



The Secrets of Swale's Armorial Bearings

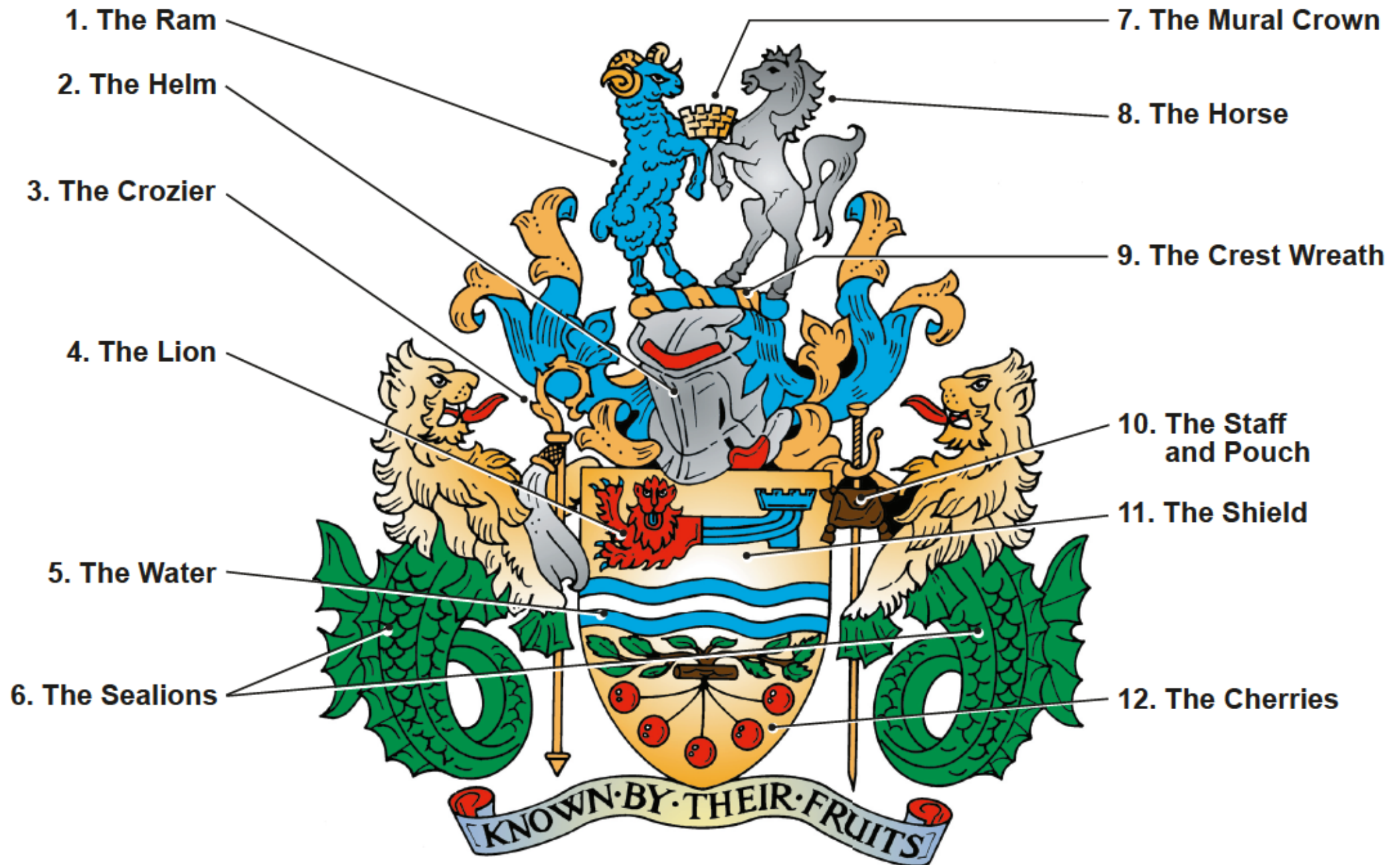
The Mayor

The Mayoralty or Chairmanship is the most exalted position in the gift of a local authority, and those members of our Council who are elected to this office are rightly proud of its traditions and zealous to preserve its privileges which have been acquired through the years. The Mayor – “the Head and Chief Governor of the Town” – had for long been recognised as being, in his or her own Borough, second only to Royalty and the Queen’s Deputy, the Lord Lieutenant, a status which continues to be recognised in Borough and District Council by Section 3(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972. This high standing at the present time is mainly one of honour and dignity rather than actual legal powers, a distinct contrast to the days before the Municipal Corporation Act 1835, when the Mayor was often virtually and legally a dictator within his own Borough.

