p 117
2 Slater, S & Znamierowski, *Flags And Heraldry* (London 2007) pp 12-16
3 Laughton, p117
4 Laughton, p119
5 Nicolas (Sir) N H. *History of the Royal Navy Vol II* (London, 1842) p181
6 Laughton, p 120
7 Laughton, p 121
8 Archibald, E. H. *Dictionary of Sea Painters*, (Woodbridge, 1989) pp 24-25
9 BBC news 10th June 2011
10 Laughton, p 123; Rodger, N. A. M *The Safeguard of the Sea ; Naval History of Britain Vol* 1 (London 1997), pp 357-8
11 Laughton, p 123
12 Latham P. Ed, *The Shorter Pepys* (London 1990), p 43
13 Laughton, p127
14 Laughton, p 128

A SURVEY OF HERALDRY IN CANNINGTON CHURCH

We are making a visit to Cannington in July, and so I went there to see the church, with its heraldry. It seems worthwhile to give a foretaste of what you can see, as I was able to take some photographs, and members may like to read around the history of the place.

Cannington was the centre of a Hundred, which was the basic unit for administration and taxation of land in the Saxon period. After the conquest the Hundreds were retained, although as the County administration, initially under the sheriff, grew in importance, the Hundred became commensurately less significant. Nevertheless they survived well into the eighteenth century, although I do not know when they were formally abolished.

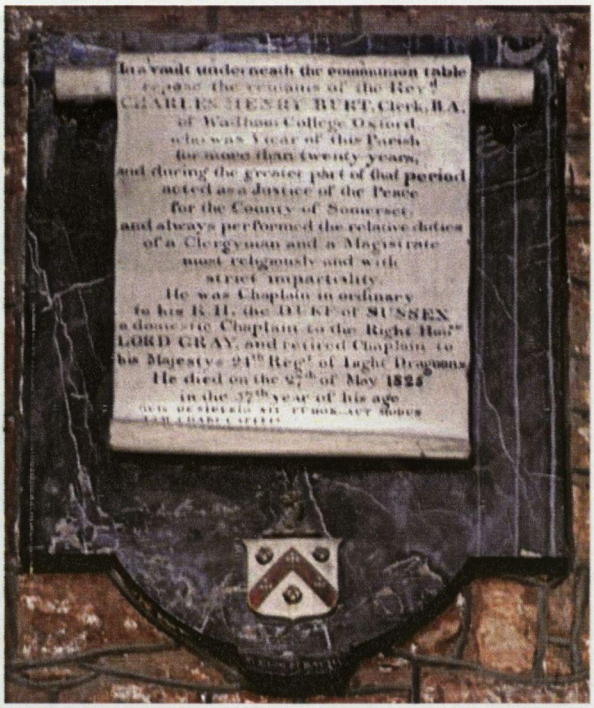
Cannington Hundred was the area to the west of Bridgwater, and it has been suggested that the name incorporates the stem "can-", which is the same as in Kent, meaning a roughly circular area. This is probably analogous to the word cantref used at the same early period in Wales for a unit similar to the hundred. The buildings of Cannington Court, next to the church were originally those of a Priory, but after the dissolution of the monasteries, they were held by the lord of the hundred and were, until the end of the nineteenth century at least, owned by the Clifford of Chudleigh family, who built the eighteenth century additions to what was then called Cannington Court.

In the church there is an interesting collection of hassocks, or kneelers, with heraldic motifs. These were obviously made in the twentieth century and one is for the Queen's Jubilee of 1977. Perhaps another is already in the making for her 2012 Jubilee. There is little point in describing each of these, but they merit attention during the visit, and as scattered around the church, mainly in or near the chancel.

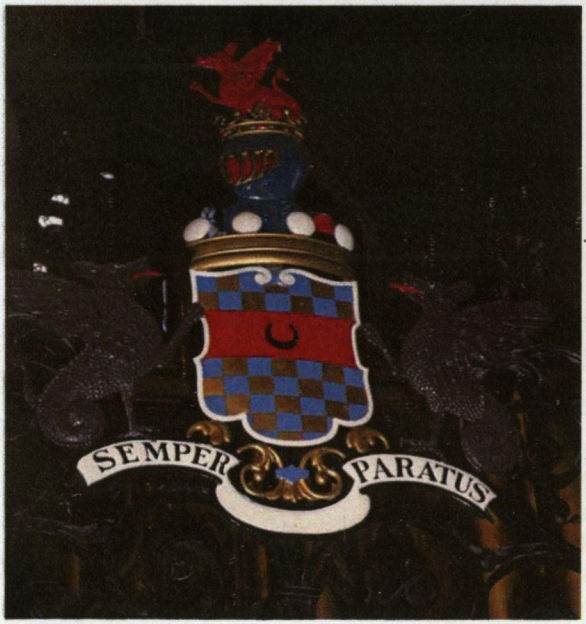
In the north aisle is a memorial to the 535th Anti-Aircraft Battalion of the US Army, which shows a rather small but interesting coat of arms, *parted per pale nebuly Gules and Or fretty Sable, a pile engrailed issuing from sinister charged with a lion passant Gules*. Piles and nebuly partitions are certainly common in US Anti-Aircraft heraldry, but this design is so particular and fussy that I do wonder whether it was in fact granted by the US Army Institute of Heraldry, or perhaps was just designed and adopted informally by the men of the battalion. SECURITAS PER VIGILAM is recorded as their motto by the Institute website, but no arms.

