

ARMS I HAVE DESIGNED

by the Rev. Canon John G.B. Andrew, OBE, DD

Summary of a Presentation

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at the New York Genealogical & Biographical Society

The Rev. Canon John G.B. Andrew, OBE, DD, an English-born clergyman long resident in New York, where he was the Rector of Saint Thomas Church on Fifth Avenue, is many things. He is a well-grounded Christian and renowned preacher; a fine host and conversationalist; a lover of heraldry; and a collector of Chinese armorial export porcelain, of which he has a splendid collection.

When Canon Andrew offered to give a talk on the coats of arms he has designed, or helped to design, for his friends, the College of Arms Foundation and the Committee on Heraldry of the New York Genealogical & Biographical Society (the “G&B”) accepted with alacrity. The event took place on Tuesday 4 October in the G&B’s Portrait Gallery.

Canon Andrew prefaced his talk by describing how he came into contact with heraldry. Over 40 years ago, in 1960, he became Chaplain to the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsay. In that position, he saw heralds attired in their splendid costumes – tabards, buckle shoes, britches – participating in royal and state ceremonies. The clergyman was drawn to their world of heraldry and pageantry and became friends with them.

Canon Andrew said he also developed a passion for and collected Chinese armorial export porcelain. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Canon Andrew said, British shoppers would send bookplates with their arms to China by tea ships to be copied onto plates and other pieces. Two or three years later these would be delivered to their buyers, usually well executed but sometimes containing curious errors due to a misunderstanding of the artwork.

While he has been involved in the design of numerous armorial bearings, Canon Andrew stressed that he is an amateur, or lover, of heraldry which he described as an “allusive and illusive” art, and also a “playful art.”

Canon Andrew related that heraldry began in Western Europe eight centuries ago in times of war. Flags with colors and designs were used to identify military leaders who had to be recognizable to the combatants. Visually distinctive designs created a sense of “apartness” for their bearers. Heraldry became associated with important people, leading to imitation. Eventually, and inevitably, snobbery crept in but this, he said, is no longer a factor today.

At its best, heraldry should be clear and simple. After the Middle Ages, heraldry's original purpose disappeared but not its use. There were styles for complex designs and quarterings which "pompous potentates" imagined were better than plainer arms. In the 18th Century there was a marked taste for multiple visual allusions, resulting in cluttered – and difficult to decipher – designs.

Canon Andrew believes that heraldry must produce instant recognition to be effective. "Simplicity is at its heart," he stated. "Heraldry is poetic. It comes from the same part of the brain as poetry." Also, he said, "accuracy is of the essence."

There followed a series of images which Canon Andrew explicated one by one. Many of the armigers are associated in some way with churches – most, though not exclusively, with the Episcopal Church.



Left to right: the arms of Haas, Risk, Fertig, Burkhead impaled and Lane.

G. William Haas was for many years the Senior Warden of Saint Thomas Church in New York, where Canon Andrew was Rector for 25 years. Fr. Andrew also noted that "haas" is the German word for "hare. These two elements – church and name – were symbolized in the shield. The "T" stands for Saint Thomas, and the hare on the bend indicates the bearer's name. The Maltese crosses in the wreath refer to Mr. Haas' membership in the Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem (also called the Order of St. John), of which he ultimately became Chancellor of the American Association. The crest itself was Mr. Haas' design.

The arms of **James C. Risk** also isolate and depict elements of his background and career. The gold disks (or "bezants") point to his occupation as a numismatist, or coin dealer. (Mr. Risk is a well-known authority on European orders and decorations as well.) The red maple leaves on the gold bend are, of course, a symbol of Canada, whence his parents came. The crest consists of a coronet made of golden anchors and thistles from which emerges a fabulous dolphin. The anchors and sea creature refer to Mr. Risk's service in the US Navy; and the thistles to his Scottish forebears. The design encompasses five ideas (parentage, navy service, employment, parentage and forebears) without the result being cluttered.

Canon Andrew urged the **Rev. Gary Fertig**, his assistant at Saint Thomas Church for 18 years, to seek a grant of arms and advised him in the design. Every coat of arms describes the grantee in different ways. This composition incorporates word play, Marian imagery and (once again) a reference to the Order of St. John, of which Fr. Fertig is a Chaplain. The word play is of two kinds, verbal and visual. The motto is a translation of

the armiger's name: "Fertig" is a German word meaning "prepared" or "ready" and the Latin word "paratus" means "ready." Among the Saint Thomas choirboys Fr. Fertig was called "Tigger." There are four (which sounds like "fer") "tigers" on the shield. We are close to producing the name "Fertig" visually. The cross flory symbolizes the Virgin Mary and the Maltese cross at the point of the shield indicates the Order of St. John.

