

# Practical Heraldry for the Self-Isolator

## Week 4 Topic 2: Funeral Hatchments

Death seems rather a lugubrious subject for the exuberance of heraldry but in fact it has always added greatly to the pageantry of funerals and indeed it is likely to be on a funerary monument in a church or churchyard that one might first encounter a coat of arms.



Royal funerals were always very heraldic, of course—here is a contemporary drawing of the funeral of Mary Queen of Scots coloured by Mark Dennis. The heraldry was designed not only to add splendour but to draw attention, by the royal emblems and genealogy displayed in the arms, to the “divine” authority by which the monarch ruled.

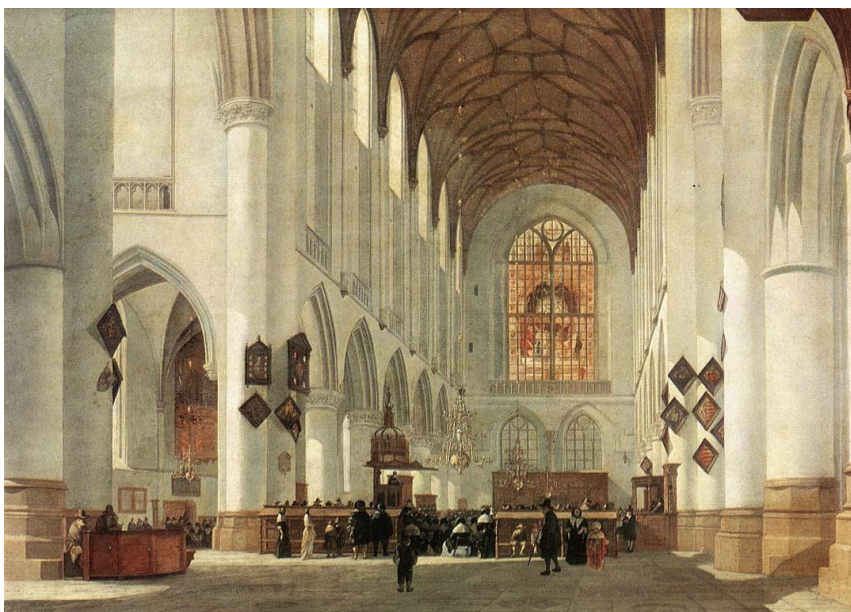
The nobility had funerals almost as grand—below is the funeral procession of the Duke of Rothes in 1681.

If you look at the back of the first picture, you will see a diamond-shaped plaque bearing the royal arms of Scotland. This is called a **FUNERAL HATCHMENT**.



A **HATCHMENT** is a square piece of wood, rotated through 90 degrees, on which the deceased’s arms, along with a pious motto or two, would decorate the front door of the deceased’s house and, in another copy, be placed in the church where the funeral was to take place. The continental practice, as you will see in churches all over the Low Countries in particular, was to surround the arms with smaller shields carrying the arms of the dead person’s ancestors—ideally numbering the magical *seize quartiers*—or 16 noble shields of arms of great-great-grandparents, often regarded as the touchstone of nobility. Scotland followed this practice in the 16th and 17th centuries before falling into line with the English practice of only displaying the deceased’s personal arms. A further complication was that if the dead armiger was married and left a widow, the background of the hatchment was painted black on the dexter side only, the sinister being painted white to indicate that the lady was still extant. Hatchments are usually at least one metre square—often larger.

This Dutch interior shows a number of hatchments on the pillars.