In the chapel in what represents the east transept are some memorials to the Pleydell-Bouverie family, who lived locally for some generations, the earliest of which was the Hon[ble] Philip Pleydell-Bouverie, fifth son of the third Earl of Radnor. He was a London banker who married in 1811 Maria daughter of Sir William A'Court of the Heytesbury family, and died in 1872. There is a brass for his son Philip, of Brymore (1821-1890), which has the two crests in the upper corners, but no arms. These how-

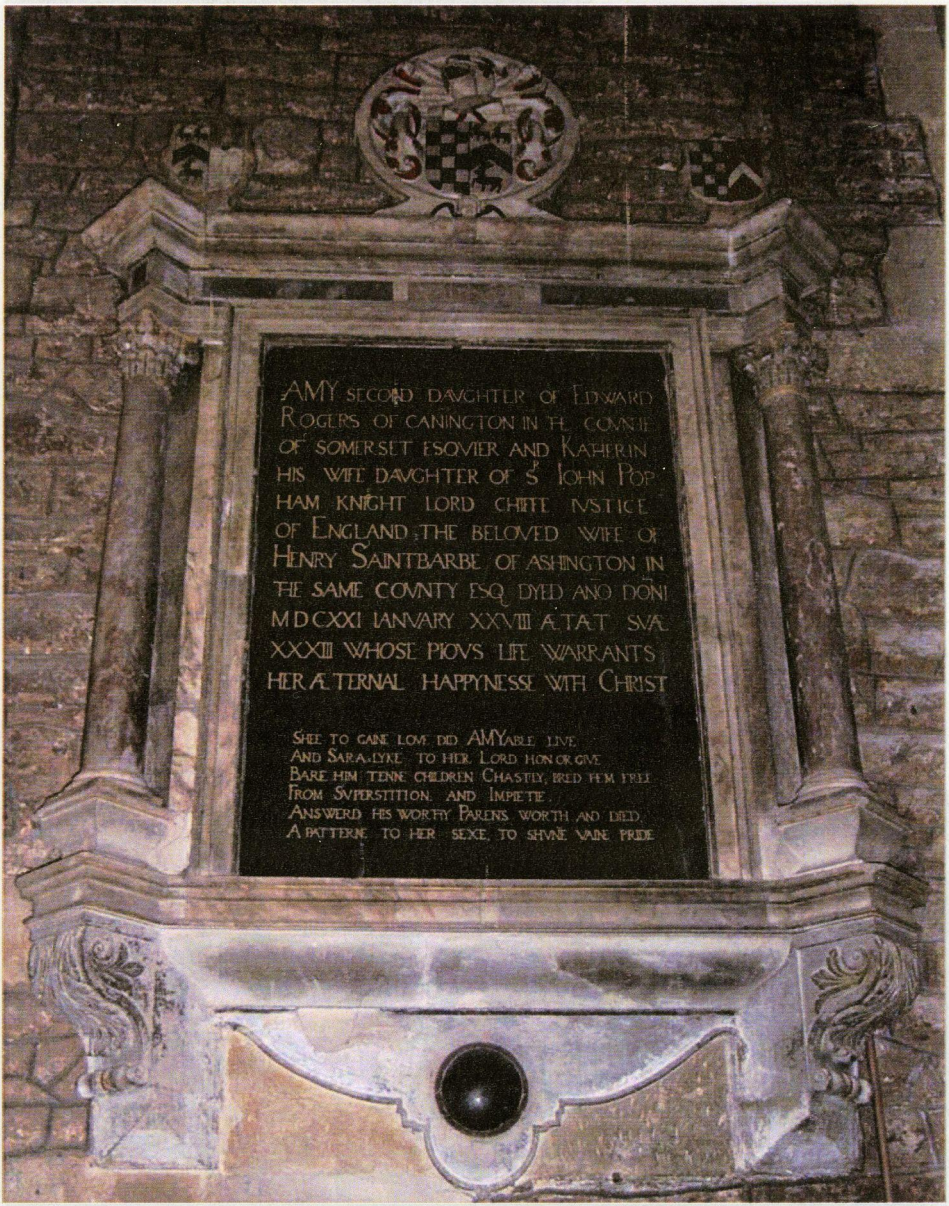
ever are supplied by the glass in the 1838 window next to and above the brass. There are five coats the first two for Bouverie and Pleydell, and I leave it to you to check out the other three shields in this window. The family died out in the male line in 1951.



