

HERITAGE CIRCLE

Derek Palgrave, Enjoying Heraldry

Derek Palgrave warned his audience that the study of heraldry can be 'dry', however, his talk was the reverse when he spoke to the January meeting of the Heritage Circle at Rickinghall Village Hall.

Derek explained that heraldry has five component parts. It contains symbols, colours, geometrical designs, recognisable allusions and conventions. He began to illustrate this by reference to the coat of arms for Suffolk. The main design is a sunrise over water which is an allusion to Suffolk containing the most easterly point in England where the sun rises first and its coast on the North Sea. There are also two crowns with arrows through them which is a link to St Edmund. Similarly, the coat of arms for Hong Kong contained a lion for Britain, a Chinese lion and had junks in a harbour. There is often wit that underlies coats of arms. The shield of the former Prime Minister, Edward Heath, had a cloud, a wide staircase and a portcullis. This alluded to his boat, *Morning Cloud*; his birthplace, Broadstairs; and his links to Westminster.

The coat of arms for Great Yarmouth shows dimidiation as two coats of arms are combined together. The original shield for the town had three silver herrings but Edward III allowed his three lions to be added as a reward to the men from the town who helped him to win the Battle of Sluys in 1340 against the French. Now the coat of arms has the head of three lions on the left and three fish tails on the right.

Derek described how he applied to the College of Arms for his own crest. His first test was to prove that he was a gentleman. He either had to be a university graduate or an officer. He satisfied both criteria. Then he engaged in a discussion with the College of Arms about the design of his shield. A Palgrave family, not related to him, had arms with lions rampant which was a helpful start. Then he was asked about allusions to himself. He had attended City of Norwich School and lived in Norfolk and these gave him part of his design. Further elements included were his fellowship of the Royal Society of Chemistry, his career in the RAF, and his interest in North Barningham Church, where some members of the Palgrave family are buried. He eventually received his grant on vellum and was very pleased with the outcome. Minor variations on the coat of arms are used by his family.

The talk finished with examples of unusual places where coats of arms may be found. Pubs often have coats of arms on their signs. The drain pipes at Audley End House have the family arms, while they appear on the ceiling and above a bed at Blickling Hall. There is a door latch at Drogo Castle with the coat of arms. Finally, the coat of arms for Bury St Edmunds appears on some dustbins in the town.

The talk was delivered with great enthusiasm which led to an enjoyable evening for the audience who posed many questions to the speaker after its conclusion.

The next meeting of the Heritage Circle will be at 7.30pm on Wednesday 23 March 2016 at The Village Hall, Rickinghall IP221HD when Peter Driver will be speaking about *Follies and Oddities of Suffolk*. Further information about the Heritage Circle is available on its website, www.heritagecircle.onesuffolk.net.

Gerry Gurhy