



**Court of the Lord Lyon**  
**Heraldry for Young People of Any Age**  
**By Unicorn Pursuivant**  
**Activity 1: CRESTS**



Several hundred years ago, long before football matches had been invented, knights in armour used to have fun by organizing **TOURNAMENTS**—when they would charge up and down and try to knock each other off their horses by hitting them with a **LANCE**. Lots of people would come to watch the knights jousting. Once a knight had his armour on, even his own mother could not tell who he was so they carried **SHIELDS** with symbols to tell people who they were and wore **CRESTS** on top of their helmets to make them easy to spot. Crests had to be very light and were often animals or birds painted in bright colours. Here are some modern ones:



*Here is a painting of a tournament held at Eglinton Castle in Ayrshire in 1839. Of course this was hundreds of years after knights in armour really existed but the knights and the audience all had a lot of fun.*

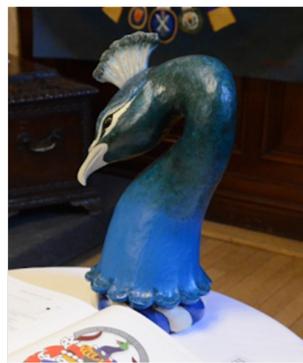
Here are some modern crests carved out of wood—they are very heavy and only for display, not wearing!



A unicorn's head



A boar's head



A peacock's head



A half-lion holding a primrose



A hand holding a dagger



A stag's head



A silver tower



lady holding a thistle & a flower

The **CREST** is taken from a person's **COAT OF ARMS**:



The crest is only the figure at the top—the whole thing is called a **COAT OF ARMS**.

The crest sits on a **WREATH** on top of a **HELMET**.



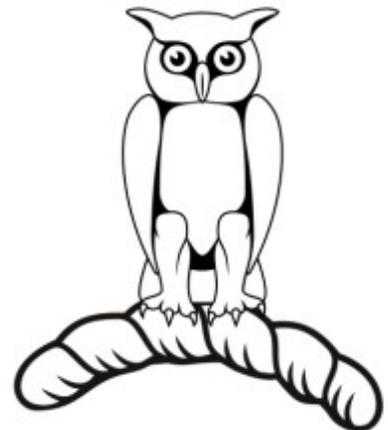
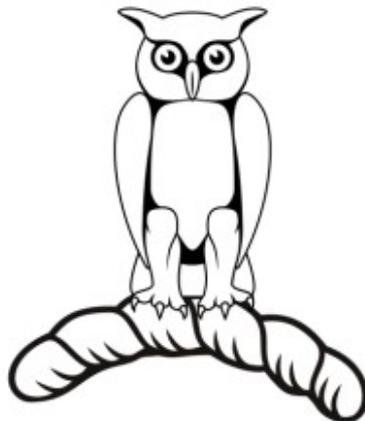
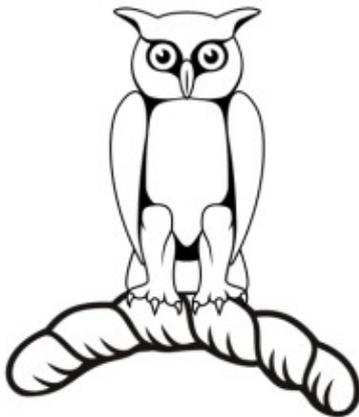
The wreath is always of two colours, either **GOLD** or **SILVER** and one other. It may have begun as a way of holding on some cloth to protect the knight's neck from the sun.



You can see cloth still on coats of arms under the crest—it is called **MANTLING**.



Here are some owl crests for you to practise colouring



These owls are flying....

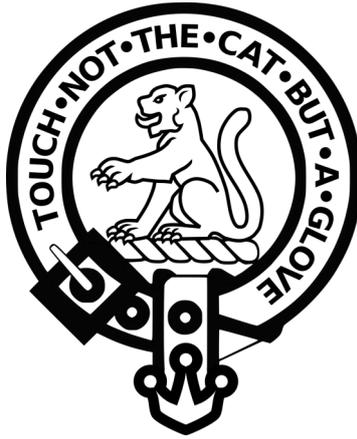
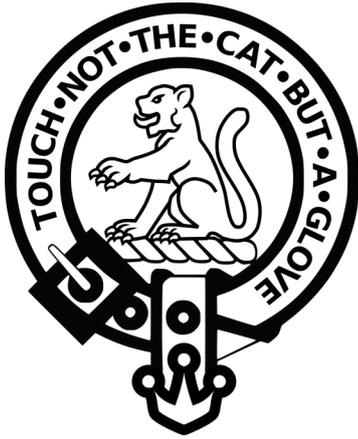


Have a go at copying some of these lovely crests. Start with the wreath.

This splendid boar and tree could do with being coloured in too.



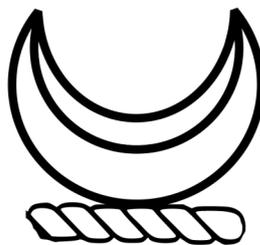
Members of clans often wear the chief's crest as a BADGE. Here is the famous Macpherson clan crest of a cat and the motto "Touch not the cat but a glove." "But" here means "without" so the motto means that you should be very careful not to tangle with a Macpherson!



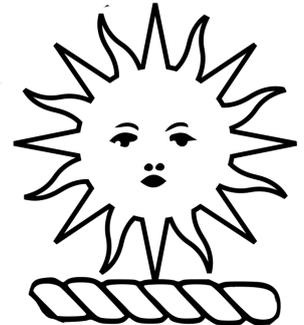
Here is the clan badge of Clan Maclean which uses the chief's crest of a TOWER we saw on page one.



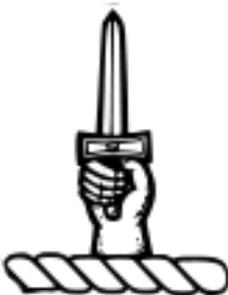
Campbell



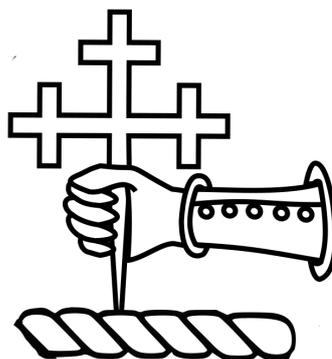
Leask



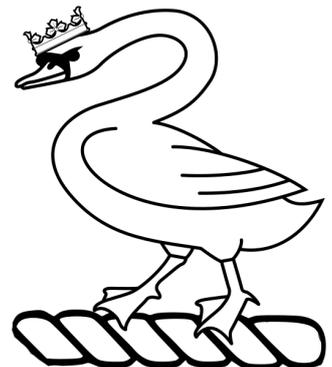
Kerr



Mackay



Macdonald of Sleat



Campbell of Cawdor