

The 2005 Christmas Quiz

Composed, with a sense of fun, for the erudite readers of the Baronage eMagazine

Now with added answers!



The Baronage Press

Instructions

In accordance with a tradition stretching all the way back to 2003, we here present the 2005 Christmas entertainment. For some newcomers we may need to explain that it is a quiz, not an examination, which is to say that it is intelligence and lateral thinking which should produce most answers, rather than an encyclopædic knowledge of heraldry, genealogy and history. (Of course, Google can be very helpful.)

Candidates who remember the 2003 Quiz will doubtless recall that few of the questions were as flippant or as superficial as first appeared, and those who wish to examine (or to re-examine) the 2004 Quiz (available online with the answers at <http://www.baronage.co.uk/2004quiz.html>) will probably agree that although more effort had been made there to appease those who insist that heraldry is a serious study, in general the overall approach was based on heraldry being fun. We have tried to continue that approach this year.

Each question notionally carries ten marks. When the answers are published on 31st January, candidates who have scored over eighty should consider themselves qualified to sit the 2006 Midsummer Quiz (for which significant prizes will be awarded to the most successful entrants), and should submit their names.

Question 1

- (a) The designers of the flag of the European Union reportedly avoided the inclusion of a cross because it was believed to have a significance some Muslims might find offensive. However, the chosen circle of twelve golden mullets on a blue field could be even more controversial. Why?

- (b) A very famous international charity based in Switzerland has recently announced that the three emblems most widely associated with its humanitarian work have been supplemented by a fourth. There is an unpublicised and perhaps unrecognised geometric link between two of these four emblems. What is it?

Question 2

A basic principle of good heraldic art is that charges should fill the space available without overcrowding it. Give one example of when this principle may be said to be always and necessarily ignored.

Question 3

These are the pronominal arms of three families which share an unusual characteristic. What is it?



(The shield on the right may mislead readers who have seen the *annulet Or stoned Azure* illustrated elsewhere, as it is mistakenly too often, as a *gem-ring Or stoned Azure*, so that the blue “stone” tops the ring as if it were a jewel.)

Question 4

Whose neatly decapitated charge was recently placed on public view in a scruffier guise?

Question 5

These three illustrations are linked by a specific word used in the three phrases that would describe them. What is that word?



Question 6

“What’s the point?” asked the politician for whom history meant nothing in this brave new millenium.

“That’s the point,” responded the herald, his index finger stabbing the open page of the book he held.

“But what’s a point-in-point?” his secretary queried later. “Someone asked on a heraldry forum.”

Well, what is a point-in-point? And if you saw one, what tincture would it most probably be?

Question 7

Until the second half of the last century the brides of most armigers wore white on their wedding day and in respect of their relations with young ladies of their own class the bridegrooms tended to be virginal too. Thus traditional honeymoons could have been perhaps more interesting than those enjoyed today.



Bearing that in mind, and remembering especially that in a substantial proportion of early heraldry the use of dreadful puns (known as “canting heraldry”) is often found, link the previous sentence to the picture.

(This question is included for those newcomers to the study of heraldry who might otherwise score zero points. Experts who wish to query the charge of a mullet of **seven** points on the trappings may be interested to know that the illustration is inspired by Sir Thomas Holme’s Book, a mid-15th century roll in the British Museum, in which a seven-pointed mullet appears on a knight’s arms. Sir Thomas Holme was Clarenceux King of Arms 1476-94.)

Question 8

If a silver shield bore *a chief cousu*, of what tinctures might it be?

Question 9

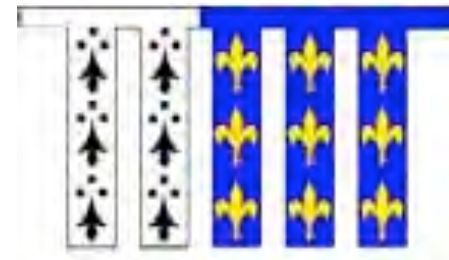
Whose arms are these? Some readers will recognise them immediately, others may deduce their origin from their blazon, some may see a connection to a famous Irish playwright contentiously alleged to be of Scots descent, and one or two may perhaps think of the snows of yesteryear (“*les neiges d’antan*”).



Question 10

Which famous life peer debruised his arms with this five-point label?

(His fame is not wholly unconnected with the subject of the previous question.)



The editorial staff of The Baronage Press wish all their readers a Very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous and Successful 2006.

