

The Society of Scottish Armigers

Petting for Arms

Information Leaflet No. 4
Extracted from the Court of the Lord Lyon

November 19, 2025



The Court of the Lord Lyon *Scotland's Heraldic Authority*



Petting for a Coat of Arms Letters Patent & Extracts of Matriculation

Apart from the requirement that the petitioner should be, in terms of the Lyon King of Arms Act 1672, a "virtuous and well-deserving person", in general the governing factor in the case of an original Grant of Arms is the domicile of the petitioner or the ownership of property in Scotland. Does the petitioner have a Scottish domicile of origin? If not, has he acquired a Scottish domicile of choice? In cases where the petitioner's claim to fall within the jurisdiction of the Lord Lyon rests on the ownership of property the key question is whether the petitioner is able to reside on the land. A dwelling house of whatever size presents no problem, but the ownership of forestry land or "amenity" land on which there is no house and for which planning permission for a house would not be obtainable would not necessarily be sufficient to bring the owner into the Lord Lyon's jurisdiction. The ownership of "souvenir" plots of land of a few square feet or thereby such as are marketed from time to time, is insufficient to bring anyone within the jurisdiction of the Lord Lyon King of Arms. Where the petitioner is seeking to matriculate off a previous Grant of Arms he or she will have to prove his relationship to the original grantee and show that s/he comes within the destination of the original Grant of Arms. It does not matter where she or he is domiciled. Those domiciled in England,

Wales or Northern Ireland should approach the College of Arms in London, while those domiciled in the Republic of Ireland should approach the Chief Herald of Ireland in Dublin. Commonwealth citizens, in particular those of Scottish descent - save for Canada and South Africa which have their own heraldic authorities - can apply to the Lord Lyon King of Arms.

Foreign Countries.

It is not generally possible for non-British citizens to be granted Scottish Arms. It is sometimes possible for a cousin who is domiciled in Scotland to seek a Grant of Arms with a destination which includes the other descendants of a common ancestor, provided that ancestor had also been domiciled in Scotland. The Court of the Lord Lyon is a court of law, and applications for Arms are made by a formal "Petition". This is done on the initiative of the person wishing to obtain Arms, who submits a Petition to the Lord Lyon stating who s/he is and asking for Arms to be granted to her/him. The process is not complicated. There are four main varieties of Petition:

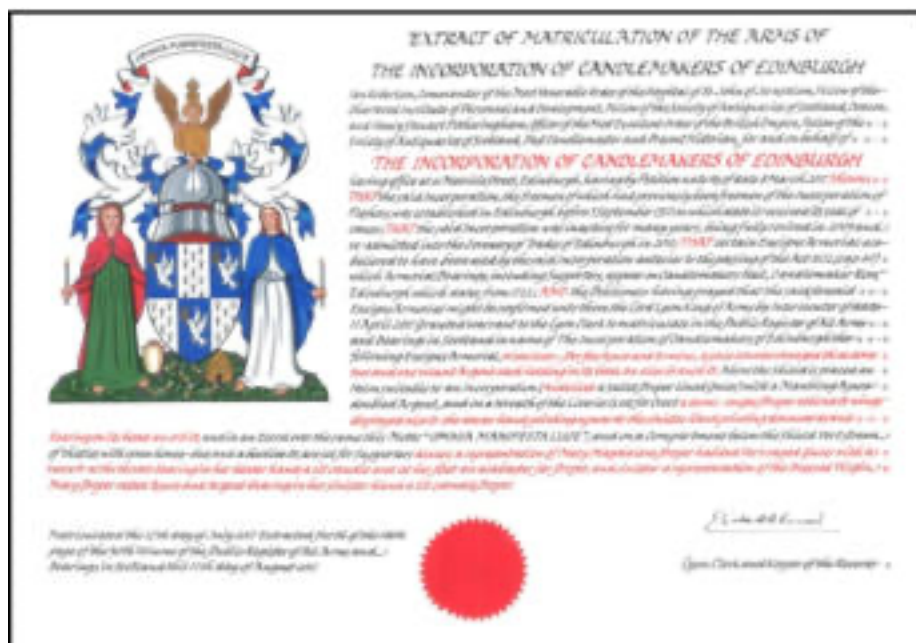
- Petition for a new Grant of Arms,
- Petition for a Grant of Arms to an Ancestor
- Petition for a Matriculation of Arms
- Petition for a Grant of Arms to a Company.

Sample Forms of Petition can be found on our leaflet [here](#): Advice on any special difficulties or matters not covered can be obtained by writing to the Lyon Clerk at the Court of the Lord Lyon, HM New Register House, Edinburgh, EH1 3YT, and to whom all completed Petitions should be sent. All such correspondence is 'CONFIDENTIAL'.

