

Dig-ital Resource pack

Medieval Heraldry (KS1 - KS2 / Primary) (History / Art)

KEY STAGE 1-2 LESSON INFO:

A Key Stage 1-2 art history inquiry into the design and use of heraldry, in the context of medieval Buckinghamshire. This lesson focuses on symbolic heraldry, including family shields and coats of arms, associated with the archaeological site of St Mary's Church, near the village of Stoke Mandeville in Buckinghamshire. The lesson encourages students to think about the historic use of colour and symbols associated with the families of people living in Stoke Mandeville in the past.

Objectives:

- Understand the term heraldry and how coats of arms were used by people in the Medieval period
- Learn about what historic use and meaning of colours and symbols
- Discover images of heraldry from around St Mary's Church and related to Stoke Mandeville/Buckinghamshire
- Gain a basic understanding of historical art inquiry in the identification of colours, animals and symbols within images

Teacher Objectives:

To encourage thinking about how people represented themselves through heraldry in the past. Enable understanding of symbolism and the historic context of heraldic images still in use today. Encourage creative thinking and artistic expression.

Children will:

Consider what is important to them, what represents them as a person and how they could express that through pictures and colours, in line with historic reference images.

Provided resources:

Template for shield/coat of arms
Images of coats of arms associated with St Mary's Church, Stoke Mandeville.

You will need:

Printer
Colouring pencils, pens or crayons

Estimated time: 40 min

Introduction

Archaeologists are currently working on behalf of HS2 to excavate the ruins of St Mary's Church in Stoke Mandeville. They are uncovering a wealth of archaeology that will tell us more about the history and past communities of Stoke Mandeville. The church and churchyard of St. Mary's is one of the most important historical sites being investigated along the route, and we hope that the archaeological work will answer many questions about the building and its surrounding landscape.

The church of St Mary the Virgin was built in the late 11th century, shortly after the Norman Conquest in 1066. Unlike the modern church, also called St Mary's, the old church was not located in the centre of the village. Instead it stood in the middle of an agricultural landscape, on land owned by the bishop of Lincoln. Near to the church there were a number of other buildings, like barns and a mill. The mill is mentioned in the Domesday Book, which lists information about who owned land in England after the Norman Conquest.

The church was built in the bottom of a shallow valley, which was naturally very wet. People working the land in the medieval period took advantage of this, creating a number of artificial streams and ponds. These provided water to the nearby mill and were later used for growing watercress.

When the new church in the centre of Stoke Mandeville was opened in the late 1800s, St. Mary's fell into disrepair, although the churchyard continued to be used for burials until 1908. The ruins became dangerous and unstable, and the church was eventually demolished in 1966. In total the church and churchyard were used for over 800 years. The landscape around the church has evidence for even longer habitation. Excavations have also been taking place at the site of a Roman settlement to the east of the church, where buildings were arranged on either side of a central trackway. This settlement appears to have earlier Iron Age origins. High status Roman finds, such as a coin and decorated pottery, suggest that a Roman villa may have stood nearby.

As well as these packs for schools, we have a Field Museum on site, over a number of weekends over the summer. Inside the museum is a viewing platform giving a view of the ongoing excavations, as well as displays, films and interactives enabling you to explore the history of St. Mary's church and find out about archaeological discoveries in the area. Come and see the excavations, meet the archaeologists and find out more!

Learning Content: Coat of Arms in Medieval England

The use of coats of arms in England (also called heraldry) can be traced back to the early 1100s, not long after the Norman Conquest in 1066. Originally, they were used by knights to tell each other apart during battles and tournaments. Knights would have their own coats of arms painted onto their shields or parts of their armour.

Soon it wasn't just knights who had their own coats of arms. By 1250 women, merchants and many peasants had them. They didn't just appear on shields, people would have them on their clothes, houses, jewellery and even use them as adverts for their businesses! Many people in the middle ages couldn't read or write, so using pictures and symbols to represent yourself, your family or your business would have been very useful!

When people designed their coat of arms, they included pictures (symbols) which represented who they were and what they liked. Colours were also important but they didn't have the same names as colours do today - they were all in french! This is because between 1066-1413 the kings, and other important people in England, spoke French!

