



Parts of a Coat of Arms
(The Achievement)

CLANS, HERALDRY AND THE LORD LYON

- The Lyon Court is part of the judicial system of Scotland.
- It has jurisdiction over all Heraldic and Genealogical matters.
It is presided over by a judge - The Lord Lyon King of Arms.
- Together with his other duties Lord Lyon is authorised by His Majesty the King to grant Arms in Scotland.
- The Office of Lord Lyon is one of the oldest heraldic appointments in the world and its origins can be traced back to the High Sennachie of the Celts.
- Anyone living in Scotland may petition the Lord Lyon for a Grant of Arms provided they are "virtuous and well deserving". This also applies to anyone domiciled in His Majesty's overseas realms or in the Commonwealth who are of Scottish descent.
- Nationals of other countries who can trace their ancestry back to Scotland may petition for a retrospective Grant of Arms for a Scottish ancestor. They can then ask for these Arms to be matriculated in their own name provided they share the same surname. It may be possible to arrange for a cousin in Scotland, or in one of Her Majesty's overseas realms, to get a grant of arms from the Lord Lyon King of Arms, and then obtain a cadet-matriculation for themselves.
- Corporate Bodies (i.e. a group of people banded together for a common purpose) such as clan societies, commercial companies and golf clubs may also petition for a Grant of Arms.
- Clans are legal entities in Scots Law. They are represented by the Clan Chief. Both the Chief and the Clan come under the jurisdiction of the Lord Lyon.
- Once Arms have been granted they become the property of the Petitioner - therefore the Arms of a Chief of a Clan are his or her personal property and cannot be used by anyone else.
- The only way to obtain an authentic Scottish Coat of Arms is by petitioning The Lord Lyon King of Arms. It is illegal to use a bogus Coat of Arms or to use someone else's Arms in Scotland.
- Traditionally a member of a Clan is given permission to wear the Crest of the Chief of the Clan surrounded by a strap and buckle upon which is depicted the Chief's Motto. This represents the metal brooch given to a follower to attach to their sword belt.