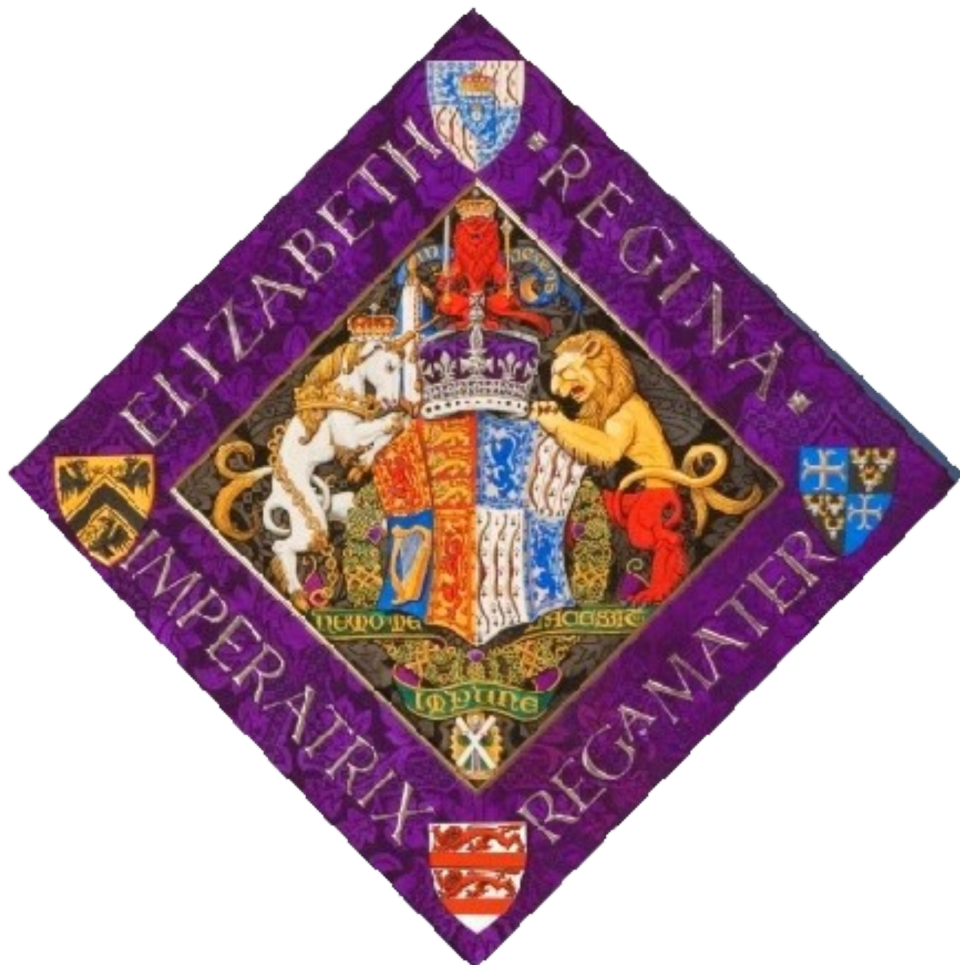


This Scottish hatchment shows the 16 quartiers and some of the symbols of death—skulls etc. It belongs to 1st Lord Douglas of Castle Douglas and dates from 1827 which is late for this style.

A certain squeamishness about death crept into society in Victorian times but there was a revival of hatchments in the 1890s. Here is the hatchment of Sir Archibald Drummond Stewart, 8th Bt (1807-1890). It now hangs in the Chapel at Murthly Castle. The photograph beside it shows the hatchment hanging over the front door of the Castle. Photographs kindly supplied by Thomas Stuart-Fotheringham of Powrie.



In the last few years, the practice of displaying funeral hatchments has been gloriously revived by Mark Dennis, formerly Ross Herald Extraordinary. Here are some of his hatchments—note the *pleurants* lion and unicorn in the hatchment for H.M. The Queen Mother



