

The Escutcheon,

Journal of the Cambridge University Heraldic & Genealogical Society

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A message from the President

A successful C.U.H.& G.S. year has ended with the customary round of social and official activities. The single speaker meeting of the term was given by Mr Robert Yorke, Archivist of the College of Arms. This was followed quickly by the 1999 Annual General Meeting held this year in the Thirkill Room at Clare College. The meeting was particularly well attended, not only by members of the Committee, but also by more far flung members of the Society. We enter the new academic year with an enlarged Committee: please see page 24 for details.

The Easter Term Outing, to Sir Conrad Swan's Heraldic Garden at Boxford House, Suffolk, was both well attended and successful: please see page 25 for a full account of this visit. The Accession Banquet followed a week later, at St Catharine's College. Our return there was a consequence of the success of the Forty-Eighth Dinner in March 1998, and we are again grateful to the catering staff of St Catharine's for their support. The final event of the year was the Annual Garden Party on Wednesday 19th June, the success of which was due, in no small part, to the favourable weather conditions.

I would like to convey my thanks to the President and Committee for 1998 to 1999 for all their hard work and support. I would also like to welcome the new Committee for 1999 to 2000 who are at present planning the important fiftieth year of the Society.

Rohan Stewart-MacDonald

Back to the future:

European Heraldry after Communism

Toby A H Wilkinson, MA, PhD

Introduction

Ten years ago, in the late summer and autumn of 1989, the world witnessed the collapse of Communist regimes across central and eastern Europe, as the ripples of glasnost and perestroika spread far beyond the borders of Mikhail Gorbachev's Soviet Union. Two years later the USSR itself disintegrated, and the fifteen former constituent republics achieved independence as new nations. These two great upheavals in recent European history gave birth to fledgling new democracies whose rejection of Communism was accompanied by a rejection of its symbols. The newly-liberated countries of central and eastern Europe sought to express their regained sovereignty through the use of traditional national emblems. Many countries consciously returned to the heraldry of their pre-Communist past. This article investigates the fascinating subject of national heraldry in post-Communist Europe.

Hungary

The great political upheaval of 1989 began in Hungary, when its government allowed holidaying East Germans to cross into Austria and freedom. Thus began an exodus which eventually resulted in the fall of the Berlin Wall. Like most countries of the Warsaw Pact, Hungary had suffered from a national coat of arms designed by Communist apparatchiks: red banners proclaiming 'Troletariat of the world unite!' or significant dates in the Communist revolution, sheaves of wheat, symbols of a glorious Communist future surmounted by the red star. Hungary was the first European country to abandon this overtly ideological national symbolism in favour of its historic coat of arms, banished since 1945.

The national arms of Hungary show Hungary ancient (barry Arg and Gu) impaling Hungary modern (Gu on a mount in base Vert and issuant from a crown Or a patriarchal cross Arg). crowned by the crown of St Stephen, Hungary's patron saint. The crown - with which all kings of Hungary were crowned, up to and including HIM Emperor Karl I of Austria-Hungary in 1916 - has an interesting history. It suffered an attempted robbery in the eighteenth century, during which the cross was bent. The crown has been depicted in this curious form ever since, as a symbol of the unbreakable spirit of Hungarian nationhood. The crown was spirited out of Hungary by its keepers at the end of the Second World War. It found its way to the U.S.A.. and was only returned to Hungary by President Jimmy Carter in 1979. Twenty years later it still stands as proud reminder of Hungarian independence.

Poland

The roots of Communism's overthrow may be traced to the establishment of the free trade union. Solidarity, in Poland at the beginning of the 1980s. Unusual among eastern European countries, Poland retained its ancient arms (Gu an eagle displayed Arg) throughout the Communist era. Since 1989, the crown has been restored to the eagle's head, not as a symbol of royalty - although, the Polish monarchy was never abolished - but as a symbol of sovereignty.

The Baltic States

To the north-east of Poland, the three Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - illegally annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940, and liberated from the Soviet yoke before the formal dissolution of the USSR - provide wonderful examples of how ancient heraldic devices can be used to re-establish a sense of non-political national identity.