For **Gary and Dawn Burkhead** Canon Andrew designed two coats of arms, seen impaled in the illustration above, and a crest that combined elements of each. Mr. Burkhead was head of a major financial entity, which Canon Andrew alluded to with red moneybags in the crest. "Burkhead" sounds very much like "buckhead" (especially when pronounced by an Englishman!) which suggested the adoption of a stag's head and antlers for Mr. Burkhead's shield; surrounded by four Maltese crosses to indicate membership in the Venerable Order. Mrs. Burkhead's name, Dawn, was the inspiration for the golden suns surrounding a wheat sheaf on her shield. The crest is a mixture of the elements from both shields. Normally, the crest would be the husband's; this one is made for the couple. The motto (not shown) is "Fidelitas" which is a translation of the name of Mr. Burkhead's business: Fidelity. The bordures were recommended by the College of Arms.

A musician and organist at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin in New York, **Quentin Lane** (whose nickname is "Q") was also an assistant organist at Saint Thomas Church. True to form, his shield incorporates allusions to music (three lyres on a bend); and to his association with the Church of St. Mary (the fleurs-de-lys, or lilies). Yet again, there are Maltese crosses to denote membership in the Venerable Order. In the Bible, "Q" means "the source," a source document used by the authors of the Four Gospels. Mr. Lane's crest takes that theme further by depicting a gushing fountain, water being the "source of life."



Left to right: the arms of Lundquist, Meyer, Booth and Walsh; and the Walsh badge

For many years, **Don W. Lundquist** was Secretary of the American Association of the Order of St. John. He is also an organist. His shield is of extreme simplicity, and includes two sets of crossed quills (quills being the emblem of secretaries) and a Maltese cross for the Order. The crest is made up of a coronet of lyres (symbol of music). "Lundquist" literally means "hand holding a plant." So the composition says it all: name, secretary, St. John and musician.

Carl Meyer is a sailor and loves fox-hunting. The first is symbolized by the "water" (undulating blue and white stripes) and the coronet of sails; and the second is plainly

evident in the crest. The Canon declared that he could not recall the meaning of the gold stars on the red chief.

Canon Andrew proudly stated that the design for the arms of **James Booth** was the first to go through the College of Arms. Mr. Booth, who is from Kentucky and a well-regarded carpet designer, said that he was interested in the way light casts shadows. Light suggested lanterns to Canon Andrew. The horse's head in the crest refers to Kentucky, famed for its bluegrass horse country; and the coronet of loom shuttles is an allusion to manufacturing carpets. The College of Arms suggested placing a paintbrush in the horse's mouth to emphasize Mr. Booth's artistic training. Motto: Thy Word is a Lantern Unto my Feet.

Canon Andrew did not entirely create the arms of **Dr. Joseph Walsh**, an ophthalmologist and a former Chancellor of the American Priory of the Venerable Order. His contributions were: the suns (for light) as Dr. Walsh is an eye specialist; and the crest, an arm, wearing armor strewn with Maltese crosses, the hand of which is holding a medical instrument. The College suggested the ermine and the chevrons; and designed the badge.



The arms of Foster, Robinson, Evans and Grein. Center: crest of Saint Thomas Church.

The Rev. Prebendary John Foster was clear that he wanted a cross flory, symbol of the Virgin Mary, on his shield and that is the main feature. In the resulting quarters of the shield there are seashells, the emblem of pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela; and fleurs-de-lys, or liloies, again for the Mother of Christ. The armiger composed the motto: "I Foster Faith."

Robert Robinson headed the Church Pension Fund, which manages a large endowment. The three gold disks (or bezants) in the chief of the shield symbolize money while the castellated wall represents the church. The three robins clearly allude to the armiger's name; and the red rose denotes his Lancashire antecedents. The crest is even more direct: a robin holding a money bag in its beak perched on a church tower.

Canon Andrew worked with the renowned herald, John P. Brooke-Little, a former Clarenceux King of Arms who is a devout Catholic, on the arms of **Saint Thomas Church** (granted 1976 and seen below) but designed the crest himself. This consists of a "crown celestial" (formed of points ending in stars) out of which five trumpets are "issuant." Canon Andrew invented this word, which is now in Brooke-Little's *An Heraldic Alphabet*.

John M. Evans had almost finalized the design of his arms when Canon Andrew saw them. The shield was to show flames of fire; but these looked more like “a gas ring on a stove” in the rendering and Canon Andrew suggested something bolder.

The **Rt. Rev. Richard Grein**, former Bishop of New York, asked Canon Andrew for his advice in designing his arms. Three elements are depicted: his episcopacy (the mitre); his mother (whose maiden name was “Clausen”, close to the Latin word “clave” or “key”), and his membership in the Venerable Order (Maltese crosses). The shield is also ensigned, as is proper, with a bishop’s mitre.