The Norman conquerors of England brought the French language with them as well as a lot of symbols important to the french including the *fleur de lis* (meaning flower of the lily). This floral symbol was very important to French Royals, including the Norman king of England William the Conqueror.



Before you design your own coats of arms, take a look at some of the traditional coats of arms found in Stoke Mandeville (see learning exercise 1). See if you can spot the *fleur de lis* !

Learning Exercise 1: Coat of Arms Symbol Recognition

Teacher Instructions:

Divide the class into small groups to look at the images of coats of arms that relate to St Mary's Church in Stoke Mandeville. These can either be printed out (preferably in colour) or saved and digitally sent to students. Give each group the heraldry reference sheets to help them, read through this as a class before starting.

As small groups, students should identify important symbols within the heraldry, using the reference sheet to help. They should also identify at least 3 colours used and suggest what they mean. Give each group the images to look at, and encourage them to point out the colors, animals and symbols used within the heraldry.

The aim in this exercise is for students to simply identify features within images. Identification is the basis of art-history investigation. The reference sheets are there to help them suggest meanings but do encourage creativity of thought.

After students are done looking at and identifying features within images (give them about 15 minutes), go through each image with the class. Go around the groups and ask them to point out symbols within the image or colours used. Offer them explanation to the use of colours and symbols, as stated within the teacher notes for each image.

Useful questions to prompt students:

- Why do you think a person chose those colours?
- What do those colours represent / mean?
- What animals can you see?
- Can you see any plants, flowers or trees?
- Can you spot any crowns, hats or helmets ?
- Are there any words in the coat of arms you are looking at?

Heraldry Reference Sheets

Colours:

Coats of arms contain bright colours – this is so they could be easily seen in battles. The colours also had a meaning. They showed how people thought they should behave. For example, you would want to be good friends with someone with black and blue on their coat of arms! This is because blue suggests that they are **loyal** and black suggests they are **reliable**.

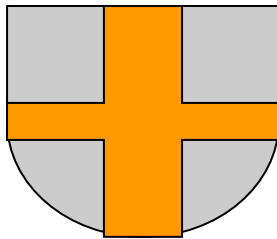
Colour	Norman / French	Meaning
Red	<i>Gules</i>	Courage
Blue	<i>Azure</i>	Loyal
Green	<i>Vert</i>	Hopeful
Black	<i>Sable</i>	Reliable
Purple	<i>Purpure</i>	Fair (also a colour for Kings and Queens)
Yellow or Gold	<i>Or</i>	Generous
Orange	<i>Tenne</i>	Determined or Enthusiastic
White or Silver	<i>Argent</i>	Peaceful

If something (like an animal or a plant) is shown in its natural colours, it is called 'Proper'.

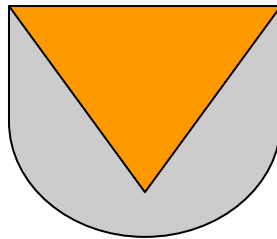
Which colours would you pick to describe yourself?

Shapes:

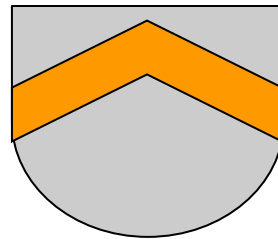
The shapes of shields were also important - the simple patterns on shields were called 'heraldic ordinaries'. They divide the shield into sections of colour. As well as a choice of these 4 common 'ordinaries', when you design your own shield, you can also divide it in half vertically, horizontally or diagonally too!



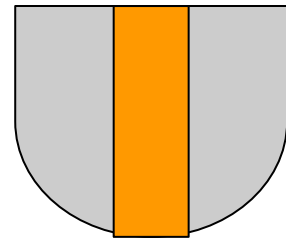
Cross



Pile



Chevron



Pale

Symbols:

Most medieval coats of arms contained many different symbols, some of these took the form of more simple shapes. These were called 'Heraldic Charges' and were added to shields or in the background of heraldry.