The arms of Lithuania (Gu a vytis proper holding a shield Az charged with a double cross Or) are widely used in the new republic, not least on its postage stamps and coins. The principal charge is a vytis (Lithuanian for "defender"), or armoured knight on a charger. The double-barred cross on his shield recalls the Lithuanians' conversion to Christianity in 1385, under the terms of a treaty with Poland, whereby the Lithuanian Grand Duke Jogaila became King Wladislaw n Jagiello of Poland and united the two crowns. From the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries, the arms of Poland and Lithuania were displayed together on a quartered shield.

The arms of Latvia - also found on coins in the new republic - date back to the period of Latvian independence between the two world wars. The three quarterings represent the three provinces of the country: Latgale in the north-east (Az a rising sun Or); Kurzeme or Courland in the south-west (Arg a lion rampant sinister Gu); and Vidzeme in the south-east (Gu a griffin segreant holding in its dexter forepaw a sword erect Arg). The three stars of the crest have the same symbolism, and are held aloft by the colossal statue of Latvian independence in central Riga, once again accessible to the public since 1991.

Northern Estonia was conquered by the Danish king, Valdemar n Sejr, in 1219-20 and his arms, minus the crowns, were adopted as the arms of Tallinn; later they came to symbolise the entire country (Or three lions passant guardant in pale Az). An Estonian law, passed in parliament on 7 Aug 1990, specifies not only the shape of the shield ("baroque") but even the colour of the lions' eyes (Arg). According to the Estonian interpretation of the arms, the three lions are now said to stand for the three great struggles in the fight for Estonian self-determination: "ancient times", 1343, and 1918-20. This is a good example of how ancient heraldry can be re-interpreted to give it modern relevance.

Romania and Moldova

Following the execution of Nicolae Ceaucescu on Christmas Day 1989, the government of Romania restored the country's former royal arms, as borne by King Mihai I before his illegal overthrow in 1947, but shorn of the overt trappings of royalty (the eagle's crown and the black-and-white inescutcheon of the royal house of Hohenzollern). On an Azure shield, the principal charge of an eagle displayed Or holding a sword and sceptre, is itself charged with an inescutcheon of five quarterings. The full achievement presents a fine example of inclusive national heraldry, whereby each region of the country is represented by its own quartering. The first quarter shows the arms of Wallachia or south-eastern Romania (Az between a sun and moon an eagle displayed Or beaked and membered Gu, holding in its beak a cross formy fitchy of the second). The second quarter represents Moldavia, or north-eastern Romania (Gu in chief a mullet of five points, and between a sun and moon an auroch's head Or). The sun, moon and star are ancient symbols dating back to the Roman occupation of Dacia. The third quarter stands for the Banat of Severin and Oltenia in the south-west, the fourth quarter for Transylvania north and west of the Carpathian Mountains, and the fifth quarter (two gold dolphins on a blue field) for Dobruja, south of the Danube Delta.

The arms of Moldavia are also used, in a modified and highly stylised version by the former Soviet republic of Moldova (an artificial creation of Stalin's, composed of the former Roumanian province of Bessarabia and the Russian-speaking area of Trans-Dniester). The shield is divided per fess into Gules and Azure; the auroch's head is heavily stylised, its ears reduced to mere lozenges; and the sun appears more like a five petalled flower. The Moldovans emphasise the fact that the sword held by the eagle in the Romanian arms is replaced in the Moldovan version by an olive branch. This is intended to demonstrate the peace-loving nature of the Moldovans (but misinterprets the sword in the Romanian arms, which is a symbol of royal authority, not of belligerence).

Bulgaria

Like Poland, Bulgaria retained its traditional arms (Gu a lion rampant Or) throughout the post-war period. Despite the re-establishment of Bulgarian sovereignty, the lion's crown has not yet been restored. Perhaps this is because King Simeon II of Bulgaria still enjoys considerable support, and to restore a royal symbol to the national arms might be mis-construed as a step towards the restoration of the monarchy.

