



The Seaxe

Newsletter of the Middlesex Heraldry Society

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No. 48

(Founded 1976)

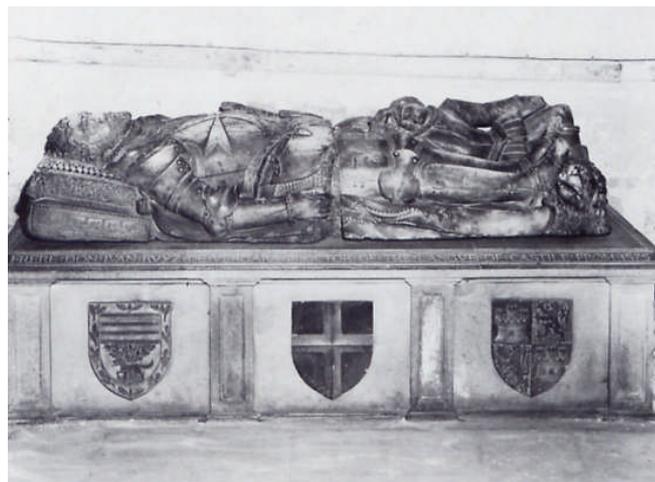
October 2004

The Society's summer visit to St John's Gate in Clerkenwell.



On 22nd June twelve members of the Society visited St John's Gate in Clerkenwell. St John's Gate is the headquarters of 'The British Association of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta'. Starting from under the arch we were first taken to see the Order's Grand Priory Church, which is situated to the north of St John's Square. In the crypt, our guide Mrs Willis, gave us a very interesting overview of the history of the Order in this Country and their relationship with the main order of St

John, whose full title is 'The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes, and of Malta'. The crypt is one of the few remaining Norman buildings in London, the first three bays probably being built in the 1140's.



Effigy of Don Juan Ruyz de Vergara

In the crypt is an alabaster effigy of Don Juan Ruyz de Vargara. He was the procurator of the knights of St John in Castile. He died in 1575 and was buried in Valladolid Cathedral. After restoration of the cathedral his tomb was removed. It was later presented to the Order in London by Sir Guy Laking. The table was built especially for the effigy and early in the 20th century the Vergara family gave the coats of arms now seen on the plinth. The first shield is the Vergara arms: 'Party per fess Azure three bars Or; Gold an oak tree terraced Vert and a wolf passant

proper. On a bordure also Gold ten oak leaves Vert'.
 The centre shield is the arms of the Order, 'Gules a cross Argent'. The third shield is Castille quartering Leon.

After viewing the interior of the Priory Church, where we saw the banners of the Bailiffs Grand Cross, the highest grade of the order, we returned to the Gate house. We were taken up one of the towers to the library stopping off at a few other rooms, including the Grand Prior's office.



Quarterings showing proof of Nobility in the museum in Mdena, Malta

In the library Mrs Willis had put out on the large table in the centre of the room a number of books opened showing coats of arms of members of the Order. One book was showing the "proof of nobility" which is still required for certain ranks to this day.

Mrs Willis also pointed out the bookcase provided, through a legacy in his will, by a former Heraldry Society member and authority on the Order, Charles Town. It was a wonderful climax to the visit. The one disappointment of the visit was that we did not get in to see the Chapter Hall, which was being used for a fund raising function. Those who had been before knows that this room is full of heraldry.

After the visit Peter and Anne Esslemont invited members back to their home in Chelsea for tea. After feasting on sandwiches and cake Anne showed us pictures on her lap top computer of a tabard she had just finished working on in time for it to be exhibited in the John Pine exhibition at the Freemasons Hall in Holborn. Anne also showed pictures of a number of altar frontals

from Westminster Abbey. It was a perfect ending to a perfect day. Thanks to Anne and Peter for their hospitality.

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Did you know...?

...that the Knights Templars' were forbidden to wear pointed shoes and shoe laces? Rule 22 states "We prohibit pointed shoes and shoe-laces and forbid any brother to wear them; nor do we permit them to those who serve the house for a fixed term; rather we forbid them to have shoes with points or laces under any circumstances. For it is manifest and well known that these abominable things belong to pagans...".
 'The Rule of the Templars' translated by J.M.Upton.