Arms of Holy Family Church, Robbins, Holman, Peeper and Shannon

Canon Andrew also participated with the rector, Fr. Robbins, in the design of the arms of the **Church of the Holy Family** in New York. The dove of peace in the crest and the fleurs-de-lys at the points of the cross on the shield were his contributions. Fr. Robbins authored the motto: *Pacem Meam Relinquo Vobis*.

Fr. Robert Robbins sought Canon Andrew’s advice for his own grant of armorial bearings: three robins on a blue shield, with a gold pale to distinguish them from those of another Robbins family. The crest also shows a robin holding a cross and standing on a hemisphere, used to suggest the United Nations, next to which his church is located.

Morgan Holman is a former Verger of Saint Thomas Church. His shield contains a castellated church “wall” similar to Mr. Robinson’s, only blue. Two sets of crossed verger’s maces are placed in the chief; the badge of Saint Thomas Church, a wheel of trumpets, and Maltese crosses (yet again indicating membership in the Venerable Order) occupy the lower area. The crest, with its church tower, is also reminiscent of Mr. Robinson’s; although this one is surmounted by another pair of crossed maces.

E. Quinn Peeper is a gynecologist and talented pianist who turned to Canon Andrew for advice in designing his arms. (It is lamentable that he should have settled in New Orleans, where he lost everything – home, hospital and practice – in hurricane Katrina.) The chief depicts a keyboard (proposed by the College of Arms and first used by Sir Elton John); and a stork, in tribute to Dr. Peeper’s profession of delivering babies. The crest shows a stork holding a sprig of gooseberry in its beak – since, in England, children are told that babies are found under gooseberry bushes. The coronet is composed of lyres (music) and Maltese crosses (Venerable Order).

Another Saint Thomas parishioner, **John Shannon** turned to Canon Andrew for assistance in designing his crest. The end result was a “triple pun,” of which the College

is fond. The red windmill contains three allusions, referring to a) Mr. Shannon's maternal Dutch antecedents; to a 17th Century English ancestor who settled in Long Island and established the first mill in Southampton; and, finally, to New York, where he is the Almoner of St. George's Society (which the shield depicts with money bags and a suggested cross of St. George). The crest coronet consists of gold ledger book (almoner again) and Maltese crosses (for St. John).



Canon Andrew showed two designs on which he is working. At left: design for Tedford Marlow, incorporating two blue piles creating a large "M", with martlets (for Marlow). At right, a sketch of arms for William Wright, Senior Warden of Saint Thomas Church. The Y-shaped shakefork is a reference to Yale University; and the wheels are a pun of "wheelwright" (Wright). The crest will be a yale.



Saving them for the end, Canon Andrew showed his own arms and also the crests he has acquired.



Arms of Andrew, Saint Thomas impaled with Andrew; and two additional crests of Andrew.

Canon John Andrew is an Englishman from Yorkshire (though his name is associated with the patron saint of Scotland), is a cleric and was Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury. All are referred to in his arms: a cross in saltire (for St. Andrew) containing quills (the Archbishop's chaplain is his secretary) and the roses of Lancaster and York. The crest is a novel use of a cleric's hat: it rests on an open Bible.

As Rector of **Saint Thomas Church**, Canon Andrew was granted the novel privilege of impaling his arms with those of his church. This image affords us the opportunity to see the church's arms (on the left side of the shield). Surmounting the shield is a cleric's hat with an elaborate cord denoting his clerical rank – priest – at the time.

For his services to the College of Arms, and to heraldry in America, **Canon Andrew** was granted a **special crest**: a blue dove (symbol of the College of Arms) holding in one claw an American star.

Finally, **Canon Andrew** was also granted **another crest** in connection with his service to Saint Thomas: this is a winged trumpet, the instrument having become heraldically associated with the church and its music.

As can be seen, Canon Andrew has championed the finest qualities of contemporary English heraldic design in the United States. Clarity and simplicity are always his goal, for the reason that, in his words, “the simplest arms are the grandest arms.” Complicated designs with too many charges are to be avoided: in heraldry, more is not more. And even though, in theory, all the “simple” designs were appropriated by old families centuries ago, it is still quite possible to achieve designs of such apparent simplicity that they appear to be older than they are.

Canon Andrew’s talk also reveals the critical role played by the College of Arms in England. It is the heralds who are responsible for keeping alive the principles of good heraldry, clarity and simplicity, which date back to the origins of heraldry itself. Without someone to police the players, it is to be expected that heraldic design will quickly degrade. Over the past few decades the officers of arms in England have raised the standards for heraldists.