Yugoslavia

The disintegration of the former Yugoslavia has dominated our news bulletins for most of the last decade. One little-known aspect of these dramatic events has been an explosion of heraldic re-discovery, as the constituent republics have sought to

express their distinct identities through the use of national symbols. What remains of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia - the republics of Serbia and Montenegro - has re-adopted the formal royal arms of Yugoslavia, as used by King Petar n and his Karageorgevic forebears, with certain modifications. The main arms (Gu a double-headed eagle displayed Arg beaked and membered Or) have been retained; but the quarterings of the inescutcheon have been amended. The three quarterings of the royal arms, representing Serbia, Croatia and Carniola, have been replaced by four quarterings for Serbia (first and fourth) and Montenegro (second and third). The arms of Serbia (Gu a cross between four C's Arg) are very ancient. The four charges which in some illustrations resemble flints are more probably depictions of the Cyrillic letter "S" for Serbia. The arms of Montenegro seen in the new version of the inescutcheon (Gu a lion passant Or) are a modern invention. The ancient arms of Montenegro were similar to the royal arms of Yugoslavia (Gu a double-headed eagle displayed Arg), but this has been abandoned in favour of a simpler charge. The lion passant seems, ironically, to have been taken from the dynastic arms of the Petrovic family, erstwhile kings of Montenegro until 1921.

Croatia, Bosnia-Hercegovinia and Slovenia

There can be few better examples of the power of heraldry to express national identity, even in the late 20th century, than the new arms and flag of Croatia, adopted in 1991. The mediaeval arms of Croatia (chequy Arg and Gu) are surmounted by five smaller shields arranged as a five-pointed mural crown. Each of these smaller shields bears the arms of a province of the new country. Interestingly, each has an Azure field, giving great harmony to the achievement as a whole. The five shields are:-

- (1) niyria or Croatia ancient (Az in chief a mullet of six Or in base a crescent Arg)
- (2) The City of Dubrovnik (Az two bars Gu - breaking the laws of heraldry)
- (3) Dalmatia or the Adriatic coast (Az three lions' heads crowned cabossed Or)
- (4) Istria, a triangular peninsula jutting out into the Adriatic south of Trieste, once a margravate of the Austro-Hungarian empire (Az a goat statant Or armed, hooved and langed Gu)
- (5) Slavonia or north-eastern Croatia (Az a river in fess Gu bordered Arg thereon a weasel or marten passant proper beneath a six-pointed star Or). The inclusion of this last shield by the government of Croatia was no doubt intended to make a political statement, since eastern Slavonia had been occupied by Serb forces in the war of 1991 and was only handed back to full Croat control some years later. The arms of Slavonia afford a rare example of a weasel as an heraldic charge.

As a province of the Austro-Hungarian empire, Bosnia had its own coat of arms (a mailed arm holding a scimitar all on a gold field); but this may have been too closely identified with the Roman Catholic population to serve as an emblem for the multi-ethnic republic of Bosnia-Hercegovinia following its secession from Yugoslavia. Hence, the Bosnian government went back to the fourteenth century and to the first period of independence, in its search for a new national emblem.

From 1991 to 1998, the Bosnian flag displayed the coat of arms of King Steven Tvrtko, who released Bosnia from Hungarian overlordship and ruled from 1376 to 1391. The shield (Az a bend Arg between six fleur-de-lys Or) is a beautiful one, and seems to recall the royal arms of France by the inclusion of fleur-de-lys. King Steven Tvrtko claimed to be related to the kings of Hungary, who were themselves connected with the French royal house of Anjou. While this may be one explanation for the fleur-de-lys in the Bosnian arms, another more plausible suggestion is that they are stylised representations of a native Bosnian lily. During the late 1990s, the flag and shield of Bosnia-Hercegovinia became identified with the Muslim-led government. Failure to agree on a replacement design by the three Bosnian factions led the Office of the High Representative to impose a new flag on the country in 1998. Designed by a committee to please all, this ghastly new design is unlikely to please any, and is an example of vexillology at its worst.

A rather better attempt at designing a new national emblem can be seen in the arms of Slovenia. Although a Slovene coat of arms (Azure in chief three mullets Or in base a crescent Arg) existed under the old Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later styled "Yugoslavia") the newly-independent republic of Slovenia decided in 1991 to adopt an entirely new design without any historical connotations. The arms - a stylised representation of the Alpine country, with its rivers and mountains - recall the older shield but are successful in presenting Slovenia as a thoroughly modern western democracy.

The Czech and Slovak Republics

The recent heraldic history of Czechoslovakia provides the best illustration of how symbols can be combined and re-combined to reflect political changes and new national aspirations. From 1945 to 1989, Czechoslovakia was one of only three Communist-bloc countries to retain a traditional coat of arms, albeit on a strangely-shaped pentagonal shield. The main design (Gu a lion rampant queue-fourchee Arg) represented the Czech lands, anciently known as Bohemia. The other half of the country, Slovakia, lacking traditional arms, was represented by a small inescutcheon showing a golden flame against a silhouette of the Tatras mountains.

