

SWINNERTON

FAMILY HISTORY

Heraldic and Genealogical Studies

of the family

Compiled and edited by

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SWINNERTON HERALDRY

I have been promising for some considerable time to devote one newsletter entirely to Swinnerton Heraldry. Heraldry is a complex but fascinating subject and I can obviously only touch on it here. I shall deal with the arms that have been granted to various members of the family over the centuries - there is some confusion over these as I shall show. Various authorities give different versions of the arms and I shall try to differentiate between them without being too technical. For an explanation of the Heraldic terms used there are many excellent reference books you can consult, most of these you should find in your local library. In particular, I would recommend "An Heraldic Alphabet" by J. P. Brooke-Little MVO. MA. FSA. (Richmond Herald of Arms); "How to read a Coat of Arms" by Peter Summers FSA. and - as an introduction to the subject - "Heraldry" by C. R. Humphery-Smith BSc.

A word of warning - you may display any arms in your home for ornamentation, interest, etc. but you may not CLAIM or USE any arms unless they have been granted to you by - or your right to use them has been registered at - the College of Arms. To do the latter, you must prove to their satisfaction that you are directly descended in the male line, from the person to whom they were granted and, of course, pay a not inconsiderable fee. For a very clear and lucid explanation of this, read Richmond Herald's essay on "The Law of Arms" in his book "An Heraldic Alphabet" already mentioned (pp. 26-29).

For most of the illustrations I am greatly indebted to Mr. WILLIAM LESLIE SWINNERTON of Liverpool, who has spent a lot of time and gone to a great deal of trouble to meet my exacting requirements. A retired draughtsman, at the age of 76 his penmanship is still quite remarkable. For the rest, my thanks to my friend, the Rev. F. M. Best, MA.



THE CROSS FLORY

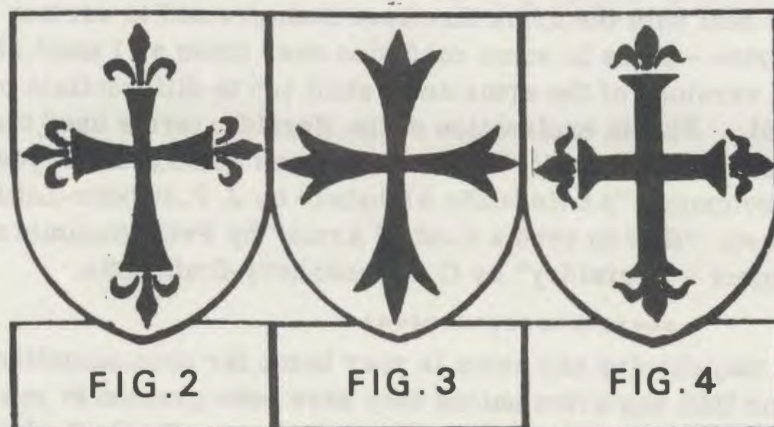
It is generally accepted that this has always been the basic device of the Swinnerton family. A flory cross (sometimes written fleury) is a plain cross with flowered or fleur-de-lys ends. Boutell gives 'SWINNERTON' as the classic example of this form of the cross :-

"Flory: having the limbs ending in fleur-de-lys; argent, a cross flory sable - Swinnerton", and illustrates it as shown in Figure 1. ("Boutell's Heraldry" Revised by J. P. Brooke-Little 1973. p. 50. first published in 1863 as "The Manual of Heraldry" by the Rev. Charles Boutell). Translated this means a black cross on a silver field.

Bridgman, however, blazons (describes) it as "Swynnerton of Swynnerton - argent, a cross formée, fleury sable". (Collections for a History of Staffordshire, Vol. VII. Pt. II. 1886 p. 24 by the Hon. & Rev. Canon G. T. O. Bridgman MA. JP.) Here we have our first variation.

A cross formée or formy is a cross whose arms are not straight but splayed and so a cross formée fleury is a cross with splayed arms ending in fleur-de-lys as shown in fig. 2. These are the arms given for Sir ROGER de SWYNNERTON in Collections for a History of Staffs. , Volume for 1913 (p. 283). You will notice that the fleur-de-lys have now become slightly detached from the main body of the cross, this is to distinguish it from another heraldic form known as the cross patonce (Fig. 3)

Curiously, however, Bridgman when going on to blazon the differenced arms of the various branches of the family, reverted to a cross flory except for Swinnerton of Butterson. (S. H. C. Vol. VII Pt. II, pp. 81, 91, 158 and 162).