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Proof of Nobility for the British Association of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta.

As with other Orders of knighthood in the Middle Ages, the Order of St John of Malta insisted on proofs of nobility from those who wished to be raised to the rank of knighthood. In 1262 it was laid down that "...no Prior nor Bailiff nor other brother knight or brother, unless he who is to be knighted should be the son of a knight of a knightly family". The requirements for proof have varied over time and from country to country. Germany and Austria are well known in their strictness, demanding that all 16 great-great-grandparents be noble. In this country the requirements are that each grandparent has inherited arms. The new grade of Grace and Devotion, which was introduced after the Second World War, requires only 100 years nobility in the male line.

'Blood of the Martyrs' by Sir Conrad Swan and Peter Drummond-Murray of Mastrick. For the heraldic practices of the numerous grades see 'The Double Tressure' No. 27, 2004.

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The flag of the European Union.

In December next year the flag of the European Union will be 50 years old. The now famous, or infamous as some would

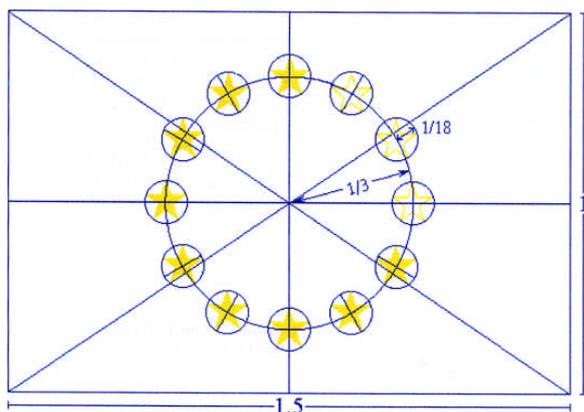


Flag of the European Union

have it, flag of blue with twelve gold stars in a circle was designed by Ireland's Chief Herald, Gerard Slevin, (1954-81). It became the official European flag in December 1955. The rationale behind the design is aimed at encapsulating graphically the ideal of an evolving Europe over the course of time. The circle is symbolic of the European ideal of unity and harmony while the twelve mullets or stars represent the passage of time. Twelve is the number months in the year. Twelve is also a symbol of perfection. The stars have nothing to do with the number of member states.

The flag is described on the EU web site in the following terms:

"The emblem is in the form of a blue rectangular flag of which the fly is one and a half times the length of the hoist. Twelve gold stars situated at equal intervals form an invisible circle whose centre is the point of



intersection of the diagonals of the rectangle. The radius of the circle is equal to one-third of the height of the hoist. Each of the stars has five points which are situated on the circumference of an invisible circle whose radius is equal to one-eighteenth of the height of the hoist. All the stars are upright – that is to say, with the one point vertical and two points in a straight line at right angles to the mast. The circle is arranged so that the stars appear in the position of the hours on the face of a clock. Their number is invariable".

For further information on the European flag and the technicalities of drawing it and the specific colours used see the European Union web page:

http://www.europa.eu.int/abc/symbols/emblem/index_en.htm

See 'Royal Roots, Republican inheritance – The survival of The Office of Arms' by Dr Susan Hood.' This is an excellent book documenting the continuing heraldic practice in Ireland from 1922 when the office was finally transferred to the Irish Government.

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Pedantic....?

Sometime in the 1980's The Daily Telegraph published a letter addressed to the 'Genuflex' column by Mr Mostyn Sheep-Harris. It read:

"My elder brother Eric, who is in holy orders and also holds medical and dental degrees, joined the police force some 10 years ago and has just been promoted Detective Sergeant. Soon afterwards, through the death of a cousin, he succeeded to the baronetcy".

When writing, how should I address him, as he is a stickler in such matters?