After the overthrow of Communism in 1989, Czechoslovakia adopted the traditional heraldic solution for a country of two nations: a shield of four quarters, the first and fourth representing Bohemia (with the golden crown restored to the lion), and the second and third standing for Slovakia. For this purpose a new shield was devised for Slovakia (Gu on a mount of three copeaux in base Az a patriarchal cross Arg). These are based closely on the arms of Hungary (modern), reflecting the fact that, until the end of World War I, the Slovak lands were part of the Kingdom of Hungary. In the Slovak version, the colours have been altered to the pan-Slavic white, red and blue.

The "velvet revolution" of 1989 was followed, shortly afterwards, by the "velvet divorce", and the two halves of Czechoslovakia went their own ways. Slovakia has

retained its new arms, and these are prominently displayed on its national flag. The coat of arms adopted by the Czech Republic is an exemplar for other countries to follow: it successfully combines three ancient arms in a new design, which, although entirely modern, looks suitably traditional. The new arms reflect the three provinces which make up the Czech Republic: Bohemia in the west, Moravia in the east (formely a margravate attached to the Bohemian crown), and Silesia along the Polish border. Perhaps following the pattern of the United Kingdom royal arms (which combine the emblems of three kingdoms in a quartered shield, giving prominence to England) the Czech arms give prominence to the most important province, Bohemia. Hence the Bohemian arms occupy the first and fourth quarters; the second quarter shows the arms of Moravia (Az an eagle displayed chequy Gu and Arg crowned, beaked and membered Or); the third quarter shows the arms of Silesia (Or an eagle displayed Sa crowned of the first armed and membered Gu on its breast a crosslet on a Kleestengel Arg). Interestingly the arms in the third quarter are also found on the princely shield of Liechtenstein, since the Liechtenstein family once owned extensive estates in Silesia.

Concluding remarks

Since the fall of Communism a decade ago, the countries of central and eastern Europe have embarked on a conscious programme of national renewal, shaking off the remaining vestiges of Communist rule and rediscovering their pre-Communist identities as distinctive and vibrant nations. Heraldry has been at the forefront of this process. Far from being an outdated and esoteric art, heraldry has been recognised for what it is: a powerful and eloquent symbolic vocabulary, capable of expressing a nation's links with the past and its hopes for the future. The uses (and occasional abuses) of heraldry by the countries of the former Communist-bloc have been as various as the countries themselves. Some have reverted to hallowed national arms (in the cases of Hungary and the Baltic States), some to former royal arms duly modified to suit a republican constitution (Romania). Whilst in Montenegro, a dynastic charge has been recast as a symbol of the whole nation. The crown of sovereignty has been restored to the Polish eagle and the Bohemian lion, but not to the lion of Bulgaria, perhaps for political reasons. Entirely new arms have been devised for Slovenia and Slovakia, while the arms of Croatia and the Czech Republic demonstrate the enduring power of ancient devices in new and inventive combinations. Only in the sad case of Bosnia has heraldry been banished as a symbol of national identity: not by the Bosnians themselves, but by the international community. ""He who controls the past controls the future": the history of Europe in the last decade of the twentieth century tells us that ancient symbols can still have modern relevance and resonance. In their use of heraldry, the newly liberated nations of central and eastern Europe are demonstrating the efficacy of looking back in order to embrace the future.

The Society's AGM - 1st May 1999

One of the main items on the agenda of the Annual General Meeting, which was held at Clare College, was to elect new Officers and Committee for the year 1999-2000. The meeting took the opportunity of expanding the membership of the Committee by creating some new functional posts. One of these was a Publicity & Recruiting Officer, in response to the need for a sustained recruitment effort during the Society's fiftieth year and beyond. Another was to formalise the post of World Wide Web Officer giving the holder publicity on the Society's Year-card, thereby emphasising the way current information technology is being utilised to serve the Society's best interests.

