

THE ARMS OF WARWICK SCHOOL

by

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Plate by D. Escott



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THE ARMS OF WARWICK SCHOOL

Warwick School was given a Grant of Arms on the 7th September, 1931, under the hands and seals of Sir Gerald Woods Wollaston, Garter King of Arms, Arthur William Steuart, Esq., Clarenceux King of Arms, and Algar Henry Stafford Howard, Esq., Norroy King of Arms. The arms granted were as follows:—

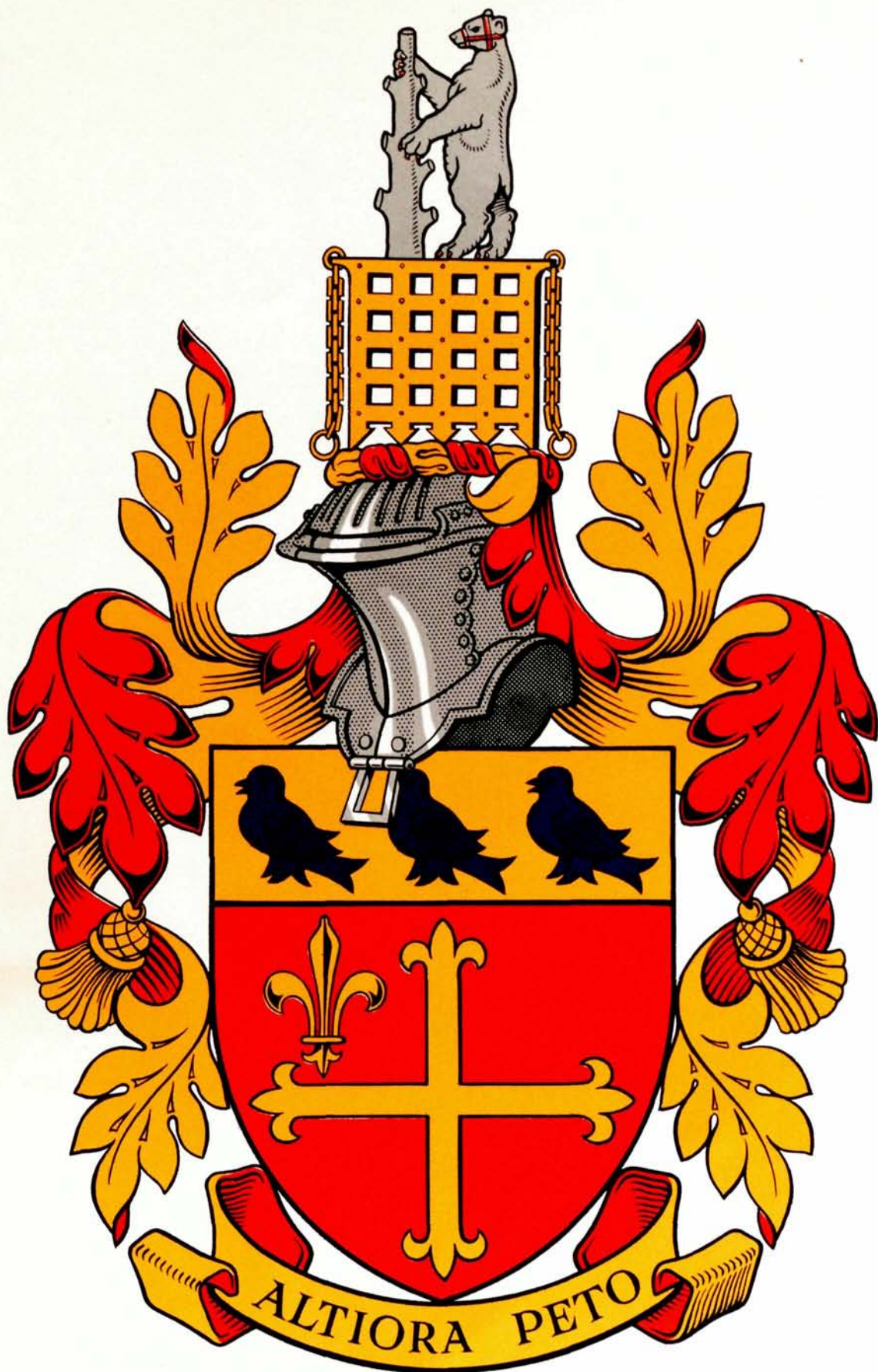
Gules a Cross Flory in the first quarter a Fleur-de-lys Or on a chief of the second three Martlets Azure. *CREST*: On a wreath of the colours Upon a Portcullis chained Or a Bear erect Argent Muzzled Gules supporting a Ragged Staff also Argent. *MOTTO*: (As is customary this is not mentioned in the blazon or heraldic description in the Grant but is included in the illustration of the arms) *ALTIORA PETO* (I aim at higher things).

Many varieties of arms were used by the School before the official Grant was made. Before 1894 it was thought that the School had been founded by Henry VIII, and the Tudor Royal Arms are consequently to be found over the central doorway of the main building. Between 1842 and 1880 a Badge consisting of a combination of the Rose and Portcullis, both Tudor badges, was in use, and the motto was added by Dr. Way, Headmaster between 1885 and 1896. The Rose and Portcullis between the motto and a crown were used as a coat of arms.

To put it simply, the coat of arms may be interpreted as follows: On a red shield a golden cross with each limb ending in a fleur-de-lys and a golden fleur-de-lys in the top left-hand corner; on the upper part of the shield, also of gold, three blue martlets (heraldic swallows, depicted without feet because of a mediaeval belief that they could not perch on the ground). The wreath represents the twisted band of material which helped to hold the crest in place upon the helmet and, at the same time, held the mantling or cloth which prevented the helmet being overheated by the rays of the sun. It consists of "the colours", that is, of the two principal colours of the shield, gold and red.

Meanwhile, it had been discovered that Warwick School was mentioned in a charter of Henry I which indicates a much earlier foundation, possibly in the time of Edward the Confessor or even of Ethelfleda, daughter of King Alfred. Dr. Way consequently designed an achievement in which the motto encircled the shields of Edward the Confessor and Henry VIII placed side by side and surmounted by a crown. Another shield used about this time incorporated a bear sejant (sitting) muzzled, with a "paly" shield (that is, one divided into vertical stripes) of blue and white, the School colours, between the Rose and Portcullis badges. In 1928, when Mr. G. A. Riding became Headmaster, he found complete confusion as to what the School arms were, and discovered that none had been registered with the College of Heralds. Through the good offices of Alderman Sidney Flavel, one of the Governors of the School, the Grant of Arms was made. The preamble of the Grant mentions the existence of the School in the time of King Edward the Confessor, and that it was probably part of the foundation of the Collegiate Church of All Saints in the Castle of Warwick, possibly dating from the year 914 when Ethelfleda built the Burgh of Warwick. It goes on to mention the re-establishment in 1545 of the School by Henry VIII as "the King's New Schole of Warwick" and the setting up of the Governing Body of the King's Schools Foundation in 1875 under the Endowed Schools Acts.

The significance of the shield and crest are as follows. The cross flory is taken from the shield ascribed to Edward the Confessor, as are the three martlets. The fleur-de-lys is from the shield of Henry VIII, which combined the fleur-de-lys of France with the lions of England. The Bear and Ragged Staff is the crest of the Warwick family, and Lady Warwick graciously gave her consent to its use. The Tudor portcullis was allowed as part of the crest and the use of the motto confirmed.



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