Shape	Meaning
Fleur de lis	Purity, Royalty
Rose / flowers	Hope, Joy, Love
Crescent	Honored by the king
Crown	Victory, Royalty
Stars	Honour, Achievement, Hope
Flames	Passion, New Energy
Sun	Glory, Brilliance, Authority

Circles	Continuity, Long lasting
Feathers (Usually the plumage of a helmet)	Obedience, Nobility

Animals -

Coats of arms often featured animals that you would have been able to see in Britain in the medieval period. For example bears used to roam the forests in some parts of England and Wales until the 1600's! like colours, animals had important meanings.

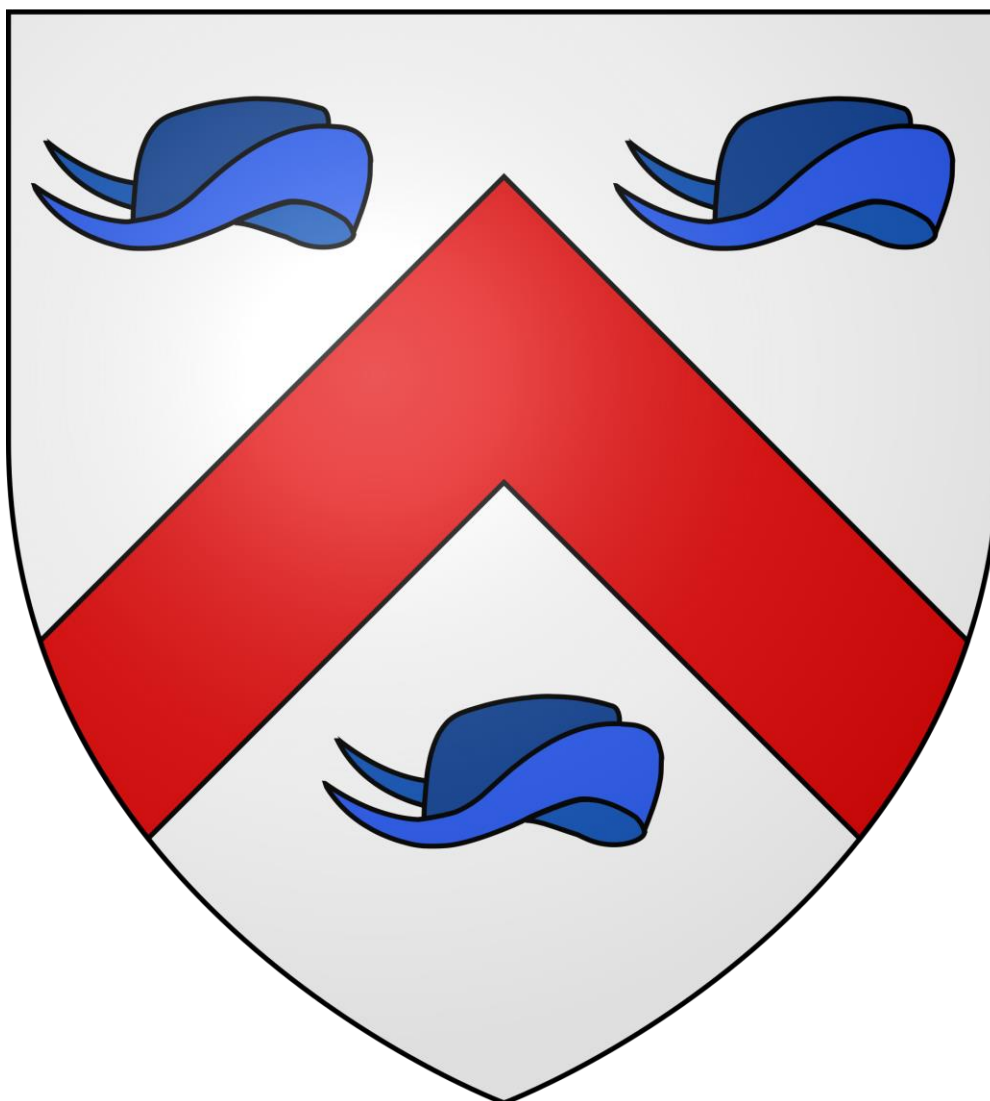
Animal	Meaning
Deer / Stag	Wisdom and long life
Lion	Bravery
Dog	Faithful and reliable
Eagle	Power and nobility
Swan	Graceful but fierce
Rabbits	Peaceful
Badgers	Endurance / 'hanging on'
Bear	Strength
Fox	Wisdom

'Fantastical' animals were also used alot by people when designing their coat of arms. Some people believed they existed, maybe because they'd heard about them in stories made up by travellers to distant lands, like crusading knights or merchant adventurers. Pictures of them also appeared in 'bestiaries', a popular kind of illustrated medieval story-book.