The meeting was pleased to welcome these and other new members to the Committee as well as to re-elect a number of senior members who, in some cases, have served for many years. There was regret that Mr Tim Cockenll. JP, was standing down as a Town Committee Member but we are most grateful to him for his devotion to, and support of, the Society. The composition of the new committee is as follows:-

President	Mr Rohan Stewart MacDonald
Acting Secretary	Miss Camilla Haggett
Membership Secretary	Dr Richard Marquis-Hirsch
Senior Treasurer	Dr Gordon Wright
Junior Treasurer	Mr Robin Millerchip
London Representative	Dr Austin Dunn
Publicity & Recruitment Officer	Mr Timothy Milner
World-Wide Web Officer	Dr John Horton
University Committee	Dr Toby Wilkinson
University Committee	Mr William Edwards
Town Committee	Mrs Eve logon
Town Committee	Mrs Isobel MacDonald-Robertson
FFHS Liaison Officer	Mr Derek Palgrave
Librarian and Archivist	Mr Nicholas Rogers

Changes were proposed to the Society's Constitution (full details available from the President) There were discussions relating to the programme of events for the fiftieth year and a report from the Treasury on the Society's financial position, which as a result of meticulous accounting, remains stable. However, it was pointed out that more revenue needed to be sought from membership subscriptions to prevent an undue reliance on donations from Honorary Members. Hopefully this matter will be addressed by next year's recruitment drive, announced at the Forty- Ninth Annual Dinner in March.

(More details of the proceedings of the AGM are available from the President.)

Easter Term Outing to Boxford House

Saturday, 29th May, 1999

This year the Society visited Sir Conrad Swan's Heraldic Garden at Boxford House in Suffolk. The garden was established by Sir Conrad, then York Herald of Arms and subsequently Garter Principal King of Arms, and his late wife. The Lady Hilda Swan. Since the tragic death of Lady Hilda in 1995 the Heraldic Garden was opened to the public in her memory.

Attendance at the outing was pleasingly high, partly due to the interesting prospect of a visit to Boxford House itself and to the availability of transport provided by Mr Arthur Henderson of St John's College, Cambridge, one of the Society's most recent new members. The week after the outing and during the Accession Banquet at St Catharine's College, a small presentation was made to Mr Henderson in recognition of his important contribution.

We arrived in Boxford towards the middle of the afternoon, which allowed us time for a visit to the village church as well as for some exploration of the actual village of Boxford. St Mary's Church dates from the fifteenth century, although there is some evidence of a church on the site some 200 years earlier. The clock, on the east face of the tower, restored in 1977 to mark the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, is one of the church's important features. Another is the wooden north porch dating from the fourteenth century, with its very fine tracery and panelling, it is considered to be one of the best in the country. On entering the church through the south door one is confronted by the ornate seventeenth century cupboard type font cover with its hinged folding doors painted with passages from the scriptures. There is also a delightful eighteenth century pulpit incorporating a staircase with finely twisted balusters. The main structure of the building is in the perpendicular style with clerestory, aisles and chancel chapels.

At 6-00 p m we made our way to Boxford House for the main part of the outing. Sir Conrad began with an illustrated talk providing us with the heraldic background to the subsequent tour of this unique garden, the design of which embodied typically English aesthetic ideals. Rather than being presented with an orderly panorama, as in the French tradition, here one experienced permutations of the unexpected including thickets, fountains, enclosed areas and even live animals, all illustrating the enormous representational breadth of heraldry. We were indeed fortunate that the weather held for just long enough for us to enjoy an uninterrupted viewing of the garden, although distant thunder hastened the retreat indoors.

Following the interesting tour. Sir Conrad's hospitality extended even further when we were invited to meet members of his family. On behalf of the President and Committee of the Society, I presented to Sir Conrad a copy of the Cambridge Armorial as a gesture of our thanks for his generosity at every stage of our visit.

then adjourned for supper to The Fleece public house back in the village where the proprietors made us most welcome.

Next year we look forward to an extended series of outings. Two have been arranged for the Michaelmas Term both to venues within Cambridge, but there will be visits to the Society of Genealogists and St George's Chapel, Windsor, in the Lent and Easter terms respectively. Please give these your support.

Rohan Stewart-MacDonald

Book Reviews

British Genealogical Books in Print, 160 pp ISBN 1 86006 095 1 (£8-95) & **British Genealogical Microfiche**, 124pp, ISBN 1 86006 100 1 (£8-50) both in A5 paperback compiled by Stuart A Raymond and published by the Federation of Family History Societies (Publications) Ltd, Birmingham, 1999.