'Genuflex' replied:

'The Revd Det-Sgt Dr Sir Eric Sheep-Harris, Bt, DD, MD, LDS' is the correct form. Should your brother be appointed a Privy Councillor, join the Navy, Army or Air Force, or make a

pilgrimage to Mecca, please write to me again'.

This reminded me of an interview I heard with Cardinal Hume. He told of a story when he was at a function and was asked how he would like to be addressed.

He replied that he would answer to any form of address except "oi you".

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In the time of Queen Dick

By Cynthia Lydiard-Cannings

No.16 – KYNASTON OF SHROPSHIRE – PART 1

"Popinjay!" barked the Yorkist commander, Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury.

"No, my lord," returned the squire, irrepressibly. "You're thinking of my friend Poyner, he bears a popinjay. I'm Kynaston. I bear - "

"You'll bear yourself out of my sight, sir, upon the instant, or - !"

Roger Kynaston bowed low in the saddle and, still grinning, reigned his horse away from the Earl's charger.

"Why do you bait him so, Roger?" asked his friend, trotting up beside him. "One day you'll go too far."

"I like him. And he's worried. He knows the enemy is close, and he knows we're outnumbered. His advisers tell him it's madness to go on, and cowardice to retreat. I give his brain a rest from it, that's all."

"I don't think he appreciates it. Why aren't you like the rest of us? A comfortable anonymity is what we strive for, where great lords like Salisbury are concerned. They can be dangerous, Roger."

"Anonymity is fine, if you don't *need* - look, John, this is just an interlude for you. When this is over you'll go home, to lands and rents that will one day be yours. You have a future. I have nothing. If I want a future, I must earn it."

"How? By annoying our lord?"

"By ensuring he knows who I am. Then, when I cover myself in glory - "

"And how are you going to do that?"

"Once we meet the Lancastrians, in whatever way I can."

"Roger, you're crazy. You can't - we've never - a few skirmishes, that's all we know! This is going to be a *battle*. You'll get yourself killed."

"Don't worry, John. I'm in no hurry, and there'll be other meetings." He laughed. "But my first battle will surely be my best chance. I shall be so bewildered I shall be unaware of danger. That will make me look very brave, and impress my lord of Salisbury tremendously!" And he laughed again at his friend's anxious expression.

In after days, my lord of Salisbury was never quite sure whether he found the Lancastrians, or whether the Lancastrians found him. But he had been right in one thing; he was outnumbered.

"Kynaston! You're a Shropshire man. What is this place?"

"I believe, Blore Heath, my lord."

"Then at Blore Heath, I fear, our cause will suffer its first defeat."

"Is that certain, my lord?"

"Aye, certain, boy. We were too few, and of that few too many are already down. Only one thing could demoralize the enemy now ..."

"Tell me."

"Their commander, Lord Audley. Were *he* to fall - but he is too well protected, and I have lost too many, trying to reach him. I will send no more."

"I will try, my lord."

"Fool boy. Would you throw your life away? An unfledged squire, against - "

But he was talking to himself.

To be continued.

(First published in the Norfolk Standard and is reprinted with the kind permission of the editor and the author)

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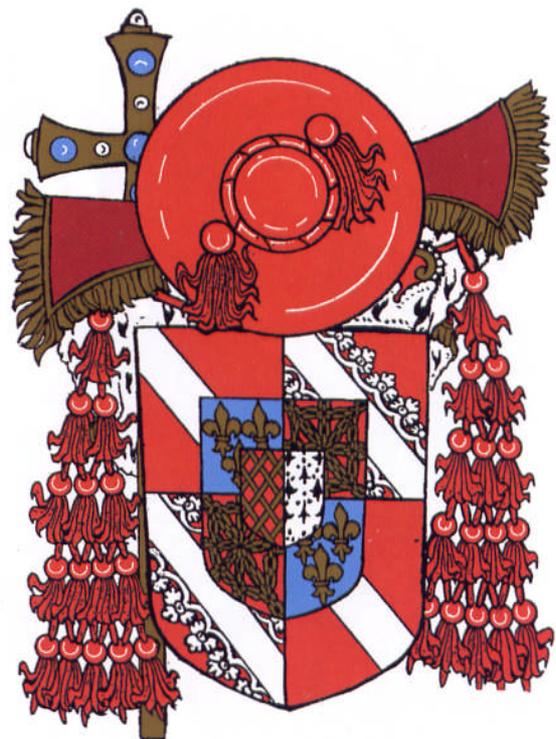
Cardinal Louis René Edouard de Rohan, Prince-bishop of Strasabourg.

