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# HERALDRY AT HYLTON CASTLE



People from noble families like the Hyltons would have coats of arms. These were used as a means of identification so in battle knights could be seen at a distance, similar to uniforms and football strips today.

They started out as simple designs and became more decorative as time went on. Coats of arms stuck to a set of rules, using only certain colours and shapes.

On the west and east sides of Hylton Castle, shields show the coats of arms of different friends and family of the Hyltons and also those of Kings and Queens. They help us work out when the castle was built as families would change their coats of arms over time. Now they blend into the stone of the castle but once would have been painted.

Most of the shields are on the West side but on the East a big shield showing the Hylton family badge can be seen.

Colours used were very simple and special names were used for them. The Hylton arms was argent with two bars (stripes) of azure can you guess what colours these are? If not look on the list below.

## Colours

Blue – Azure  
Red – Gules  
White/Silver – Argent  
Black – Sable  
Purple – Purpure  
Yellow/Gold – Or  
Green – Vert

## Shapes

Fess – a stripe  
Bar – two or more stripes  
Pale – Vertical stripe  
Cross - cross  
Saltire – St Andrews cross  
Bend – Diagonal stripe  
Pile – Triangle pointing down

Lots of animals are on coats of arms. The Hyltons had a white hart (deer) wearing a crown

### Animals

Lion

Dog

Eagle

Unicorn

Stag

Dragon

Phoenix

Swan

Owl

Deer

Hare

Griffin (lion/eagle)

Popinjay (parrot)

No two knights were allowed to use the same arms and different objects called heraldic charges could be added to the shield.

Stars

Annulet (ring)

Roundel (circle)

Diamonds

Crescents

Roses (and other flowers)

Crosses

Scallop (shell)

Some of the coats of arms on Hylton Castle were moved around when the castle was altered over the years.