Using his many years experience as a librarian. Stuart Raymond has been responsible for a very comprehensive series of bibliographies in the field of genealogy and related topics. Many of his titles concentrate on the literature associated with a particular county or group of counties, but in these two volumes he offers us listings of a representative selection of more general works which have been published, not only in book form, but also in microform. The principal criterion for listing, in each case, is current availability.

Both books tackle their subject matter in the same way by basing the selection of titles on three distinct categories: those published by commercial and private publishers, those published by societies and those produced by Libraries and Record Offices. All the titles are grouped by publisher but very full indexes are provided covering subject matter, family names, authors and placenames. In fact each of the indexes occupies around 25 of the contents.

To ensure that all the references relate to books which are genuinely current, all publishers have been circularised with detailed questionnaires. In practice this has led to some inconsistencies as not all of those who had been circularised provided all the information requested. However the author does point out that several publishers have their own web sites so readers can verify the necessary details.

For anyone relatively new to the study of genealogy, family history and their associated disciplines Stuart Raymond's new compilations are ideal. He draws our attention to titles which outline the use of all the appropriate archive resources such as the Family Records Centre, the Public Record Office and the numerous local authority repositories, libraries, etc. He also provides an extensive listing of titles

which are devoted to specific categories of archive such as church registers, probate records, manor court rolls, maps, taxation records and many others. Although the emphasis is on the more general genealogical works, there are also plenty of references to books related to particular geographical areas and also to a somewhat limited selection of family names.

Gaining an appreciation of the literature associated with any new field of research can be a somewhat time-consuming experience. However Stuart Raymond has provided us with some reliable short-cuts at a reasonable price and in a very convenient format.

Derek A Palgrave

A Basic Approach to Making Contact with Relatives; *Peter C Amsden, FFHS Publications) Ltd, Birmingham, 1999. 16pp, A5, paperback. ISBN 1 86006 099 4 £1-50*

Genealogical research, like any other form of historical research, requires access to evidence. More often than not, we tend to assume that the most obvious evidence is found in documents and that we probably need to travel to official archive repositories in order to accumulate the necessary details. Of course, in practice, it is much more convenient to study the documents and ephemera already in the hands of the family.

Nowadays, because families are widely scattered, the process of gathering together things like certificates, letters, diaries, photographs, family bibles, etc depends on being able to make contact with a large number of relatives, each of whom may have some unique evidence which has been passed on from earlier generations. In this booklet, Peter Amsden suggests a practical strategy which will enable the researcher to make a successful approach to very distant and occasionally hostile relatives.

He gives advice on the use of directories and electoral rolls to locate the addresses of those distant cousins whom you have never met. He stresses that even when you know their telephone numbers, it is often better to write in order to introduce yourself. Techniques including letters to local newspapers, appeals on local radio and postcards in post office windows have been used effectively but on the whole it is better not rush the process,

There is sound advice for everyone, not only for those who are starting to trace their ancestry, but also for those who have been involved in research for several years. The author is to be congratulated on distilling so much excellent common sense into this remarkable publication.

Derek A Palgrave

[Books published and distributed by the Federation, such as those reviewed above may be purchased from the Society. Please contact the Editor for details]

Forthcoming Conferences and Other Events

Public Record Office Summer School

12-16 July, 1999

Non-residential, practical course

(For details write to James Guthrie, PRO, Kew. TW9 4DU)

Weekend Conference - NW Kent FHS

3-5 September, 1999

incorporating FFHS Council Meeting

Greenwich University, Avery Hill

Conference Theme: 'Time and Tide'

Family History Fair

25-26 September, 1999

organised by the Society of Genealogists

National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham

North Western Family History Fair

30 October, 1999

organised by local family history societies

Preston

9th British Family History Conference

Revised Date

hosted by Wiltshire FHS

12-16 April 2000

incorporating FFHS AGM & Council Meeting

University of Bath

East Anglian Group Conference

1 July 2000

hosted by Huntingdonshire FHS

Editor's Postscript

I would like to offer a warm welcome to new readers of The Escutcheon. Please note that it is your magazine to which I hope you will contribute news items, articles about genealogy and heraldry, book reviews, queries and comments.

Derek A Palgrave

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