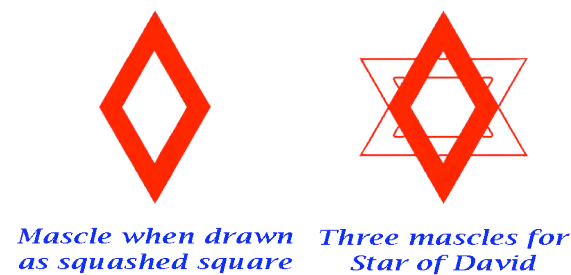
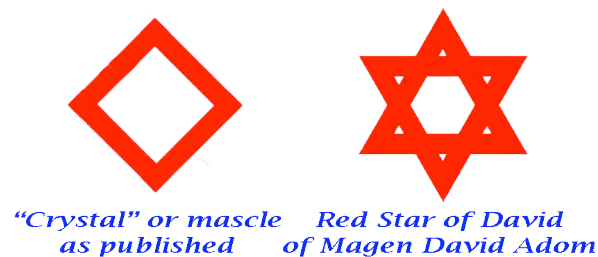
The Answers

The Christmas Quiz is not an examination: it is a quiz, which means that the questions are not intended to be difficult, but to tease. Great heraldic knowledge is not necessary — a fair grasp of the basics plus the ability to use the Internet should ensure that most readers score more than the pass mark. Of course, those who have read the pages on the Baronage website may find some questions very easy.

Visitors to the Baronage website should be aware that its pages have accumulated over a ten year period, and that most were designed for older versions of the browsers now in use. Accordingly, much of the text will appear in modern browsers two sizes too large, and readers should reduce their text settings (usually with CTRL-minus or, with a Mac, with CMD-minus). This allows the text to align neatly with the graphics. In 2006 the new pages will be formatted for the newer versions of the browsers.

Answer 1

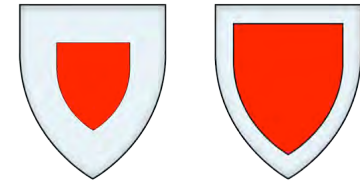
(a) This is a rather sensitive matter, as those who knew the answer were already aware. The EU flag began as a flag intended for the Council of Europe, and when Turkish objections ruled out the intended cross a committee was appointed to examine alternatives. The discussions that followed produced the circle of twelve gold mullets, agreed by the European Community, now the European Union, in 1986, but the designer, Arsène Heitz, later declared that the flag symbolised the Blessed Virgin Mary. The flag was formally adopted by the Council of Europe on 8th December 1955, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, in Strasbourg Cathedral.



(b) The Red Cross has long had problems with its emblems. Its name and its first badge were derived from the Swiss flag (*Gules a cross couped Argent*), that of its host country, by the simple act of reversing the tinctures. Muslim countries that later joined the organisation preferred to use a crescent, and the Israeli equivalent was a red Star of David. However, arguments about the symbols have reached the point where not only is the Star of David unacceptable in many Muslim states, so also is the simple cross (hated by some as a Christian symbol). Accordingly, the organisation has introduced a fourth symbol, described as a crystal but effectively a mascle, which is to be used wherever the cross or star is unacceptable. (Yes, the mascle, as usually drawn, is almost a fusil voided, but as a fusil it would spoil the geometry of the question.)

Answer 2

When emblazoning such arms as *Argent an escutcheon Gules* (Constable of Flanders), filling the space available would produce *Gules a bordure Argent*.



Answer 3

This question was about three Scottish baronetcy families and featured the pronominal arms of Dalyell of the Binns, the pronominal arms of Dunbar of Hempriggs within their bordure vairy, and the arms of Maxwell of Pollock (later quartered by Stirling-Maxwell of Keir).



The unusual characteristic shared by these three families is that their baronetcy titles can pass through a female line. The mother of the eminent Parliamentarian, Tam Dalyell (who is the 11th Baronet but does not use the title), was the 10th holder of the title and is listed as “*de jure* Baronetess of the Binns” in the peerage directories. The title had previously passed through the female line in the early 18th century. The mother of the present Dunbar of Hempriggs baronet had similarly been recognised as the Baronetess, and this title too had passed earlier through a female line. The Maxwell of Pollock baronetcy passed to William Stirling-Maxwell of Keir, 9th Baronet, through his mother who pre-deceased the 8th Baronet.

The parenthetical note distinguishing between *an annulet Or stoned Azure* and *a gem-ring Or stoned Azure* which accompanied this question disappointingly prompted only two reactions, the second being from a kinsman who jokingly chided that our readers might judge the distinction too provocative by far. (Heaven forbid !). The first response, however, had more substance and deserves a substantial answer for which this is not an appropriate setting. Accordingly, under the heading of “Annulets and Gem-rings”, an article discussing their confusion will appear in the *Baronage* pages in February.

Answer 4

The principal charge of the paternal arms of the Duchess of Cornwall is a boar's head couped, which is to say that it has been decapitated with a neat cut, and these arms are what she was entitled to bear on a lozenge. However, on her marriage to the Prince of Wales she was granted new arms in which the boar's head is erased, which is to say that it has been decapitated with a ragged, scruffy cut. The Duchess's father, being Scottish, follows the national tradition of such charges being usually couped, while the College of Arms in London has in its grant followed its own tradition. Of course, there may well be another factor at work here ~ heralds regranteeing arms from another jurisdiction do like to symbolise their authority by making a small change. (The boar's head erased may be seen here in the Duchess's impaled arms as painted by the College.)