The Badge of Office

The Mayor’s badge of office comprises a Chain and Pendant made of gold which is inscribed with the Armorial Bearings of the Borough. The chain is joined at the front by a link pin formed by the four sea swallows facing inwards. The sea swallow is also used in the corporate identity of the Borough Council.

The Armorial Bearings of Swale



The Armorial Bearings

The following is a detailed description of the Armorial Bearings:

Shield (11) This is coloured gold to signify the wealth of the area in so many different ways: historical, industrial, agricultural and so on. Across the centre of the Shield is placed a band of symbolic **Water** (5) in allusion to the waterborne industrial activity of the area which includes dock and port facilities, boat building and all the many other connected ancillary trades and occupations. The band of symbolic water also refers to The Swale and so is a pun or cant upon the very name of the district. In the upper part of the Shield a **Lion** (4) passant guardant dimidiates the hulk of a medieval ship. This device is taken from the Arms of the Cinque Ports of which Faversham is a limb. In the lower part of the Shield are placed five **Cherries** (12) in reference to the fact that the district is the centre of the Kentish fruit growing activities. It will be recalled that cherry growing was introduced into the area in the time of Henry VIII, with the first trees being planted in Teynham.

Crest This consists of a **Ram** (1) and a **White Horse** (8) supporting a **Mural Crown** (7). The colours are heraldic, being Azure (blue), Argent (silver or white) and Or (gold), which are a reflection of the basic tinctures of the Shield. The Ram is a further reference to agriculture which is both varied and important in the district and has particular reference to the Isle of Sheppey. The White Horse is the White Horse of Kent, known as *Invicta*, unconquered, and these two support the Mural Crown which is a symbol of municipal government. These stand upon a **Crest Wreath** (9) of the livery colours of the district, that is to say Or and Azure (gold and blue) which in turn is placed upon a **Helm** (2) appropriate to a body corporate, that is to say steel with visor closed and facing the viewer's left. From beneath the Crest Wreath there flows down the mantling which, following the usual procedure in such matters, is also made

up of the livery colours, blue and gold. The livery colours are usually the first colour and metal which are mentioned in the blazon or technical description of the Shield of Arms.

Supporters On each side is a **Sea Lion** (6). The lions are the Royal Beasts of England and refer in particular to King Stephen and Queen Matilda who founded at Faversham the Cluniac Abbey where they are buried. The other lion refers to Edward III who founded Queenborough. Each is made into a Sea Lion because of the marine importance of the area. The Supporter to the Dexter (the viewer's left) holds an abbatial **Crozier** (3) complete with veil flowing down the shaft. This refers to the various significant monastic and other religious establishments in the area, and particularly Minster Abbey and Faversham Abbey. The Supporter to the sinister (viewer's right) support a pilgrim's **Staff and Pouch** (10) in allusion to the fact that the district is on the Pilgrims Way from London to Canterbury.

The Grant also refers to a badge which has been registered with the College of Arms. This appears on the Grant in the following terms: "Four Sea Swallows volant in saltire wings conjoined beaks to the centre Azure". These are shown in natural form. The Badge is separate from the Coat of Arms and can be used independently for day-to-day purposes as a simple means of identifying the Council and its activities.

It is based upon the design prepared by Doctor A.C. Gripper-Gray and adopted by the Council following a competition which was held in 1974. The Council has adopted a styliform version as prepared by Doctor Gripper-Gray. The College of Arms has explained that this is entirely permissible and that the naturalistic design included in the Grant follows heraldic practice which is open to adaptation according to the wishes of the owner of the registered design.

Original leaflet concept by Cllr Ann Mclean, Mayor of Swale 1999 – 2000.