

The following Obituary of Sir Malcolm by Gordon Casely FHSS was published on Saturday 26th September by "The Times", to which copyright belongs.

Sir Malcolm Innes of Edingight KCVO WS

Modernising Lord Lyon who brought Scots heraldry into the 21st century

When an East of Scotland coach owner decorated his bus fleet with the logo of a lion rampant on a gold shield, the reality that he had unwittingly usurped the coat-of-arms of the Earl of Wemyss and March escaped him. But the long arm of Scots heraldic law caught up with him, and when he demurred over removing the logo, he was politely informed that he faced the prospect of £100 a day in fines and plus the legal defacing of his coaches.



He had the devices speedily replaced, though he was less than enamoured of the Lyon Court and its officials. "As far as I am concerned, they are a load of pompous twits that want to give everybody a hard time for no reason'.

Swift actions such as this by Lord Lyon Sir Malcolm Innes of Edingight have maintained the position of Scots heraldry as the purest and finest in the world, and a matrix for others to copy. He took immediate action when the first British Airways flight into Edinburgh boasted a new coat-of-arms on the tail. He firmly pointed out that BA was were using arms not legally recognised in Scotland. BA swiftly matriculated their arms to conform with Scots law.

For all the clichés surrounding "the Lyon in his den", Sir Malcolm was very much a modernist. In enforcing centuries-old heraldic law, he ensured that legislation met current standards, presiding as a judge of the realm in the only country where a court of heraldry and genealogy is fully integrated into the judicial system.

In Elizabeth Roads, he appointed the first woman herald in the world in 1992, a move thus far copied only by Canada and Ireland. Thus the heralds on duty at the first opening ceremony of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 proved gender balanced in an era before the term had entered common parlance.

His reign (as the term of office of a Lyon is quaintly termed) oversaw the introduction of heraldic charges (the devices on shields) to cope with late 20th century needs such as computing and electronics, a period by which time he had long been familiar with heraldic use representing DNA and space travel.

He encouraged a move away from Latin as a base for mottoes, suggesting that a language relevant to the petitioner for arms be considered. His father Sir Thomas had as Lyon in 1956 granted Shetland Isles Council the motto in Old Norse "Med Logum Skal Land Byggji" (By law shall the land be built up). Thus in Sir Malcolm's time came mottoes in English, Greek, French, Welsh and several Asian tongues. He took particular interest in the use of Scots, with "Leal" (True-hearted) being granted in 1987 - the shortest motto in Scots of all time.

His example encouraged his successors. Thus Aberdeen and North-East Scotland Family History Society bears the Doric motto of "Aye Tyaavin Awa".

Educated at Edinburgh Academy and Edinburgh University, Sir Malcolm was born in the Capital into a heraldic family. His father Sir Thomas Innes of Learney, married to Lady Lucy Buchan, had been Lord Lyon for nearly a quarter of a century after the war, and the young Malcolm showed early leaning toward armory. A non-heraldic boyhood memory was that at his boyhood home near Torphins, Aberdeenshire, so little alcohol was ever served that the young Malcolm grew up believing that whisky was solely to counter wasp and bee stings.

Appointed to the honorary position of Falkland Pursuivant Extraordinary as a teenager in 1957, and maintaining the rank of Orkney Herald in retirement, he became one of the longest-serving heralds in the 600-year history of Lyon Court. His service actually started when as a 10-year-old in 1948, when in November that year, he became a page, the most junior officer of court.

He took up full-time appointment within Lyon Court on graduating, ultimately being appointed Lord Lyon in 1981, the 35th Lyon since Henry Greve (Greve) in 1399. Recent research however shows that the office goes back at least to Jack or James Caupeny in 1290, with the position being *seannachie* in times of Celtic kings.

Ensuring that heraldry did not become stultified, he readily acted on a suggestion in late 1976 by heraldist Charles Burnett (later to become a distinguished officer of arms himself) that an association catering for the study and use of heraldry be formed. In February the following year, he started out as first chairman of the Heraldry Society of Scotland, an active grouping with some 400 members.

Recalling early society days, he wrote: “We went on many wonderful (heraldic) excursions, fortified with good picnics and bottles of decent wine. In those days, I was described by Lady Olga Maitland in her column (in the *Daily Express*) as “a robust partygoer!”.

