

# Practical Heraldry for the Self-Isolator

## Week 8D— Royal Burghs

By the early 1970s, when they were abolished, Scotland had nearly 70 Royal burghs. Some were created as early as the 12th century and many much later. In 1977, on being asked a question in the House of Commons, the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, Frank McElhone MP, replied:  
*"There is no statutory ban to the continuance of historic titles for other purposes."* which has enabled some Community Councils to assume the title of "Royal Burgh".

In Volume 1 of the Lyon Register, a number of Royal Burghs had their historic arms accepted including Elgin in 1678 which also had a curious phrase about a compartment . Volume 1 has no illustrations but in 1888 the then Lyon Clerk allowed Elgin's arms to be painted in along with the phrase "Upon ane compartment suitabill to a Burgh Royall." The *compartment* is of course the platform on which the supporters stand—usually a grassy knoll or, in the 19th century a gas bracket".



The next appearance of the Royal Burgh Compartment, although not specified in the blazon, seems to be Rutherglen in 1889 (12/14) (left)



Curiously, this heraldic privilege does not seem to have been claimed by another Royal Burgh until Forfar matriculated in 1948 (36/138): (right)

The arms for the **Royal Burgh of Montrose**, along with the "reverse" or sacred side, presumably for a banner or burgh seal, were recorded in 1694 but without the special compartment:

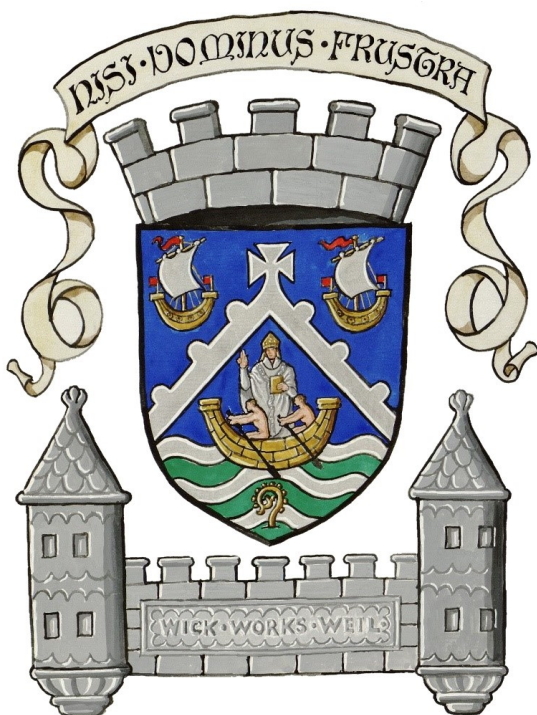
This was remedied when the arms were rematriculated, with a crest in 1953 (39/53):



### Fortrose (1954) (40/9)

Was the next Royal Burgh to be granted the compartment.

*Per pale wavy, dexter, per fess embattled Vert and Azure, a barrulet embattled Or, between a rose Argent, barbed and seeded of the Third, in chief and a stag's head cabossed also of the Third in base. Sinister, Gules, a demi-lion rampant guardant Argent mitred Or, issuant from a rose also Argent, barbed and seeded Vert.*



### Wick (1954) (40/21)



### Cullen (1956) (41/37)



### Berwick-upon-Tweed (1958) (41/103)

*Per pale, Azure and Gules, upon a mount in base Vert a wych-elm proper and in front of the same a bear passant proper.*

Then we have the canting arms of Berwick-upon-Tweed anciently a Scottish Royal Burgh, with its Bear and wych-elm,



### Kintore (1959) 41/105

*Or semé of torteaux, an oak tree eradicated of ten leaves Vert, fructed of two acorns in fess Azure.*



### Stirling (1962) (45/48)

Stirling took the opportunity to record other symbols taken from old seals and chose for supporters a pikeman and an archer..