In 1734 in a palatial palace in the Marais district in Paris, Hercule de Rohan and his cousin wife Mademoiselle de Soubise had a son, their third. They named him Louis René Edouard. He grew up to be a pretty fellow with a high-bridged nose, rosebud mouth and long-lashed supercilious eyes. His talents have been described as moderate, his ambition high, and to close the gap he relied on his name and wealth. In 1771 he was appointed ambassador to Vienna. He entered the city in a specially built coach upholstered in mauve silk, accompanied by twelve footmen, six musicians, five secretaries and his string of fifty thoroughbreds. Due to his slapdash manner and his failure to foresee the partition of Poland he was sacked from the ambassadorial office. To keep a promise made by his father, Louis XVI confirmed the appointment of Grand Almoner on Rohan despite protests from Louis' former governess and Rohan's cousin, the Comtesse de Marsan. In 1778 he received his cardinal's hat and in 1779 was made bishop of Strasbourg. He is notorious for his part in what is known as the 'diamond necklace' affair. His gullibility and naïvety in this episode is quite unbelievable. He was arrested as he was dressing for mass on the orders of the king and imprisoned. Due to the uproar his arrest and imprisonment caused ensured a not guilty verdict at his trial and his release. He died on 17th February 1803 at Ettenhiem, Barden in Germany.

The Rohan arms (page 6) were Quarterly France and Navarre en sur tout Gules nine mascles conjoined 3.3.3. Or, (Rohan) impaling Brittany. The shield is surrounded by the ribbon of the St Esprit and the ducal mantle, and ensigned by the ducal coronet and the double-traversed cross; the temporal sword and crosier are in saltire behind the shield. The cardinal's hat surmounts the whole." The Rohan arms are also displayed on the exterior of the mantle. Their motto was: "*I cannot be king, I disdain to be a prince, the name Rohan shall suffice*".

The Rohans claimed descent from the independent Kings of Brittany, and consequently impaled the arms of Brittany with their personal coat, "Gules nine mascles 3,3,3, Or". The paternal grandmother of Henry, 20th Vicomte de Rohan, was Isabelle d'Albret, king of Navarre, which is where the Navarre arms comes from. Henry d' Albret was also the grandfather of King Henri IV of France, which is where the French Royal arms come in.