In one of his many lectures to the society, Sir Malcolm predicted that in a globalised world, heraldry would occupy a role in preserving identity for the individual and family, and for institutions local and national. When he added that the desire for individual identity ran very deep in Scotland, he invoked his famously dry wit, turning for authority to his wife’s hairdresser, this lady informing Lady Innes that Edinburgh’s “leading tattoo parlour” never applied exactly the same tattoo to customers. “Each pattern is absolutely individual”, she said.

Essentially modest and not one to seek the limelight, Sir Malcolm welcomed visitors of all distinction and none to Lyon Office. Many an intending armiger (owner of a coat-of-arms) has benefitted from his kindly intervention in heraldic design. He retained the dignity of his ancient office while leaving admiration of the majesty of it to others.

Sir Malcolm, 16th laird of Edingight in Banffshire, was appointed CVO in 1981, and promoted KCVO nine years later. He died from cancer, and was predeceased by his wife Joan Hay, scion of the Tweeddale Hays, in 2013. He is survived by his three sons John, who runs the family estate in Banffshire; Colin, a lawyer in Edinburgh; Michael, who works in private equity in London; and grandchildren ranging in age from seven to 24.

Sir Malcolm Rognvald Innes of Edingight KCVO KStJ MA LLB WS, Lord Lyon and Secretary to the Order of the Thistle 1981-2001, was born on May 25, 1938. He died on September 20, 2020, aged 82.



Charles Burnett (Dingwall Pursuivant),
John Spens (Albany Herald),
Sir Malcolm Innes of Edingight (Lord Lyon),
Sir Crispin Agnew of Lochnaw (Rothesay),
John George (Kintyre Pursuivant)
image © National Museums Scotland

Funeral Hatchment of Sir Malcom Innes of Edingight, painted by Mark Dennis, quondam Ross Herald Extraordinary

The arms of Sir Malcolm Innes, 16th of Edingight, are shown impaled with those of the Lord Lyon on the badge of a Knight of the Venerable Order of St John of Jerusalem and encircled first by the circlet of a Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order and then the golden Thistle Collar as King of Arms of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle. Behind the shield, the batons of a Lord Lyon are displayed in saltire and reversed. From the base and ascending along the dexter side are the badges of the positions he held as Lyon Clerk, Carrick Pursuivant, Marchmont Herald and, finally, Orkney Herald Extraordinary. Across the helmet of a knight with the palm crest of the Innes rising from his chapeau as feudal Baron of Crommey is depicted his personal badge of a bullrush and crescent. The dexter supporter is that of the Office, and the sinister supporter is Sir Malcolm's (heraldic) greyhound. The hound partially obscures the arms of Joan, Lady Innes, who predeceased her husband. Only the sinister half of the hatchment is blackened as, of course, the Office endures.



Obituary by Elizabeth Roads, Snawdoun Herald and Secretary to the Thistle

SIR MALCOLM ROGNVALD INNES OF EDINGIGHT, KCVO, WS 1938-2020

Sir Malcolm Innes of Edingight, KCVO, WS, Lord Lyon King of Arms and Secretary of the Order of the Thistle from 1981 to 2001, was born in 1938, the third son of Sir Thomas Innes of Learney, GCVO and Lady Lucy Buchan, daughter of the 18th Earl of Caithness. His father was already a distinguished herald when Sir Malcolm was born and was appointed Lord Lyon King of Arms in 1945 demitting office in 1969 by which time Sir Malcolm had held the office of Lyon Clerk and Keeper of the Records for three years.

He was educated at Gilsland Park School, the Edinburgh Academy, as were his three sons, and the University of Edinburgh from which he graduated with an LLB. He became a Writer to the Signet in 1964.

