

Chapter 4

Heraldry, Coats of Arms, Family Crests and Mottoes.

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Introduction

The Jephcott family is not of noble extraction and what heraldic devices have been found in my research, appear to have come from individuals from the family who have been knighted or who have achieved some degree of eminence - or simply of those who may have had some pretensions of nobility.

Heraldry is a highly specialised subject and I do not here propose to demonstrate my lack of knowledge. There are many books available to those of you who are interested, and your best starting point would be your local library. I have tried to explain something of the terminology used for your interest only.

Heraldry in this country really has its roots in the middle-ages and was associated with knights, jousting tournaments and the like. At the tournament, the man would be dressed in his 'coat of arms', the design of which later transferred to his shield, which would have been distinctly painted in a manner unique to the bearer. Only on his death could the same design pass to his eldest son. Younger sons had to add a difference to the design, to distinguish themselves from their brother, and this sometimes led to a kind of family tree being produced. It is probable that the heralds would have advised knights of suitably distinctive colours and devices for their shields, crests and mantles.

A knight going in to battle would not be recognisable, as his face would have been hidden from view. His shield therefore told of who he was. Over the centuries, with changing styles in armour, the bearing of arms became a symbol of adornment only and, as armigerous families intermarried, the devices on their arms were combined onto one shield, thus producing quite elaborate designs. The heralds controlled the styles used and a means of genealogical representation was possible.

Modern heraldry derives its standards from the medieval heralds. It is possible to obtain your own coat of arms, either by proving descent from an armigerous family and therefore probably using all or part of the device in your arms, or by designing your own. You need to apply to the heralds, or pursuivants, at the College of Arms in London who will then go through a lengthy procedure before a grant of arms may be given. It can be a costly exercise!

I know that Sir Bruce Jephcott (family AB) was investigating, with the College of Arms, the possibility of using the chevron and cock's heads device, as detailed later, in his own coat of arms. However, his untimely death in 1987 presumably brought that enquiry to a halt. Bruce had obtained some very old documents from the heralds, in relation to our family, although I do not know what became of them.

The information on the following pages has been extracted from various printed sources. The descriptions of arms given in some of these extracts, would enable any herald or armiger to draw up the armorial bearings completely. The language used was based on Anglo-French from the earliest days of heraldry.

Mottoes were part of the personal insignia of the individual and (in England and Ireland) were not necessarily hereditary.

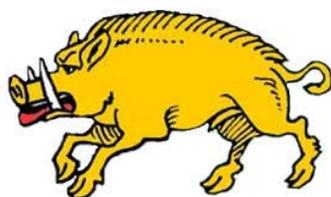
There are various organisations or individuals who offer to provide you with 'your very own coat of arms', for a modest sum. This is a very misleading offer as, all they seem to do is to consult standard reference books, which you could

just as easily consult yourself at any good library, find an example with your name, and then pass the details on to you. Of course, it is not as simple as that, as I have attempted to explain.

This whole subject is a fascinating one and it is suggested that, if you are sufficiently interested, you consult more learned works to broaden your knowledge of the subject.

The Boar Passant

The 'boar passant' has been adopted by the Jephcott Society as its crest. It is not known where this came from originally, although various reference sources shown later in this section refer to Worcester, Northampton and Ireland. Surprisingly, Warwickshire is not mentioned.



Fairbairns Book of Crests

This book gives the following references:

Jeffcott of Jephcott, Worcs, Northampton, and Ireland, A Boar Passant. 40.9.

Jeffcoat of Newlands, Rochester, Kent. A dovecote within park pales proper.

Mottoes

Dum Spiro Spero (While I Breathe I Hope)

Fortiter et celeriter (Boldly & Quickly) - Mather.

The Worcester reference most probably refers to John Jephcott (family BR) and therefore could date from the latter half of the 17th century.

The Northampton reference may refer to the early 18th century Jephcotts of Northampton, previously from Southam and previously Ansty.

The Ireland and the Middle Temple references would both refer to Sirs John and William Jeffcott from the early 19th century.

Some members of family AK have gold rings with this crest impressed, which have been used for wax sealing of documents. These rings have the motto 'Fortiter et Celeriter' inscribed beneath the crest. How old the rings are and where they came from, I have yet to discover.