Answer 5

This was intended to be an easy question, with the simplest route to the answer through the picture in the centre ~ which is, of course, the cap of a **Baron** Baillie. The two eagle's feathers point to the **Baron** of Beef (two sirloins joined to the backbone), and the armorial style is known as **Baron** and Femme.



Some additional details may be appropriate here. The achievement is obviously of the arms of the Prince of Wales impaling the new arms of the Duchess of Cornwall, and this style, termed “**baron** and femme”, is known thus whatever the rank of the bearers. The Prince is, of course, the Baron of Renfrew, but that is in this respect irrelevant.

The choice of the two eagle’s feathers to indicate the location of the **baron** of beef was determined by an argument, recently advanced on an Internet forum, to the effect that a feudal baron is equivalent to a clan chieftain !!!!!!! and that as a clan chieftain was entitled to wear two eagle’s feathers in his cap, so also could a feudal baron !!!!!!! (Some readers looking at this picture may think it rather a lot of bull. Quite so.)

Question 6

This was easy to solve with the help of Google. A *point-in-point* (not necessarily hyphenated) is an abatement of honour and, when associated with cowardice, or sloth in battle, is said to have been *Sanguine*.

The existence of abatements anywhere outside the imagination of a few heraldic writers has been much debated. Most modern commentators pour scorn on the idea, but here and there historians find indications that in addition to the awful physical fate that dishonour could bring in the Middle Ages there may have been armorial penalties. Shakespeare appears possibly to have thought so. There will be an article on the subject published in the *Baronage* pages in February.



Point-in-point

Answer 7

The question warned readers that traditional puns were awful. In fact, they are usually at the level of those found in Christmas crackers (such as “a bun is the lowest form of wheat”) ~ but this was a Christmas quiz, and so most candidates will have realised that the honeymoon answer is “a succession of early (k)night”.

Answer 8

This was a straight heraldry knowledge question which possibly needed a little imagination. Following the usual rule of metal on colour and colour on metal (and ignoring furs, of course), a metal chief ought to go on a coloured field and vice versa. If both field and chief are of metal, or both are of a colour, then obviously the chief must be said to be alongside the field, as if sewn to it, and thus is *a chief cousu*. So if the field is of silver, the *chief cousu* must be of gold (for if it were of a fur or of a colour then it would be on the field, not alongside it). Gold and silver, as in the question, cannot really be stitched together, and thus a more appropriate albeit lesser known term would be *soudé*, which means the metals would be soldered together.

Answer 9


The readers who recognised these arms immediately knew them to be those of the brothers of Jeanne d’Arc.

The question would have been rather more fun for those who did not recognise them, in which case they would have been in the position of the contestants in the best of the BBC quiz shows ~ “Find the link between a coat of arms featuring lilies, a sword and a crown; and an Irish playwright allegedly of Scottish descent; and old-fashioned winters.” Then the ideas flash back and forth across the table. “George Bernard Shaw is the best known of the Irishmen – did he have Scots ancestry?” “Yes, I think so, wasn’t he supposed to be a Shaw of Rothiemurcus?” “Well, he could have been a cadet, I suppose, but would it have to be a Scottish winter?” “Rothiemurcus is in the Highlands; there used to be a lot of snow there.” “Ah, yes, snow! Old-fashioned snow – snows of yesteryear! *Les Neiges d’Antan*.” “Of course, François Villon, and the coat of arms has lilies on it. We’re looking for something French.” “Shaw wrote ‘Saint Joan’, which could not be more French, but many English and Scottish arms have lilies on their arms.” “Yes, but in that poem Villon lists his heroines, and one of them is Jeanne d’Arc.” “So we’ve linked both an Irish playwright and an old-fashioned winter to Jeanne d’Arc, but do we know her arms?” “I don’t, but I do know she did not have any, and that when the King ennobled her brothers he designed arms for them. What could have been more appropriate than French lilies, a crown and a sword?” “Right, so that’s the answer we’ll give. Agreed?”

And that is the way the successful candidates in the 2006 Midsummer Quiz will doubtless find their minds working as they Google the hours away following the trails the clues suggest.

Answer 10

Readers who never question the old political *canard* that life peerages are a modern invention may have been led astray here and then searched for a twentieth century solution. But there were life peers in the Middle Ages, and one of these, certainly “not wholly unconnected with the subject of the previous question”, was, before he was granted an hereditary peerage title, “Duke of Bedford for life”. The two label points of ermine are for his grandfather, John of Gaunt, and the three of fleurs de lys are for his great-grandfather Henry of Lancaster. He was the son of Henry IV and Regent of France when Joan of Arc was burned.



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