









Some Interesting Chiefs

Of the ways of partitioning a shield perhaps the best known is quarterly,  as here in one of the many versions of the famous de Mandeville arms, and these brief notes have been prompted by a posting on one of the heraldry forums noting that the arms of a life peer, Lord Laing of Dunphail, an eminent Scot, are similar, but by using the chief innovatively the heralds have partitioned the shield  into two one-sixth sections and two one-third sections. The innovation is however restricted to the chief's partition line being unmodified, for the early arms of Laing of that Ilk achieved the same interior proportions with an indented  chief. Variations for difference included  indentation of the palar line below the chief, but there is the probability that the one surviving ambiguous blazon was intended to continue this line into  the chief.

Another blazon noted in an early roll, *circa* 1300, is that of Ralph Perot, whose chief was dancetty. 

Many early families bore arms partitioned with an unpartitioned chief, but one of interest, FitzNicholas, had only the chief partitioned  and that quarterly. However, of the former perhaps the most intriguing to British students of heraldry are the arms of Barsham of Colkirk, a Norfolk family, whose asymmetry seems more in sympathy with continental European armory than English  (*per pale Or and Gules, a chief of the first*).

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