

# Practical Heraldry for the Self-Isolator

## Week 7— Heraldic Supporters



Here once again is a picture of the Royal Arms as used in Scotland. It is on the Sovereign's Stall in the Chapel of the Order of the Thistle.

The Unicorn and Lion holding up the shield are called SUPPORTERS. In the United Kingdom, as in most traditions, SUPPORTERS are a great heraldic privilege – especially in England where the bearer would usually need to be a Peer of the Realm or Knight Grand Cross or some other high ranking person. In Scotland, Knights of the Thistle and some Clan Chiefs and some others can be added to the list and the Lord Lyon has the Discretion to grant supporters to any person or corporate body he feels deserving, although he maintains the exclusive character of the honour by using the discretion very rarely.

In Scottish Heraldry, a SUPPORTER is a SUPPORTER, whether it be animal, person, object or whatever.

In **French** heraldry, although supporters are even rarer, they distinguish three types which usefully break the subject up:

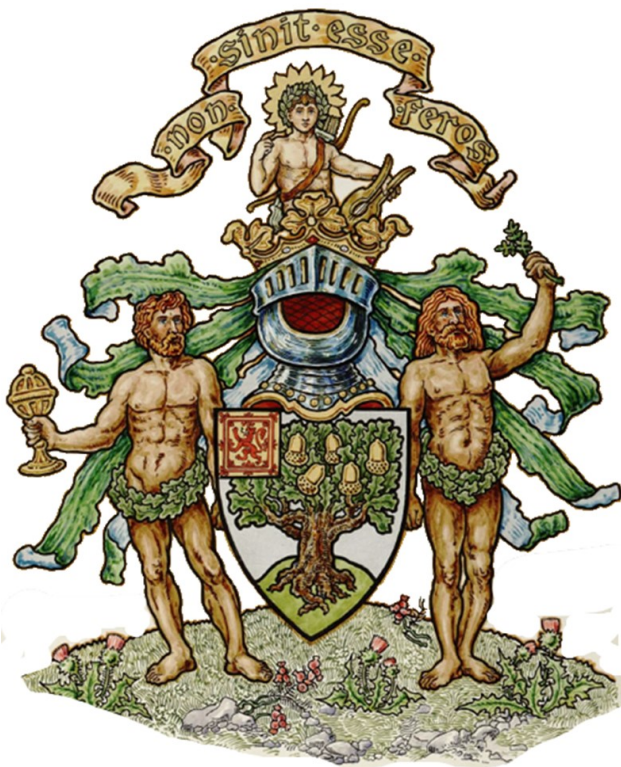
**tenants** when the supporters are humans (or angels)

**supports** which are animals or mythical beasts, and

**soutiens** which would be inanimate objects like trees.

We can find some of each type in Scottish heraldry, although the last ones, the **soutiens** are VERY rare.

Here are some examples of **tenants**:



The Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh. Gloriously painted in 1900 by Herald Painter, Graham Johnston.

*"Two savages wreathed about the middle with oak Proper, the one on the dexter holding in his exterior hand a covered cup Or and that on the sinister a sprig of rue Vert."*

## KNIGHTS

These *tenants* are the two knights in armour belonging to George Robert Ainslie and granted in 1836 when the Herald Painter was William J. Lawson.



The knights holding gold batons, belonged to Sir Charles Arthur Fairlie-Cuninghame and matriculated in 1882, note the gas-bracket compartment. Thomas Austin Brown was Herald Painter from 1880-1884 and probably painted this .



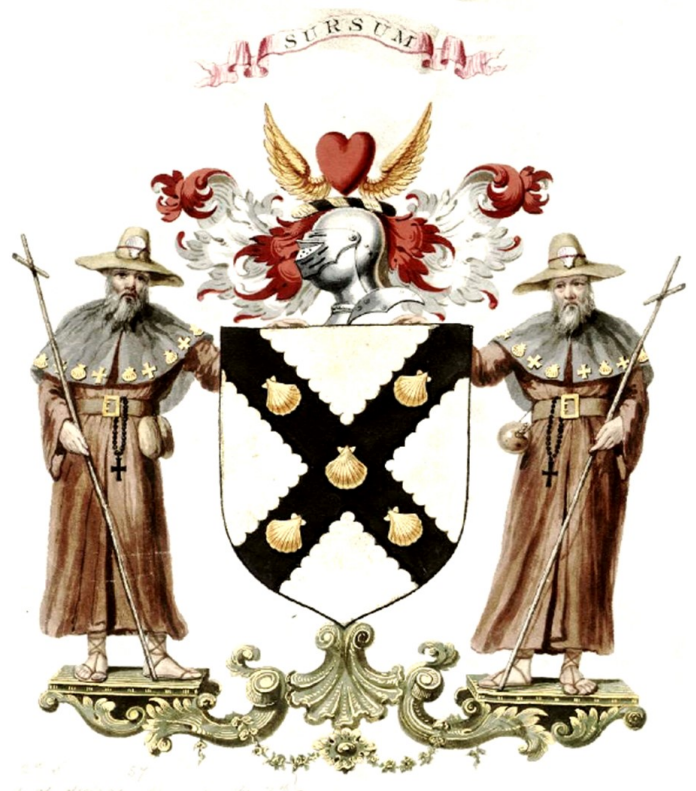
## PILGRIMS

These belong to Pringle of Whytbank and Yair 1828

*"Two pilgrims habited Proper"*

The scallop shells of course are often symbols of the Camino Pilgrimage to the Shrine of St James at Compostella, the link emphasised by the pilgrim supporters.

The Herald Painter in 1828 was Robert McInnes who, I imagine, painted this lovely composition.



## WARRIORS

The arms of Lord Steele of Aikwood 2006 Painted by Herald Painter, Yvonne Holton:

*"Dexter a Masai warrior and sinister a Border reiver Proper"*

The supporters here are used by the armiger to link two parts of his life – as a child in Kenya and then as an adult in the Scottish Borders.

*Lord Steele is a Knight of the Thistle.*



## ALLEGORICAL LADIES

The Bank of Scotland as painted in 1849, presumably by Herald Painter, Thomas Yeater:

*"Two women, she on the dexter representing Abundance holding in her hand a cornucopia as the former and that on the sinister representing Justice and holding in her hand a ballance (sic)."*

The Marquess of Linlithgow (Hope) 1902

*"Two ladies representing Hope vested Argent holding in their exterior hands an anchor Proper."*

Another of the wonderful paintings of Graham Johnston although he has painted the sinister lady Or instead of Argent which makes for a much richer composition, rather in the style of Alphonse Mucha.