Animal	Meaning
Unicorn	Courage, Strength
Mermaid	Imagination, Truth

Dragon	Defender of treasure
Griffin	Power, Nobility
Pegasus	Honor, Fame

Use these sheets for both exercises 1 & 2 , print 1 per group.



TEACHER'S NOTES: This is a simplified shield from the coat of arms of the **Brudenell family**, who became the Earls of Cardigan. The Brudenell coat of arms can still partially be seen on the Brudenell monument, now in new St Mary's Church, Stoke Mandeville. The blue hats are actually a type of helmet from the 1500s! The main colours are blue, red and silver.

> There are three main colours in this shield - can your students use the reference sheet to suggest what the colours used say about the Brudenell family?

> Can your students identify the shape of 'heraldic ordinary' used in this shield?

*For more information please go to :
houseofnames.com/brudenell-family-crest*



TEACHER'S NOTES: Buckinghamshire County coat of arms. The shield is yellow, red and black with a picture of a swan wearing a crown around its neck. Above the swan is said to represent the Whiteleaf Cross; a cross-shaped chalk hill carving, with a triangular base, on Whiteleaf Hill near Princes Risborough in Buckinghamshire. The type of crown around the swan's neck in the centre of the shield is called a "ducal coronet" this is a sign of the Duke of Buckingham. It has a long gold chain attached to it. The image of the swan might also be a reference to an important local family called *de Bohun* who used it as their symbol in the middle ages. The stag deer (or BUCK) is a play on words (BUCKinghamshire). The tree represents the old woods in the Chilterns and that they used to be Royal hunting forests. The writing underneath is the county motto. It is in Latin and means "We never go backwards". There is also Christian cross on the top of the shield.

> The animals in this crest are shown in their natural colours - can your students remember what this is called?

For more information please go to : buckscc.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/council-structure/chairman-of-the-council/coat-of-arms/



TEACHER'S NOTES: Painting of the **Royal Coat of Arms** from 1700, found in St Mary's Church, Stoke Mandeville. It is a custom to show the Royal Coat of Arms in a church – this is now in New St Mary's Church, Stoke Mandeville. The Lion is wearing a crown and represents England and the Unicorn is the symbol of Scotland and wears a crown and chain around its neck- just like the swan in the Buckinghamshire coat of arms. Both are standing in a 'rampant' position standing on their hind legs. This particular version dates to the reign of William II (1056 – 1100) the third son of William the Conqueror. The 4 quarters of the central shield represents England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. The main colours are blue, red, gold and silver. Around the central shield is a belt or strap with the motto *Honi soit qui mal y pense* ("Evil to him who evil thinks"), the symbol of the Order of the Garter. The words in the banner at the bottom of the image are in old-french and read *DIEU ET MON DROIT* meaning 'God and my right': this is still the motto of the Queen of England today.

> There are three crowns and a medieval helmet within this design - can your students spot them all?

For more information please go to :
royal.uk/coats-arms



TEACHER'S NOTES: This is the coat of arms of the **Jackson family**. A wealthy family in Stoke Mandeville during the 1700s, they had their family symbol put onto their gravestones inside the church, so that people would be able to recognise who was buried there. There aren't any colours for us to see, but the pictures of suns show that the Jacksons buried in Stoke Mandeville were related to the Jackson family of Yorkshire who originally had the coat of arms with 3 suns designed. The diamond shaped shield in the centre of the image is surrounded by feathers- plumage from the medieval style helmet sat on the top corner of the shield. The shield is divided vertically and has a cross on the right side. This cross may represent St George - the patron Saint of England. The colours of this coat of arms were red, yellow and white.