In the chancel there are a number of interesting coats. On the left of the altar is a monument to Revd Charles Henry Burt, who died in 1825 in his 57th year, showing arms beneath, *Argent on a chevron Gules between three buglehorns Sable three crosses crosslet fitchée of the field*, above which is a *dragon's head* crest. The arms are recorded in Burke's General Armory for two branches, in Maiden Earleigh, Berks, and in Candell Marsh, co Devon, which is probably actually Caundell Marsh just south of Sherborne, so in Dorset.



On the same side in front of the organ is a finely-wrought iron screen, on which is a modern achievement for Lord Clifford of Chudleigh, *chequée Azure and Or, a fess Gules, on which for difference a crescent*, which appears to be Sable, but should be in a metal, ensigned by a baron's coronet, and atop the helm, *issuing from a crest coronet a demi-wyvern rising Gules*, supporters *two wyverns Purpure*, motto SEMPER PARATUS – Always Ready. Burke's does not show the crescent, and as it is wrongly tinctured I am not sure about it.



The largest monument, opposite the organ, is to Amy Rogers second daughter of Edward Rogers of Cannington, by his wife Katherine daughter of Sir John Popham and wife of Henry Saint Barbe of Ashington, who died in 1621 in her 28th year. Above the memorial are three shields, the central one replicated to right. It is Saint Barbe, *chequée Argent and Sable* impaling Rogers, *Argent a chevron between three stags courant Sable.* To the left is Rogers impaled Popham, *Argent on a chief Gules two*

buck's heads cabossed Or.

Amy was clearly deeply mourned for the following poem is beneath the memorial

Shee to gaine love did AMYable live
And Sara-lyke to her Lord honor give
Bare him tenne children Chastly; bred them free
From Superstition, and Impietie,
Answered his worthy parents worth and died,
A patterne to her sexe, to shunne vaine pride

Edward Rogers received, on his father Sir George's death in 1581 or 1582, the manors of West Pennard, Kingsbury and Cannington, while his brother William was left lands purchased by George from his cousin Anthony, son of William Rogers of Bradford on Avon, and also lands in Wimborne St Mary in Dorset.

The history of this family shows that the Rogers were of Wiltshire, Somerset and Dorset, and sometime of Devon. Probably the first definite notice is of Thomas, who was admitted to Lincoln's Inn in 1454 and the line ended when Henry Rogers died unmarried in 1672. He left £5000 to his niece Anne for the rebuilding of the London church most needed after the great fire of London. In 1672 the estates of Cannington etc reverted to the Crown, and were then granted to the Cliffords.

Mary Lady Harrington, born 1570 daughter of Sir George, sister of Edward Rogers of Cannington, wife of Sir John Harrington

A very full history of the family, which seems to be well researched can be found on the internet at http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~gloverhoward/rogers.htm. In the Harleian 1623 Somerset Visitation the family is in the supplement, and the record looks like a copy of the 1591 visitation, as there is no pedigree carried forward. They were well-married, numbering Courtenay, Lisle and Popham as wives and marrying daughters to Throckmorton, Saint Barbe, Harrington, of which daughter there is a portrait in the Tate Gallery (a photograph of it, see left, with a note is on the Tate Gallery website at http://www.tate.org.uk). I did a certain amount of searching about on this family, as they used the same arms as Mary-Rose Rogers' family, but to no avail.