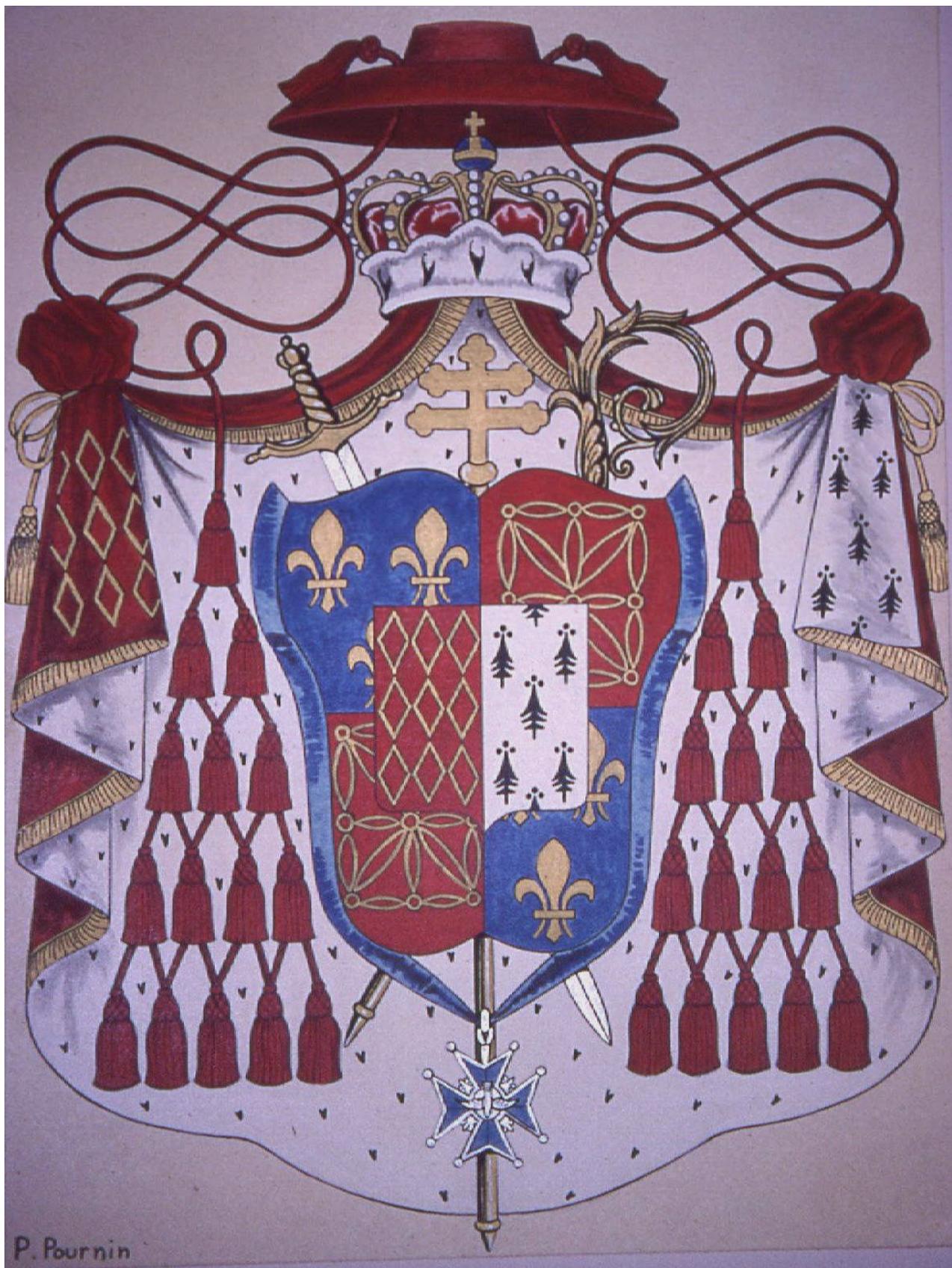
The Rohans originally bore "six mascles 3-2-1 on an almond shape shield, then seven mascles 3-3-1 on a triangular shield and finally nine mascles 3-3-3 on a triangular shield with a rounded point.



The arms of Rohan as bishop of Strasbourg.

As bishop of Strasbourg Cardinal Rohan placed his arms overall the arms of the bishopric of Strasbourg which were 'Strasbourg quartering Landgravate of Lower Elsass' as shown above.

This illustration was taken from Michael McCarthy's magnificent "Heraldica Collegii Cardinalium". The Rohan mascles however are shown as fretty.



Arms of Cardinal Louis René Edouard Rohan,
Prince-bishop of Strasbourg and Grand Almoner



ELIZABETH LEE – RIP

It is with deep regret that we have to report the death in hospital in April of Elizabeth Lee. She had celebrated her 90th birthday in January, but her health had been in decline for some time.

Elizabeth had been a long-time and loyal member of this Society, and of The Heraldry Society and the Chilterns Heraldry Group. She showed great determination to attend meetings and visits. She had some reputation as a fast driver, and some notoriety as a passenger with definite views about the best route to be followed.

During meetings she would often appear to be fast asleep, only to astonish the speaker and the rest of the audience with a very pertinent and intelligent question. She had amassed a collection of slides, many of excellent quality, but like many of us, she put off sorting them until later, by which time memory had faded.