SIR ROGER de SWYNNERTON

The family have produced several distinguished personages over the centuries but Sir Roger was possibly the most illustrious. He died circa 1338, having featured prominently in the affairs of the country and eventually becoming Constable of the Tower of London. He was summoned as a Baron of Parliament (see last issue) and was Sheriff and Escheator for Staffordshire for many years. His arms are given in several old Rolls of Arms, some of which are :-

Roll of those present at the Dunstable Tournament 1308-9

Sir ROGER de SWINERTON - argent a cross patonce sable.

(Harleian Mss. 6589 f. 41. Note the confusion between formy fleury and patonce).

The Parliamentary Roll

SIRE ROGER de SUYLVERTONE, de argent a une crois de sable les chefs fleurettes
(published by Palgrave in his "Parliamentary Writs" 1827, and by Sir Harris Nicholas in 1828)

In another Roll from Harleian Mss. 6589

In the part beginning :- 'Nomina militum in com. staff. 17 E II (1323-4)

ROGER de SWYNNERTON, argent, a cross "formy flory" sable

(All listed in the SHC Vol. for 1913 - see above - "Staffs. Coat of Arms 1272-1327, from the Rolls of Arms in Mss. in the British Museum", by Josiah C. Wedgwood, MP).

In another Roll entitled "Arma Nobilium de Com. Stafford ex Libro Antiquo in officio armorum"
we get :-

SIR ROBERT de SWYNNERTON. Argent a cross formé floré sable

Here the cross is shown in yet another form with straight arms which are only splayed at the very end - see Fig. 4. (Collections for a History of Staffs. Vol. III 1883 - The Visitation of 1583).

THE GENERAL ARMORY

This vast reference book was first published in 1828 as part of an Encyclopaedia but in its present form it first appeared in 1842 as "The General Armory" by John & John Bernard Burke. Several editions were published, the last one by J. Bernard Burke (Ulster King of Arms) appeared in 1884 when over 60,000 coats of arms were listed. The entries were drawn from every possible source: Rolls of Arms, Visitations, Histories, Herald's Books, etc. but there are many inaccuracies. To quote H.S. London, "Finding a blazon of a coat of arms in Burke or elsewhere is no evidence that it is properly described, recorded or was ever used. It merely means that one of the team who helped Burke in compiling his Armory made a note of an occurrence of a coat of arms. This may well have been first, second or third hand and in consequence may well contain errors " ("The Right Road for the Study of Heraldry" by H. Stamford London MA. FSA. Norfolk Herald Extraordinary). Having read the list of Swinnerton arms I give next, taken from the General Armory, you will probably feel like agreeing with these remarks. Several completely new variations are given but unfortunately Burke never gave sources so it is impossible to know where the arms were seen.

SWINNERTON or SWYNERTON (Swynerton Co. Salop, Constable of the Tower of London temp. Edward II) Ar. a cross flory sa.

SWINNERTON (Swinnerton Co. Stafford, descended from John Swinnerton, Seneschal of Cannock, eldest son of Sir John de Swinnerton Knt. The last male heir HUMPHREY SWINNERTON Esq. of Swinnerton d. 1562 leaving 2 daus. his co-heirs. I. Margaret m. Henry Vernon Esq. of Sudbury, II Elizabeth m. 1st William Fitzherbert Esq., 2nd Francis Gatacre Esq. of Gatacre. Same Arms.

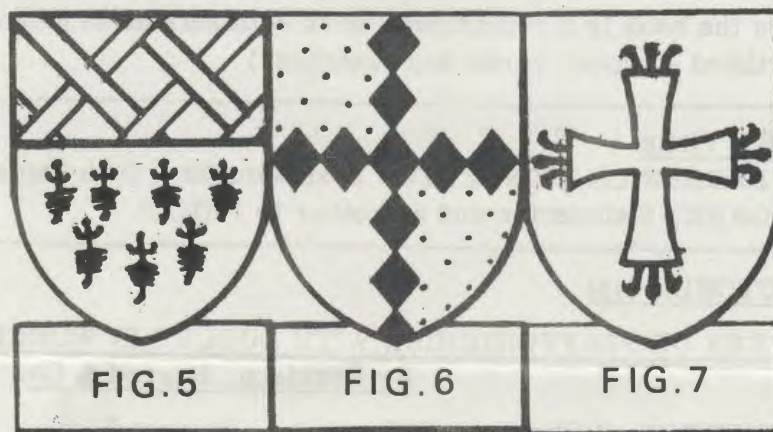
All well so far (except for a wrong county !) but he then goes on :-