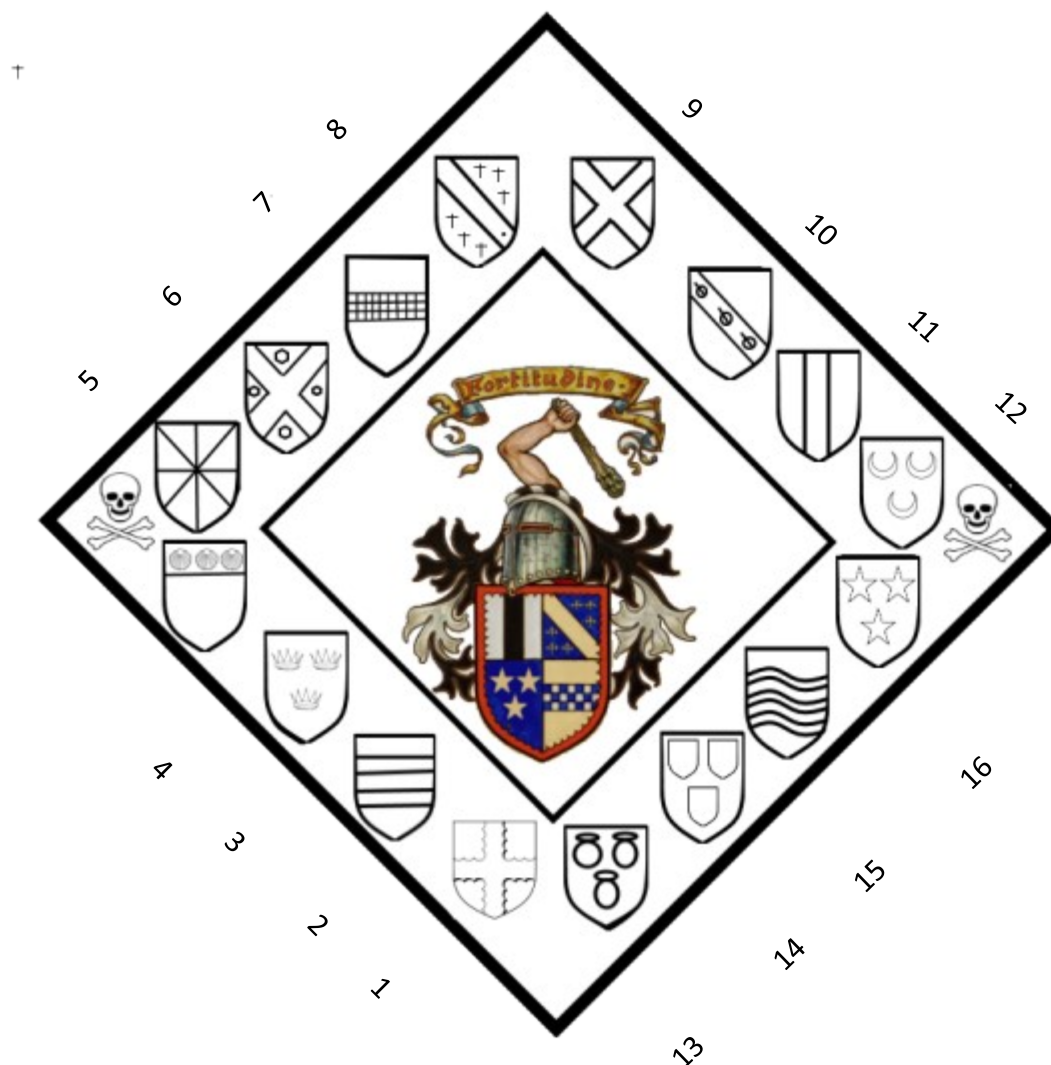


1. Lyon David Sellar
2. Alan Watson
3. Romilly Squire
4. Fred Casely
5. David Lumsden of Cushnie
6. Peter Drummond– Murray of Mastrick



Here is an entirely fictitious hatchment—can you colour in all the shields correctly?

The background should be SABLE as his wife has predeceased him.



1. Sinclair: Argent a cross engrailed Sable
2. Cameron: Gules two bars Or
3. Grant: Gules three crowns Or
4. Graham: argent, on a chief sable, three escallops or
5. Campbell: Gyronny of eight Or and Sable
6. Lennox: Argent, a saltire, between four roses, Gules
7. Lindsay: Gules, a fess chequy argent and azure
8. Mar: Azure a Bend between six Cross Crosslets fitchée Or

9. Maxwell: Argent a saltire Sable
10. Leslie: Argent on a bend Azure three buckles Or
11. Erskine: Argent a pale Sable
12. Oliphant: Gules three crescents Argent
13. Murray: Azure three mullets Or
14. Drummond: Or three bars wavy Gules
15. Hay: Argent three escutcheons Gules
16. Eglinton: Gules three annulets Or