

Learn about heraldry and make your own

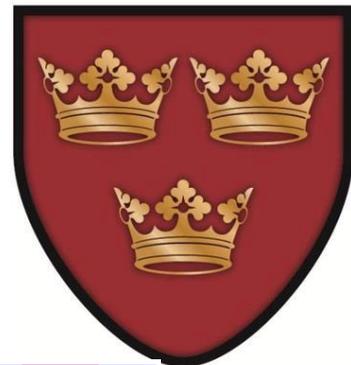
With Ely Museum

Heraldry is the name for the creation and design of a coat of arms. Coats of arms first appear in the medieval period. They were created to represent important families or organisations. Usually printed inside a shield shape they use images and colours to make a unique design. We still use coats of arms today; you might see them on buildings or on television.

Local Examples

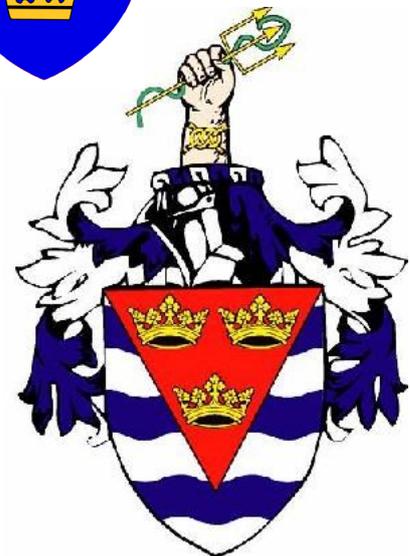
Ely Diocesan Coat of Arms

This is the oldest coat of arms related to Ely. It dates back to the 1200s and is used by the Church in the Ely diocese. It contains three crowns on a red background and each crown represents a local queen. One crown is for Etheldreda, a Saxon queen who founded a monastery in Ely, another is for her sister Sexburga who founded a nunnery at Sheppey, and the third crown is for Etheldreda's niece who took over the monastery after she died. It may be based on an even older crest for East Anglia which looks the same but with a blue background.



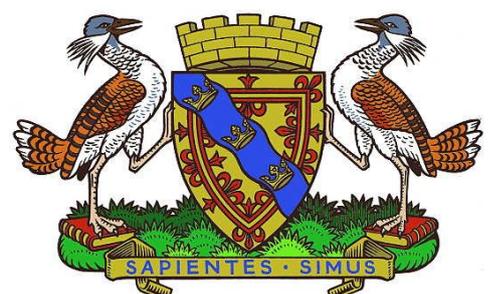
Isle of Ely

A much newer coat of arms representing the Isle of Ely. It contains the diocesan coat of arms from above but incorporates other elements. The wavy blue stripes represent Ely's waterways. A hand is holding an eel gleeve (a spear for catching eels) with an eel wrapped around it. Finally there is a Wake knot on the wrist. This represents the story of Hereward the Wake a local Anglo Saxon warrior.



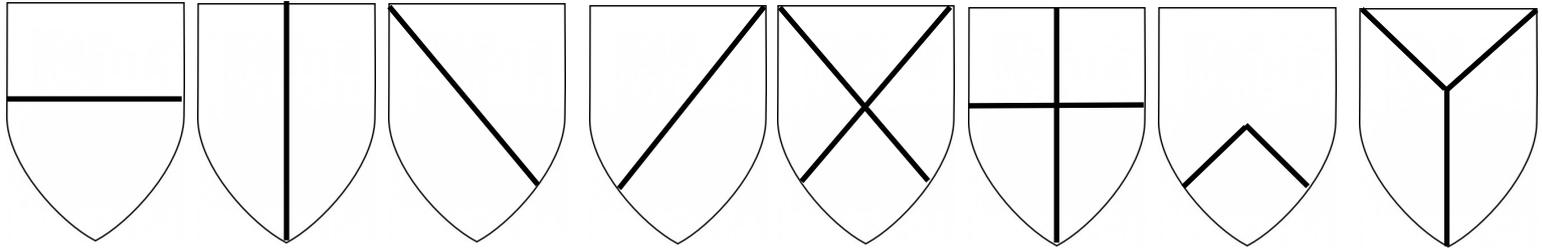
Cambridgeshire and Isle of Ely

The wavy blue line represents the River Cam with the three crowns from the Ely crest on it. Inside the crest is a Scottish design as many earls of Cambridgeshire were Scottish. The two birds are great bustards, now extinct in Britain. It is claimed that Cambridgeshire was their last English habitat. Each bird stands on a book representing the University of Cambridge. The text is in Latin 'SAPIENTES SIMUS' = Let us be people of understanding.