She was, undoubtedly, a 'character', with strong opinions always courteously and elegantly expressed. She was also considerate, kind, and generous, and will be missed by all the friends who were privileged to know her.

KH





DON KIRBY - R.I.P.

Don was a Yorkshireman and naturally proud of it, with good memories of his home town and his old school, Hull Grammar School. After a distinguished career in the army in India during the war, he and Marjorie married and moved southwards. His working life was one of efficiency and stability, ending in charge of the car parking at Heathrow.

With Marjorie he joined the Middlesex Heraldry Society in its heyday, where they already had friends, and where they found themselves 'in at the deep end' with our recording of heraldry in local churches. Challenged by this strange subject and determined to learn about it, they joined Pete Taylor's class at Windsor.

Don came on the committee, and with Marjorie, took charge of *The Seaxe*, raising it from an 'occasional' to a regular publication. Don was becoming adept with his computer, and put his skills to good use in transforming *The Seaxe's* format. He encouraged others, within and outside the society, to contribute material, making many new friends on the way. He served a term as Vice-chairman of the society, but felt he lived too far away to take on the chairmanship.

Among his own special interests were military history, philately, the Egham Local History Society and Museum, and the garden. With Marjorie's collaboration, he gave several interesting and well-researched talks, making a special study of the heraldry of the barons who sealed Magna Carta, and the conspirators in the Gunpowder Plot.

Several of us were able to attend his funeral at Woking, and afterwards to join Marjorie, Penny and Chris in a lovely garden in splendid sunshine to share memories of a good, loyal and generous friend.

KH/RB



Some heraldry of The Sovereign Military Order of St John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes, and of Malta.



The Order's arms above its HQ in Valetta, Malta,



King Edward VII's neck badge of a Knight of Justice and Knight of Honour and Devotion



The Arms of The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes, and of Malta being flanked by the arms of Grand Master Antonio Manoel de Vilhena, 1722-1736.
- Grand Masters Palace, Valetta, Malta.

Next Meetings

Heraldry at Wimpole Hall
Stuart Whitefoot
on Saturday 2nd October 2004

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Heraldry in Cobham Church, Kent
Stephen Kibbey
on Saturday 6th November 2004

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Christmas Quizzes etc.
on Saturday 4th December 2004

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Meetings will be held at the Guide Hut in Bury Street, Ruislip – part of the Manor Farm, Library, Great Barn group of buildings and are usually on the first Saturday of each month. Meetings will be followed by tea and biscuits.

Visitors are most welcome

Officers and Committee

<i>Chairman</i>	Stephen Kibbey
<i>Vice-Chairman</i>	Marjorie Kirby
<i>Hon. Treasurer</i>	Stuart Whitefoot
<i>Minutes Secretary</i>	Margaret Young

Committee
Nan Taylor Ron Brown,
Kay Holmes,

Subscriptions

for 2004/05 are now due and are unchanged at:-

£6.00 for full membership
£4.00 for country membership

Please give or send your cheque or cash to the Hon. Treasurer or to any member of the committee.

The Chiltern Heraldry Group

The Work of Amateur Heralds
Melvyn Jeremiah, CB, Hon. Secretary of the
Heraldry Society
On 16th October 2004 at White Waltham

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Slater's Travel's No 7.
Stephen Slater
on 13th November 2004

*Meetings begin at 2.30pm and are followed by a light
tea provided by members*

The Seaxe.

In the last edition of The Seaxe, I wrote that I hoped it wouldn't be too long before Don Kirby felt well enough to resume producing The Seaxe. Sadly this was not to be. I have agreed to take on the editorship of The Seaxe in an attempt to continue the work that Don had carried out for so long. This can only happen if there are articles, comments or interesting items to publish. If you wish The Seaxe to continue please make a contribution for inclusion. Unless there is material to publish The Seaxe will undoubtedly cease to exist.

All correspondence regarding this edition and articles for future editions should be sent to The editor, 3 Cleveland Court, Kent Avenue, Ealing, London W13 8BJ. Tel. 020 8998 5580