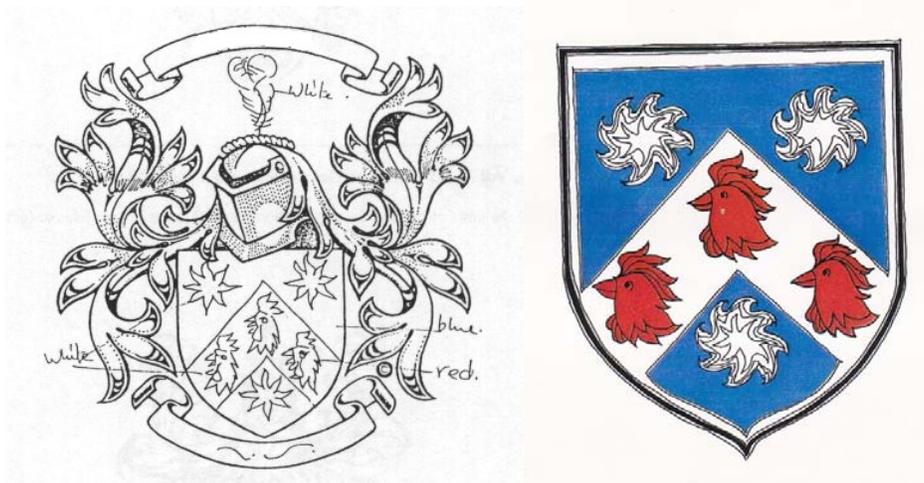
The General Armory - 1884 - Sir Bernard Burke

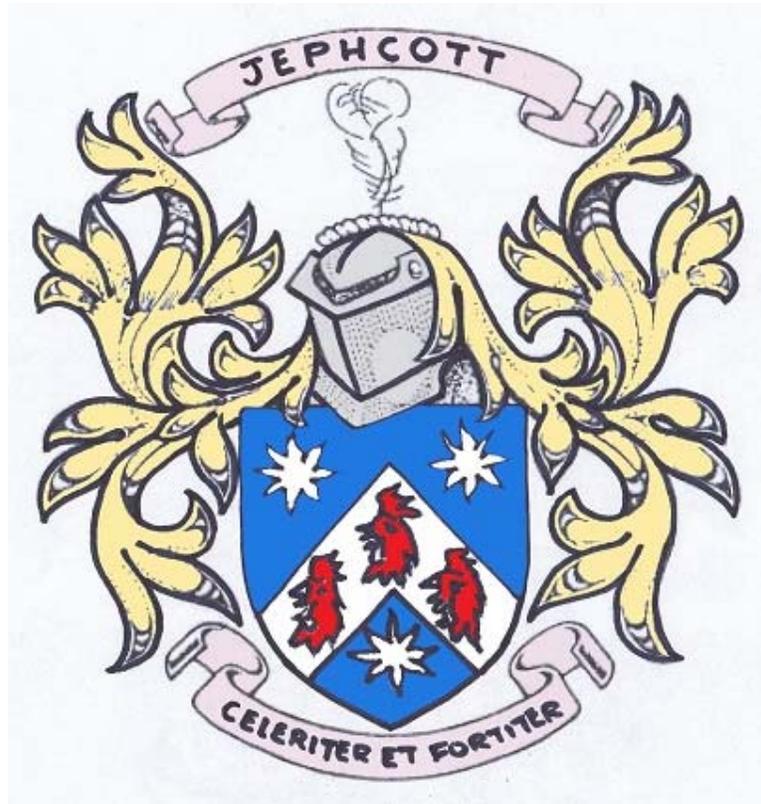
Jeffcott, or Jephcott (counties Worcester & Northampton, also the Middle Temple, London). Ermine three crescents azure on a canton gules four crosses crosslet fitchée.

Crest - A Boar Passant.

Jephcott (Evesham Co Worcester; Rev John Jephcott, DD, was Rector of All Saints, Evesham, 1681).

Azure on a chevron between three stars of eight points argent, as many cocks heads erased gules.





Debrett 1966

Sir Harry Jephcott, P.446, Illustrated Baronetage

Burkes Peerage - 1970

The following are the arms of Sir Harry Jephcott. 1st Baronet (family AD).



Armorial Families Vol 2, a Directory of Gentlemen with Coats of Arms.

The following were the arms of the late Deputy Surgeon General James Henry Jeffcoat (family AC).



Sir John William Jeffcott

(Family BJ)

The following are the arms of Sir John Jeffcott, granted by the College of Arms in 1833. Described as: *Three Crescents and on a Canton four Crosslets fitchée. A Boar passant azure armed, tusked, and bristled, and charged on the body with the Roman Fasces erect Or*

(as confirmed by the Somerset Herald, College of Arms, to Miss Helen Kemp on 6th June 1995).



(More information about the granting of these arms is to be found in Chapter 6, Family BJ.)

Key to some terms

argent	the colour silver, usually represented by white
azure	the colour blue
canton	a shield with a square section at top left
crescents	crescents
crosslet	a type of cross, refer to reference book
erased	meaning torn off, indicates a jagged neck
ermine	a variety of fur, spots black on white
fitchée	where the shaft of a cross tapers to a point
gules	the colour red
stars	stars