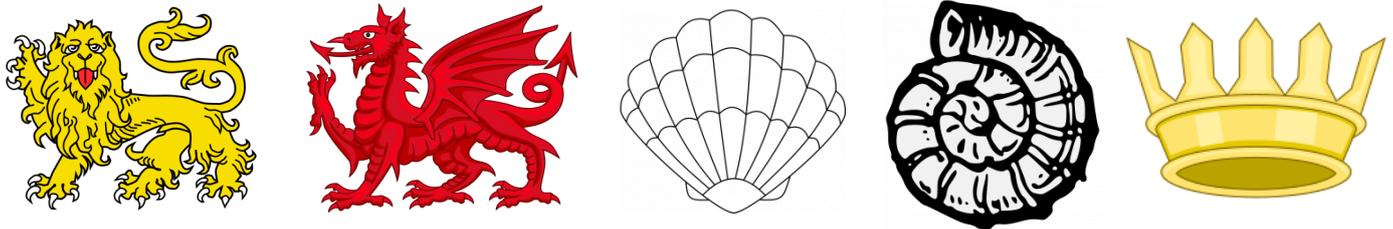


How to design your own Coat of Arms

First decide if you would like to split your coat of arms. Sometimes when two families joined together by marriage they would combine their coat of arms with each side of the split having their own design. Below are some examples of how coats of arms were split. You don't have to split your coat of arms.

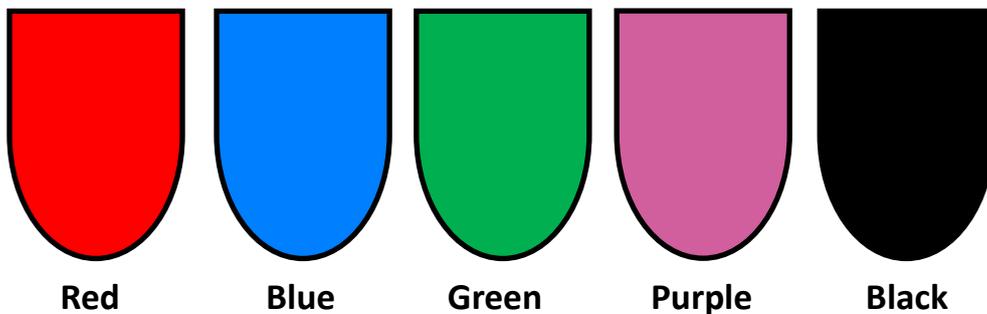


Next pick an object or objects that represents you best. If you want it could be an animal. This is known as your Charge



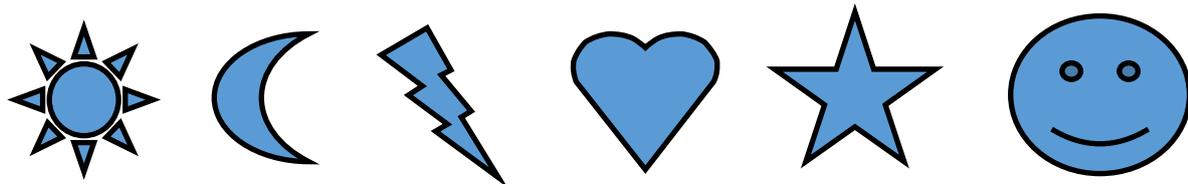
Lions and dragons were used to represent bravery. Shells were sometimes used for places near the water. Crowns were used to show a connection with royalty. It can be any object you think represents you best and it doesn't have to be an old object. Perhaps you feel a laptop represents you best! Whatever you choose draw it on your shield.

Next choose a background colour. This is known as the field. Traditionally there are 5 official colours you can use



These are the 5 official colours. They even have official names. Red = Gules, Blue = Azure, Green = Vert, Purple = Purpure and Black = Sable. However feel free to use any colour you like.

Finally add any additional patterns you like.



You can add any decoration you like - you can even add things outside the shield. Remember it must be designed to represent you.

Use the template below to design your own coat of arms