ROGERS OF CANNINGTON

Thomas Rogers
probably son of Thomas Rogers Sheriff (1455) and Mayor (1459) of Bristol
Admitted to Lincoln's Inn 1454
died 3 or 5 Oct 1478
married 1) Cecily d&c William Bessils of Bradford upon Avon
2) Catherine d Sir Philip Courtenay

William of Bradford

John, a lawyer

George, only child
born ca 1476
"of Loppit" in 1623 Visitation
"of Langport" in his will
died 1524

Sir Edward
b ca 1498
member of Royal Council, Protestant
d 1567
m Mary d Sir John Lisle

Sir George
b ca 1525x28
"only son and heir" in will of Sir Edward
d 1581x82
m Jane d Edmund Winter

Edward
had W Pennard,
Kingsbury, Cannington
b ca 1560
d 1627
m Catherine d Sir John Popham

William
had lands in Bradford
& Wimborne St Mary

Mary
b 1570
m Sir John
Harrington

Sir Francis
Hugh
dsp 1653

George
dsp 1638

Edward
dsp 1639

Henry
d unm 1672

Amy
b 1594
d 1621
m Henry Saint Barbe

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS Spring and Summer 2012

Wed 8th February	6.00 pm	**AGM**, followed by **BYO Royal Heraldry** advice and discussion with **Roland Symons**
	7.30 pm	Buffet Supper Party to celebrate the Queen's accession to the throne on 6th February 1952. Please bring some special food and drink
Wed 14th March	7.30 pm	**Skeletons, Bastards and Titles** **Alex Maxwell Findlater** A fascinating story of strange research, colonial exploitation, pretensions to titles and illegitimate Frenchmen 6.30 pm bring and share supper
Wed 11th April	7.30 pm	**The Royal Household (sticks, batons, wands)** **Stephen Slater** 6.30 pm bring and share supper. This is the first meeting to be held at the home of Mary Rose Rogers, Monteclefe Cottage Somerton TA11 7NL
Wed 16th May	2.30 pm	**Military Medals: Somerset Military Museum** **Col David Eliot** Col Eliot is very knowledgeable; tea afterwards in the Museum Café
Thurs 14th June	11.00 am	**Visit to Winchester**: morning the Great Hall, lunch in the Cathedral café and 2.00 pm the Cathedral, with Philip Hickman and a local guide
Sat 14th July	2.30 pm	**Cannington Church and the Court's gardens** **Alex Maxwell Findlater** 12.30 pm meet for lunch at Friendly Spirit pub, if you wish

SOMERSET HERALDRY SOCIETY

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

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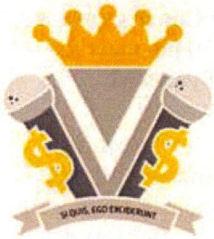
(contd from front page) and Northern Ireland. The sabres are not a nod to the Arab-Muslim world, but are drawn from the Essex coat of arms (where Mr Bercow went to university). The motto – All Are Equal – is interspersed with pink triangles, this being the symbol on Nazi concentration camp badges to identify male prisoners who were sent there because of their homosexuality. It has since been appropriated by the gay rights movement. The scroll is doubled with the spectrum of the rainbow, signifying the Speaker's support for lesbian and gay rights. So much for symbolism in arms! I offer you a couple of comments which I have found.

From a blog called Cranmer: Speaker John Bercow has commissioned his coat of arms. So tackily implausible is the design that His Grace (ie Archbishop Cranmer) thought the whole thing was a bit of gilded mockery. Perhaps it ought to have come as no surprise that it is, in fact, deadly earnest. The symbolism is utterly banal. If you aren't yet retching with incredulity (not least at this £15k waste of taxpayers' money on such an absurd vanity project.)

From the Guardian: Who might take inspiration from the Speaker's new heraldry? The coat of arms is like an ancient form of Wikipedia entry: within it one finds a potted biography, often completely made up by the person in question. Some politicians – George Osborne, say – may be stuck with the old heraldry that comes with their baronetcy, but others, like Speaker John Bercow, are in a position to invent their own. His new coat of arms features rainbows, representing equality, and tennis balls, representing how much he likes tennis. Who else in the public eye could do with a custom-fitted coat of arms?

Fatima Whitbread Silver shield, representing her silver medal in Seoul in 1988, surmounted by crossed javelins. The crest is a cockroach rampant, above the Latin motto: "Ut laoreet dolore magna celebritas, adepto ex naribus meis." ("I'm a celebrity, get out of my nose.")



Simon Cowell White escutcheon flecked with gold dollar signs, surmounted by deep V-neck sable, flattened top decorated with crown, with silver microphones flanking and the motto, "Si quis, ego exciderunt." ("If you win, I have failed.")

Ed Miliband Heart-shaped red shield surrounded by tightening belt to represent the "squeezed middle", surmounted by a grey silhouette of an awkwardly right-lurching man only partially obscuring shadow of David Miliband. Above them a dagger (representing Ed) is crossed against a banana (representing David). Motto: "Extrapolate dolor sit amet." ("I can extrapolate your pain.") (should be "extralopari dolor a me sit")

A pity about the Guardian's Latin and emblazonment!