

The Baronage Armorial Register — An Update

FOUR DAYS after uploading our announcement of the imminent start of the long-planned Baronage Armorial Register, a posting on the website of the Heraldry Society of Scotland revealed that another was about to come online. This later news prompted long threads, on both the HSS forum and the alt.heraldry newsgroup message board, that revealed both pleasure and hostility, the latter owed to the suspicion that the intended operation, launched with the famous name of Burke's Peerage to support it, would be a vanity publication aimed at those whose arms and styles had received no recognition in any of the authoritative directories, and inspired more by the profit potential than the wish to provide a service for students of heraldry. (We have been given to understand that the suspicion is unfounded.)

The two threads were then read with great care to discover whether any of the views expressed conflicted with the planned development of the Baronage Armorial Register. Fortunately, probably owing to its limited ambitions, when the discussions eventually ended there appeared to be nothing that required any amendment to the original plans. Additionally, as the editorial rules for the use of the Burke's Peerage & Gentry International Register of Arms (as it is now to be known) entered the public domain, we learned that the two publications, ours and Burke's, would be quite different in style.

The Baronage Armorial Register is aimed at an online accumulation of the arms in 21st century use and is intended to be solely a reference for students of heraldry. Inclusion will carry no implication of nobility or gentry, although of course arms borne by members of the nobility and gentry will be recorded if they are in contemporary use. Nationals of countries whose governments have recognised bodies administering the use of heraldry will be asked to provide the relevant details to demonstrate lawful use or socially accepted use. Nationals of countries without heraldic administration and using assumed arms will be asked to provide evidence of continued use during a period of five years. (The criteria for acceptance thus tend towards emphasis on the usefulness of the information to researchers, rather than on rank or legality.)

There is to be a registration fee, but that fee is to go directly to the account of a famous British charity and will not pass through the books of The Baronage Press.

More information will be published soon on the Register's opening pages.

18th January 2006

The Editor