- > Get your students to suggest colours that may have been used in this coat of arms
- > Can your students spot the 4 star symbols and the fleur de lis?
- > What do the symbols in this coat of arms say about this family?

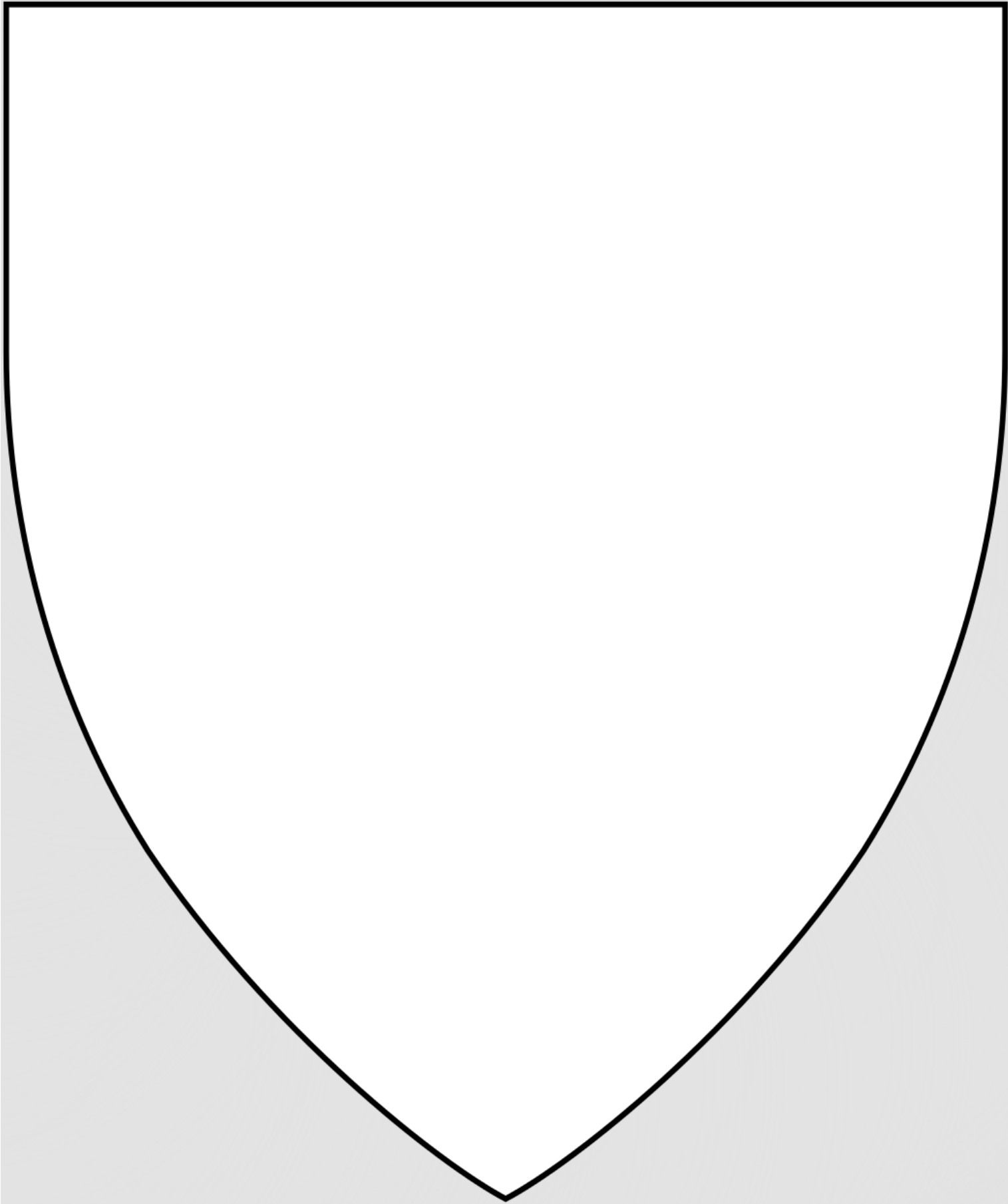
Learning Exercise 2: Design your own Shield

Instructions:

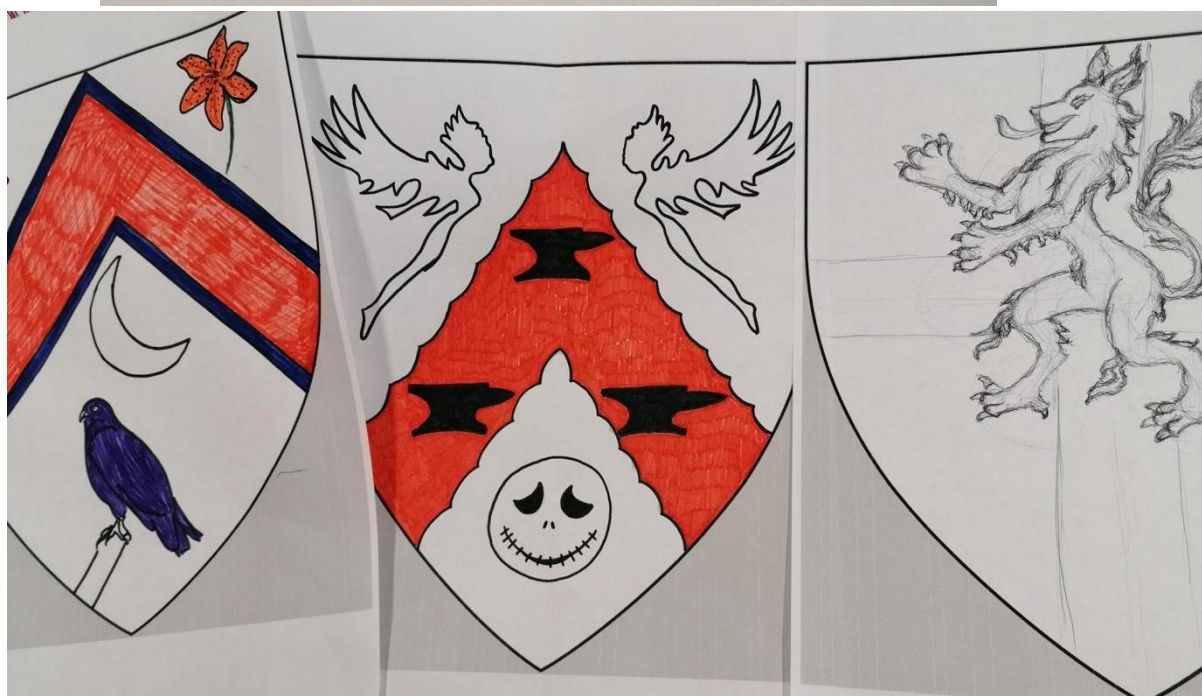
Imagine you are a person living in the middle ages. Perhaps you are a knight going into battle, a merchant who needs people to recognise their goods, or an important lord or lady who wants to decorate their house.

Draw and colour in your own coat of arms & present it to the class.

Use the heraldry reference sheets to help you. Think about the symbols, animals and colours you want to use to represent you!



Previous examples of heraldic shields from workshop trial:



Conclusion:

Ask your students to reflect on the work they have done during this workshop.

If time, get them to stand up and quickly present to the class their shield - the colours they have used, how they have divided it and which animals or symbols they have decorated it with.

Reflect on the initial exercise, ask students to keep an eye out for heraldry used in their local area. Perhaps ask if they can spot the Buckinghamshire coat of arms in their town/village.

Homework ideas -

> **Find your family coat of arms online.** Most family names have a coat of arms/shield related to them. Draw or print out and label the image to point out the colours, symbols and possible animals used. This should reflect the first exercise of this workshop but can be done independently with the use of digital research tools or/and the heraldry reference sheets.

> **Draw your full coat of arms.** Following from designing a heraldic shield, students can be asked to incorporate it into their own full coat of arms. This should include the shield in the centre and then have animals, plants or other symbols surrounding it like seen in the first exercise of this workshop.

> **Research a heraldic symbol or animal.** Ask students to design a poster about 1 other symbol or animal found in heraldry. This can even be one of the fantastical creatures used in medieval art such as a cockatrice (a cross between a cockerel and a dragon) or a manicore (a cross between a man and a tiger)!