Petitions are considered in the order in which they are lodged with the Lyon Clerk who checks the papers to ensure all is in order. The Petition is laid before the Lord Lyon who, if willing to grant the Petition, discusses the design of the Arms with the Petitioner or Agent.

Petitioners are welcome to submit a suggested design along with the Petition, or to suggest ideas that they would like the Lord Lyon to consider within the design. However there is absolutely no need to do this and a great many Petitioners do not do so.

Coats of Arms



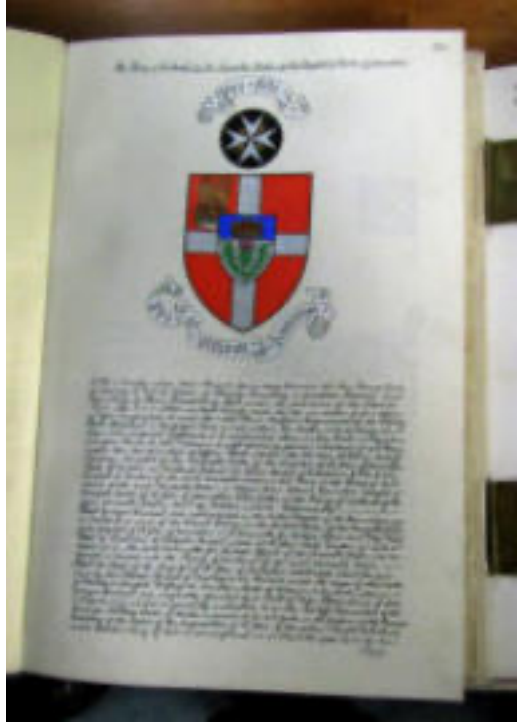


An example of a grant
An example of a matriculation



TO ALL AND SUNDRY WHOM THESE PRESENTS DO OR MAY CONCERN.

An example of an entry in the Public Register.



Any person who wishes to use Arms must petition for a Grant of Arms or – if they can trace their ancestry back to an ancestor with the same name who had a grant of Arms in Scotland,– for a “matriculation” showing their place within the family. When a grant or matriculation is obtained, an illuminated parchment, narrating the pedigree as proved, is supplied to the Petitioner, and a recording is placed in the Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland.

The Lord Lyon designs the Arms which are to be granted. In doing so he takes into account the many rules and traditions of Scottish heraldry and he ensures that each design is unique. So far as possible he tries to meet the wishes of the Petitioner, but it should be understood that there is no certainty that the Lord Lyon will be able to adopt all or even parts of any design which is submitted. In arriving at a design the Lord Lyon endeavours to ensure that the Petitioner is happy with the final result.

Once the design has been agreed, the Lord Lyon composes the verbal description of the Arms known as the ‘blazon’ and grants a warrant authorising Letters Patent to be prepared. The Petition then goes to the Lyon Clerk who drafts the text of the Letters Patent or Extract of Matriculation and sends this to the Petitioner for approval. The Petitioner will also be asked if additional decoration or artwork, for example the coats of arms of all the Heralds and Pursuivants in Ordinary, is requested, for which an additional charge will be made, is desired. Payment is then made. The Lyon Clerk places the work before the herald painters who prepare the Letters Patent or Extract of Matriculation on vellum and also enter the arms into the Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland. When the document is complete it is sealed and Letters Patent are signed by the Lord Lyon whilst Extracts are signed by the Lyon Clerk. A similar process is followed in the case of a Petition for a Matriculation from an existing grant of Arms. The whole process generally takes between 30 - 36 months from the date of lodging of the Petition. Once Arms have been granted and recorded in the Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland, they are protected under the law of Scotland. Any infringement of a person’s armorial rights in Scotland may be drawn to the attention of the Procurator Fiscal to the Court of the Lord Lyon, who may mount any necessary prosecution of the offender. In return for this permanent legal protection and for the maintenance of the permanent registration of Arms in the Court of the Lord Lyon a fee is charged to the Petitioner. The fee is made up of Government dues, Herald Painter’s fees and costs of materials in preparing the Petitioner’s Letters Patent. This is his title deed to the Arms, written in a formal script on vellum, illustrating his Arms in full colour, and sealed with the Seal of the Lord Lyon King of Arms. The fees are fixed by Statute, and rise from time to time. All statements made in Petitions must be accompanied by legal proof, usually Certificates of Birth and Marriage for statements of parentage and ancestry. It is the Petitioner’s responsibility to provide this proof. Petitioners may employ their own genealogists to provide the proof. Petitioners requiring assistance in preparing the Petition may write to the Lyon Clerk at the Court of the Lord Lyon stating their requirements and objectives.

•[Sample petitions](#)•[Scale of Fees from April 30th 2024](#)