He was appointed Falkland Pursuivant Extraordinary in 1957 and the following year promoted to become Carrick Pursuivant of Arms, an office his father had also held. On his appointment in 1966 as Lyon Clerk, in succession to Colonel Andrew Lawson who had held the office since 1929, his connection with Lyon Office was firmly established and he spent the rest of his working life there. In 1966 he was also responsible for ensuring the move of Lyon Office from General Register House, where it had been situated since the end of the 19th century, to New Register House went smoothly and his efficiency allowed for a large library of books and archives to be moved and re-catalogued expertly. In 1971 he became Marchmont Herald of Arms, an office his father had also held between his retirement as Lord Lyon and his death in October that year. His knowledge of the history of the Court of the Lord Lyon was comprehensive and even in retirement he regularly sent in new material which he had been sent or had discovered in the archives. He seemed to remember every recording of arms which took place between 1966 and 2001 and recalled meeting many of the petitioners. He was a welcoming and generous

Lyon who took on many other roles which flowed from his appointment as Lyon. He took a keen interest in the Scottish Genealogy Society of which he was Honorary President until 2007 and the Royal Celtic Society of which he was also a supportive Vice President and was, with a few other enthusiasts, responsible for the foundation of the Heraldry Society of Scotland in 1977, a society to which he devoted much time, becoming Chairman, President and Fellow. He was also a Fellow of the Royal Heraldry Society of Canada and of the Heraldry Society of New Zealand.

He produced many articles and talks and in 1978 revised his father's great work "Scots Heraldry". He enjoyed the more difficult cases which came before him and relished the legal debate. Two of the major cases he heard were those related to the succession to the Earldom of Selkirk and the petition of Colonel Dunbar of Kilconzie to succeed to the Dunbar of Mochrum baronetcy, a wish Colonel Dunbar did not achieve.

In 1981, following the retirement of Sir James Monteith Grant, Malcolm was appointed Lord Lyon King of Arms and in the same year became a Commander of the Royal Victorian Order. In 1990 he was appointed a Knight Commander of the Order. His 20 years as Lord Lyon saw many changes in the way Lyon Office worked and in those appointed to be Officers of Arms. A thorough grounding in heraldry and a desire to contribute to the heraldic world were deemed by him essential before anyone could be appointed to the office. In 1987 he broke new ground by appointing a woman to become an Officer of Arms, the first in the world and the previous year had recommended that same person to become the first female Lyon Clerk.

He took a gentle but successful approach to bringing heraldry into modernity, with ideas of new symbols for new occupations which appealed to many new to the science. He encouraged those with little previous interaction to become armigerous. With corporate bodies he either discussed how a design might be better or if there was no intention of the body wishing to acquire arms how they could render a design inoffensive. He preferred education to allowing the Procurator Fiscal to Lyon Court to use a heavy hand.

He took a great interest in the history and organisation of the Order of the Thistle and during his tenure of Office the 300th anniversary of the revival of the Order took place, an occasion when the members of the Order entertained HM The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh to luncheon after the Installation Service. As on other occasions before that Service he had been responsible for carrying the Sword of State in a ceremonial journey from Edinburgh Castle to St Giles where it was borne in procession in front of The Queen at the Installation Service. The Sword is now too fragile to be carried on such occasions and thus he will probably be the last Lord Lyon to have undertaken this duty.

In 2001 he retired as Lord Lyon and Secretary of the Thistle and being already a herald for life was appointed Orkney Herald Extraordinary. He was the last person to hold the office of Lyon as a full-time appointment and also the last to have held previous heraldic office for a significant period of time.

Whilst heraldry, genealogy and history were central to his life he had many interests well away from his professional life. He was a keen shot, excellent archer and, as a member of the Royal Company of Archers, the winner of The Queen's Prize, an avid fisherman and a long serving and assiduous member of the River Deveron District Salmon Fisheries Board, and he had a deep knowledge of forestry matters. He enjoyed music and biographies, ecclesiastical and other intellectual debate, architecture and gardens to name a few.

He enjoyed many accolades amongst which were those of a Knight of Justice of the Order of St John, an Order in which he took a great interest, and of a Grand Officer of Merit *Pro Merito Melitensi* of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta.

He was married for 50 happy years to Joan, who died in 2013, the daughter of Thomas Hay, WS and they had three sons, John Innes of Edingight, Colin Innes of Kinnairdy and Michael Innes of Crommey, all of whom have sons. His father had had a passion for re-acquiring Innes dwellings hence the territorial designations they each hold from their respective property. His family meant a huge amount to him and his annual month at Edingight in the summer when his sons were young was sacrosanct. He kept up with the interests of his grandsons, of whom he was exceedingly fond, and their musical preferences, not necessarily a genre he also enjoyed, and their schooling. His knowledge of matters of the North East and in particular Innes history was profound. He was a well-read, cultured polymath, a generous and amusing host, and a staunch friend.