SWYNNERTON (Co. Stafford) Erm(ine), on a chief gu (red) a fret or (gold) (Fig. 5) (another fretty or)

SWYNERTON. Quarterly or and ar. a cross lozengy sa. (fig. 6)

He also gives :-

SWYNERTON. Ar. a cross patée flory sa. a border engr(ailed) of the last but these are the arms of Swinnerton of Hilton which we will discuss later when we come to the branches of the family.



Why then, all the variations ? I think the answer is quite simply, artistic license. If you or I were asked to draw a rose, I am quite sure no two of them would look exactly alike. Similarly, when Herald's drew (or 'tricked' as it is called) arms, they each had their own individual style and a slight bend in a line could easily, to a blazoner, transform for instance a cross formy into a cross patonce. Possibly the strongest evidence we have for the actual form is on an old seal of Thomas de Swynnerton on a deed in the William Salt Library, Stafford (Fig. 7).

This is quite clearly a cross formy fleury and this, I think, we may take as the definitive form.

That concludes the first part of the Heraldry feature. I had thought that it would only take one Newsletter but there are still the branches of the family to deal with which so far fill five pages, as well as some modern examples, so it will be continued in future issues.

A SOUTH AFRICAN NATURALIST

We asked in Newsletter No. 9 who the SWYNNERTON'S ROBIN was named after. The answer is CHARLES FRANCIS MASSY SWYNNERTON, CMG. son of the Rev. CHARLES SWYNNERTON (mentioned many times in our Newsletter) and father of our correspondent ROGER JOHN MASSY SWYNNERTON, CMG. OBE. MC. who has sent us a great amount of information on his father which we shall be including in future newsletters.

THE PHILLIMORE MYSTERY - Vol. 1 No.10

This was solved for us very quickly by our Council Member S. K. Armitstead who sent us the following tree.

ANN SWINNERTON = Rev. Walter Bagot
(dau. of Wm. of Butterson) 7.7.1773

Elizabeth Bagot = Joseph PHILLIMORE
19.3.1807

Sir Augustus PHILLIMORE = Harriet Fortescue

JOHN SWINNERTON PHILLIMORE
b. 26. 2.1873

J. S. Phillimore was obviously named after his great-grandmother

ON THE GRAND TOUR ?

From the Register of the 'Bella Tola', St. Luc, Switzerland, 1859 - 1912

"1899 July 12th. GEORGE I. SWINNERTON. Kingston on Thames"

(ex L. J. Levens who says the book is a remarkable work with entries in English, French, German and Pitman Shorthand - prose, verse and sketches.)

ANOTHER 'TWIG' ON THE TREE

We welcome NICHOLAS FREDERICK SWINNERTON born Saturday, 20th September 1975, son of BARRIE and MARGARET Swinnerton and a brother to PHILIP.

STAFFORDSHIRE DIRECTORIES (5)

DIRECTORY & GAZETTEER OF STAFFORDSHIRE WITH DUDLEY IN WORCESTERSHIRE

		By Harrison, Harrod & Co.		1861
<u>TIPTON</u> -	SWINNERTON, William.	Chemist	Princes End	
<u>THORPE CONSTANTINE</u> -	SWENNERTON	Isaac	Farmer	(IS. 2)
<u>STANDON</u> -	SWINNERTON	John	Farmer	
<u>SWINNERTON</u> -	SWINNERTON	Eliza	Farmer	
<u>BEACH</u> -	SWINNERTON	Charles	Blacksmith	(CS. 4)
<u>KNIGHTON</u> -	SWINNERTON	James	Blacksmith	(JS. 102)
<u>COTES</u> -	SWINNERTON	Thomas	Blacksmith, Slindon	(TS. 43)
<u>HIGH OFFLEY</u> -	SWINNERTON	Francis	Blacksmith, etc.	(FS. 12)
<u>BETLEY</u> -	SWINNERTON	James	Bricklayer	(JS. 85)
		William	Grocer	(WS. 24)